A CROSS-CULTURAL TEXTUAL ANALYSIS OF WESTERN AND SOUTH KOREAN NEWSPAPER

COVERAGE OF NORTH KOREAN WOMEN DEFECTORS

AND VICTIMS OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING

Miyoung Chong, B. A.

Thesis Prepared for the Degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

UNIVERSITY OF NORTH TEXAS

May 2014

APPROVED:

Koji Fuse, Major Professor
Tracy Everbach, Committee Member
James Mueller, Committee Member
Dorothy Bland, Director of the Frank W. Mayborn Graduate Institute of Journalism and Dean of the Frank W. and Sue Mayborn School of Journalism
Mark Wardell, Dean of the Toulouse Graduate School
Trafficking women for sexual abuse has been a serious concern worldwide, particularly over the last two decades. The International Labour Organization (ILO) estimated that illicit profits of human trafficking may be as high as $32 billion. However, the international media community has scarcely focused on North Korean women defectors and victims of human trafficking, despite the severity of the issue. More than two million North Koreans, predominantly women, have crossed borders to enter China from starvation. Among those women migrants, about 80% to 90% of them were abducted by traffickers at the border between North Korea and China, and the traffickers sold them to the Chinese sex industry or Chinese men who are unable to find a woman as a wife or a sex slave.

This cross-cultural textual analysis examined South Korean and Western (U.S. and British) newspaper coverage of North Korean women as victims of human trafficking to discover similarities and differences in those countries’ news frames. The analysis has shown that politics was a crucial factor in the coverage of the issue. However, by generally failing to report on the fundamental causes of the trafficking, such as inequality between genders, both Western and South Korean newspapers perpetuated hegemonic masculinity and failed to inform and educate people about the grave situations of North Korean women defectors and victims of human trafficking. This study recommends that in reporting the trafficking issues, journalists must be able to observe objectively, not within ideologies or frames provided by politicians.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am grateful to my professors for their support and guidance during my stay at the Mayborn Graduate Institute of Journalism. I greatly appreciate my committee members: James Mueller, Tracy Everbach, and Koji Fuse. Special thanks go to my committee chair, Koji Fuse; my achievement would not have been possible without your guidance and mentorship. Tracy Everbach, you have been a delightful mentor for me, and your knowledge and friendship made me sure that I can accomplish anything regardless of my race and gender.

My new family at the Mayborn was extremely helpful to my success as a great student. To my graduate academic advisor, Julie Scharnberg, I cannot thank you enough for ensuring matters that I have to learn for graduate life. Thank you to all of my Mayborn friends, especially Madiha Kark and Morty Ortega. I also would like to say a big thank to my family members and friends in the United States and Korea. Your support and prayers helped me through this journey called graduate school.

The thesis is dedicated to my father, Choongnam Jung. Your love and care always gave me strength to go through hardships in my life. Thank you, dad.
## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</td>
<td>iii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purpose of this Study</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER II LITERATURE REVIEW</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Background on North Korean Defectors and Human Trafficking against North Korean Women</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic Crisis in North Korea: Women’s Changing Status</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hegemonic Masculinity and the Status of North Korean Women</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frame Analysis</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Media Description and Politics</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER III RESEARCH QUESTIONS</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER IV METHOD</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER V RESULTS</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Common Frames between Western and South Korean Newspapers</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Absolute Antagonism toward North Korea</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Korea: a Powerless and Ineffective Stakeholder</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Untouchable China: the Unidentified Cause of the Trafficking</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christians Involved with the United States</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Differences between Western and South Korean Newspapers</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Differences between U.S. and British Newspapers</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Trafficking women for sexual abuse has been a serious concern worldwide, especially for the last two decades (Malarek, 2003). The United Nations reported that the human trafficking industry generated $7 to $10 billion globally every year, but the International Labour Organization (ILO) estimated the illicit profits of human trafficking as $32 billion (Feingold, 2005, p. 28). According to a comprehensive research by ILO, Asia alone had 9.5 million victims of involuntary trafficking (Feingold, 2005, p. 26).

The United States Department of State Trafficking in Persons Report 2007 said that approximately 800,000 women and children were illegally traded in proximity to the national borders each year (Kim et al., 2009, p. 155). Not every case of human trafficking is for the purpose of sexual exploitation, but it is the most common motive for human trafficking (Kangaspunta, 2003).

Trafficking of women is not only a serious violation of human rights but is also often executed by organized crime connected to domestic and international crime syndicates (Fischer, 2004). In response to the rising concern, many journalists have written news stories about victims of human trafficking. This issue also has caught the attention of the United Nations (UN), which has led to research about trafficking and anti-trafficking through the annual reports on human trafficking by focusing on women and children (Kim et al., 2009, p. 155). However, the international media community has scarcely focused on North Korean defectors and North Korean women victims of human trafficking, although some studies and the Human Rights
Watch show that the number of victims has already reached a “serious” level (Charny, 2005; Human Rights Watch, 2005).

The North Korean famine that occurred between 1995 and 1998 killed more than two million North Koreans (Davis, 2006). A great number of North Koreans started to flee their country to escape from starvation, and due to the famine, more than two million North Koreans “illegally” crossed borders to enter China to enhance their circumstances (Davis, 2006). Park (2011) wrote, “Nearly 80% of all North Korean refugees are women, and their numbers have grown dramatically over the years” (p. 166). Among those women migrants, about 80% to 90% of them were abducted by traffickers at the border between North Korea and China (Davis, 2006). These Korean-Chinese traffickers, who had observed the vulnerability of North Korean women refugees, started to make a profit by exploiting the refugees’ condition (Kim et al., 2009).

Trafficking of women at the border between China and North Korea was not done by organized crime until 1996. The majority of individual traffickers were descendants of Korean immigrants. Individual Korean-Chinese traffickers waited for defecting North Korean women to snatch them, while hiding themselves in the bushes. The traffickers either offered forced marriage or sold the snatched North Korean women to sex industry (Kim et al., 2009). After 1996, these individuals began to organize networks with criminal groups for trafficking. Inside North Korea, the North Korean brokers, mostly men, recruited or kidnapped North Korean women and sent the women to the North Korean–Chinese border (Kim et al., 2009). These North Korean traffickers, mostly men, lived in cities and towns near the border.
According to an interview with a trafficking victim, security officers and border guards are able to identify the traffickers and make them pay bribes (Kim et al., 2009). As soon as the women defectors arrive in China from North Korea by crossing the border, Korean-Chinese traffickers sell them to the cooperative felony groups of Han Chinese (Kim et al., 2009). These criminal organizations take the victims to remote inner lands of China and sell them to sex-related businesses, such as brothels, karaoke, and bars, or to Chinese men who want to buy brides (Kim et al., 2009, p. 160). A North Korean victim said, “If you are a North Korean woman crossing the border, it’s almost impossible to survive without being abused or sold” (Davis, 2006, p. 131).

The news media, specifically print media, serve as valuable sources of information and powerful modes of communication (Savolainen & Kari, 2004). This power controls much of what people understand of events that occur around the world on a daily basis. Through various forms of communication, information is framed and transferred to its recipients. In social theory, a “frame” consists of a schema of interpretation, a collection of anecdotes, and a variety of stereotypes that individuals rely on to understand and respond to events (Cissel, 2012). In mass communication theory, framing defines how news media coverage can shape mass opinion by using these specific devices to help guide their readers to understanding (Cissel, 2012).

Currently, China does not consider North Korean escapees as refugees, arguing that they are not political migrants but financial migrants (Davis, 2006, p. 135). Therefore, without providing any chance to defect further to countries not allied with North Korea, the Chinese government has deported North Korean defectors, resulting in severe punishment or death.
The North Korean regime has never admitted the exodus of North Koreans because of starvation. Further, it denies the existence of the trafficking issue by claiming that “human trafficking is not allowed on any account institutionally and legally [in our country] and such a thing does not exist” (Davis, 2006, p. 135). However, major political and economic policy changes of the North Korean government have increased the number of North Korean women migrants, subsequently increasing the number of the human-trafficking victims.

Purpose of this Study

While issuing the annual reports on human trafficking, the U.N. and international human rights organizations, including Human Rights Watch, have demonstrated concern about the North Korean women defectors and victims of human trafficking. Due to the scarcity of empirical research, the social, criminal, and economic context of the human trafficking is not completely understood. To comprehend this burgeoning social problem of North Korea, the diverse aspects of the issue must be described with its whole complication (Jahic & Finckenauer, 2005).

This study is in response to the need for an empirical study on North Korean women as victims of human trafficking. It is an exploratory study focused on discovering and explaining the situations of the trafficking victims of North Korean women by implementing qualitative methods. The purpose of this study is as follows: 1) to discover and to explain how politics affect the coverage of the issue among international newspapers; 2) to discover and to explain how gender influences the issue; 3) to discover differences and characteristics of news coverage of three nations (South Korea, the United States, and Great Britain) in describing the
issue; 4) to shed light on an important human rights issue that failed to be focused by politicians and journalists; 5) to shed light on the issue as an international crime problem as well as a social problem; and 6) to discover the significance of framing the issue in news media.

Another goal of this study is to understand ways in which human rights organizations can assist the current victims and prevent future victims. Currently, the most plausible way to mitigate the number of the victims and serious human-rights abuses involving North Koreans is to increase constraints on North Korea and China. Thus, how international news media report and describe the victims’ grave situation can play a significant role in attracting actions of the international community.
Despite the abundance of research on human trafficking, an all-inclusive definition has not yet been established. Currently, researchers and activists use the *Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, Supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime* (United Nations Office of Drugs and Crime, 2004). The Protocol defines human trafficking as follows:

(a) ‘Trafficking in persons’ shall mean the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation shall include, at a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs.

(b) The consent of a victim of trafficking in persons to the intended exploitation set forth in subparagraph (a) of this article shall be irrelevant where any of the means set forth in subparagraph (a) have been used.

(c) The recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of a child for the purpose of exploitation shall be considered ‘trafficking in persons’ even if this does not involve any of the means set forth in subparagraph (a) of this article.

(d) ‘Child’ shall mean any person under eighteen years of age. (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2004)

According to this definition, people who agree to join this trade even because of circumstantial reasons may be considered illegal workers, not victims. As Marchionni (2012, p. 149) argues, the definition implies those who pursue this trade can be arrested and prosecuted.
as illegal workers by crime enforcement agencies. Others have pointed out that this process may lead to hiring and acquiring people with the intention of abuse (Pajnik, 2010, p. 47).

Moreover there are cases where women are abducted and transferred to other countries involuntarily and are subsequently exploited in the sex industry. In other cases, women struggling to feed themselves and their families often consent to be smuggled across borders. With this voluntary defection, trafficking is frequently separated from prostitution because voluntary recruitment (prostitution) is different from forced enslavement (trafficking).

Researchers thus indicate that the definition does not sufficiently identify all aspects of human trafficking due to its narrow scope (Kelly, 2002; Kelly, 2005; Freedman, 2003). For instance, Pajnik (2010) affirmed, “A narrow definition of trafficking . . . contrast[s] . . . with human smuggling as well as with ‘illegal’ migration [on grounds] . . . that force is used in trafficking, whereas a person consents to being smuggled into a country” (p. 47).

Pajnik (2010) as well as others (Doezema, 2000; Agustín, 2006) have pointed out that the narrow definition does not offer a comprehensive understanding about the situation of women’s immigration and work. It would therefore, be more precise to deal with trafficking and migrant actions together as a steady transformation (Anderson & Davidson, 2003).

Advocates of a broader definition of trafficking insist that failing to identify the unlawful immigrants as trafficking victims and who work in the sex industry causes a high level of anxiety and powerlessness for immigrant women who live and work in an oppressed environment (Pajnik, 2010, p. 48).

However, a narrow approach to trafficking excludes critical issues related to those who are not involved in the sex industry, such as coerced marriages through selling and various
types of labor trafficking, including farm and domestic work, which are abusive but non-sexual labor (Pajnik, 2010, p. 48). Additionally, Freedman (2003) observes that a narrow definition of trafficking may also fail to comprehend the different types of distress among women who experience the physical exploitation from sex trafficking and other jobs that push them to cross borders (pp. 119 & 121).

The above perspective has gained some social attention, triggering legal regulations for a specific type of labor trafficking (Pajnik, 2010, p. 48). For instance, The Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings, 2005, provides a particularized gender sensitive and human rights-oriented approach, while the U.N. approaches are general and focused primarily on settling legal affairs (Pajnik, 2010, p. 49). Therefore, a comprehensive observation is needed for all “trafficking-like practices” (Kelly, 2005, p. 238).

Scholars (Hughes, 2000; Farley, 2004; Jeffreys, 2006) have presented different opinions about the broader definition of trafficking. “Attempts to broaden the term, to think of trafficking together with prostitution and/or migration, downplay the harsh realities of exploitation and violence” (Pajnik, 2010, p. 49). In other words, the argument suggests that not separating the victimization framing from those migrant women ignores not only abusive labor circumstances but also the grave felony acts because the institution-centered view deals with trafficking and prostitution as a business.

A definition of human trafficking as criminal act executed for the intention of sexual exploitation may be too narrow of a definition. Violence against women is the most significant issue among the proponents of this perspective. They describe trafficking and prostitution as
essentially detrimental action through gendered ensnarement and sexual abuse (Hughes, 2000; Jeffreys, 2006), which has become a serious problem (Anderson & Davison, 2003).

Moreover, legal terms, such as “victim” or “criminal,” are problematic in understanding sociological perceptions of victims. The United States has criminalized every type of forced subjugation since the Thirteenth Amendment revised it. Thus, it is illegal to capture people for labor by using any form of threats or compulsive force penalized custody because the translation of U.S. Supreme Court regarding forced subjection does not include subjugation caused by mental oppression, as specified in *U.S. v. Kozminski* (Marchionni, 2012, p. 149). Thus, the amendment and authorized enactments restricted the use of trafficking in challenging lots of related issues (*Harvard Law Review*, 2006).

The issue of human trafficking attracted media attention during the 1990s in the United States when officials discovered about 70 Thailanders who were smuggled into California and were enslaved for seven years under surveillance (Potts, 2003). In 1998, President Clinton ordered a mandate that clarified the establishments of the administration’s present strategy: arraignment, guidance, and precaution (*Harvard Law Review*, 2006). In 2000, the Senate legislated TVPA (Trafficking Victims Protection Act), which includes psychological exploitation in the term “coercion.” The act also mandated the State Department to publish an annual report to Congress every year, which specifies anti-trafficking endeavors of the United States as well as other nations and is titled *Trafficking Victims Protection Act: Minimum Standards for the Elimination of Trafficking in Persons*. The countries that disagree with the acts encounter U.S. sanctions. The sanctions are decided by a three-tier rating program (Marchionni, 2012, p. 150).
Tier 1 countries regarded as accordingly in observation follow the minimum level of standards for the elimination of human trafficking. Tier 2 includes the countries that do not entirely comply with the minimum standards of anti-trafficking regulations in spite of substantial efforts. Lastly, Tier 3 includes nations which do not make even the minimum anti-trafficking efforts. The most recent report presents that 30, 130, and 14 nations were placed in Tiers 1, 2, and 3, respectively (Okech et al., 2012, p. 490). In this report, the United States, Great Britain, and South Korea placed in Tier 1, and North Korea placed in Tier 3. China ranked in Tier 2 Watch List, which explains as follows:

a) The absolute number of victims of severe forms of trafficking is very significant or is significantly increasing.
b) There is a failure to provide evidence of increasing efforts to combat severe forms of trafficking in persons from the previous year or
c) The determination that a country is making significant efforts to bring itself into compliance with minimum standards was based on commitments by the country to take additional future steps over the next year. (U.S. Department of State, 2012)

Socio-economic upheavals, wars, and natural disasters force people to search for work away from their hometown or to leave their countries to survive (Sigmom, 2008). Globalization also increased trafficking of people because more and more people started to find jobs internationally by putting themselves in troubling situations (Jones et al., 2007). Thus, people from impoverished nations get the most chances of being trafficked, and the growing number of immigrants from the nations causes traffickers to easily target them for brutality and compulsion (Davis, 2007; Joshi, 2002). Bribed government officials and scrupulous criminal organizations have helped each other to get the most out of the victims (Jones et al., 2007), which generated $32 billion of global profits each year (Feingold, 2005, p. 28).
Societies that promote gender inequality have increased the number of human trafficking victims. As Sen (1990) warned the international society in *More than 100 Million Women are Missing*, some Asian nations, particularly China and India, have already had a serious problem to find marriageable women. For example, approximately one million Chinese men have difficulties finding a wife because of the deficiency of eligible women since 2010 (Attane, 2006), and the number expects to reach more than 40 million by 2020 (Davis, 2006). For example, Yeonbyeon, a rural province of the Northeastern area in China, showed the male-female ratio of 14 to 1, which caused wife trafficking and bride trade in the region (Chung, 2003).

China has discriminated against women and promoted demographic discrepancy by reinstating the traditional hierarchy. China and other Asian countries, including India, Taiwan, and South Korea, have kept strong patriarchal values and had a son-preferred tradition that caused gender-selective abortion, mistreatment of women, and wife trafficking (Attane, 2006).

According to USAID (United States Aid for International Development), domestic violence based on gender inequality commercializes women and creates mental trauma in them, which makes it possible to easily subjugate the victims (USAID, 2006). Orphans and women with disabilities have become the victims of traffickers as well (Hughes, 2004). Sexual abuse of women and children attracted international attention to the issue of human trafficking. The initiative legislation regarding human trafficking was the 1949 U.N. Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Persons and the Exploitation of Prostitution of Others. The proposal decreed that human trafficking done for the purpose of prostitution breached the dignity and value of a human being (United Nations, 2002). In 2000, this proposal was
substituted for the *U.N.’s Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children* (UNODC, 2006).

Annually the U.S. government has published *Trafficking in Persons (TIP) Report*, which has the three-tier ranking system depends on each country’s efforts against human trafficking.

Background on North Korean Defectors and Human Trafficking against North Korean Women

The sudden collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 caused a steep reduction of aid from the Soviets, and North Korea had no choice but to accommodate the demand from the public because North Korea hardly maintained its economy without the Soviets’ help. Thus, North Korea faced a serious economic transformation (Haggard & Noland, 2010, p. 543).

In addition, during the mid-1990s, a famine in North Korea killed approximately four million people, which was about 3% to 5% of the population at that time. The state was unable to provide institutional obligations, such as supplying minimum food and daily necessities, which were especially needed under the extreme condition resulting from the famine (Lee, 2002; Noland, 2006).

Diminished arable land due to natural conditions, such as floods, droughts, and brief growing seasons, turned the agricultural production into a heavily input-weighted process that relied on the heavy use of chemical fertilizers and irrigation run by immense use of electricity, both of which required imported petroleum (Noland, 2006). The North Korean government adopted a centrally-planned economy, including agriculture, and banned personal exchange of agricultural products (Noland, 2006).

In 1990, the regime forced North Koreans to reduce individual food consumption through a campaign with a slogan of “Let’s eat two meals a day.” The campaign reduced
individual food allotments distributed by the public distribution system (PDS), which used to provide almost two-thirds of North Korea’s food demand (Noland, 2006). Research shows that mortality rates had rapidly risen in 1994 (Noland, 2006).

In 1995, the North Korean officials eventually asked for outside help. Aid arrived promptly first from Japan, South Korea, and finally the United Nations. Summer floods in 1995 and 1996 were a plausible excuse that the North Korean leadership used to attribute the deaths from the famine to natural disasters, which, as a matter of fact, contributed little to the famine (Noland et al., 2001; Smith & Huang, 2003). Despite the generous and immediate international assistance, the North Korean government interrupted the important process of the work of the relief organizations by not granting them access to the worst regions of famine (Noland, 2006). The government used humanitarian assistance for payments and stopped commercial imports, and this action substantially affected the famine because the government did not store the minimum amount of food nor call on outside help in time (Noland, 2006).

The public distribution system (PDS) could not meet the minimum needs since 1995, and it had already stopped the operation in the early 1990s in some regions (Noland, 2006, p. 202). Thus, the broken food system forced households, companies, and government organizations to engage in various legal and illegal trading activities to increase chances of survival.

The regime somewhat tolerated illegal trading activities and authorized the informal market, such as traditional farmers markets. These informal markets expanded from food to household items, and these crisis-driven conversions decentralized the North Korean industrial economy, especially through the local officials and managers (Noland, 2006, p. 203).
In the markets, people sell Chinese goods at uncontrolled prices, and to obtain Chinese goods many traders had to leave North Korea without official permission of the officials, which is criminal act in North Korea (Noland, 2000; Natsios, 2002; Hawk, 2003). The size of the unauthorized economy filled in almost 25% of the official market in North Korea by 1994 (Michell, 1998). In 2002, the officials sanctioned the markets, and this accelerated participation in small-scale bartering. The market has functioned as the major nationwide system for obtaining food for common people (Haggard & Noland, 2010, p. 543), and North Korean women dominated in these food-securing activities in the markets (Noland, 2006, p. 203).

In 1998, the regime executed “military priority,” to feed soldiers first, which made the urban underprivileged class, who consumed around 80% of income for food, suffer from starvation. Employees of state-owned enterprises, who used to enjoy privileges, became penniless (Noland, 2006). Ironically, the politically discriminated ethnic minorities happened to be in an advantageous situation because of their abilities to access outside North Korea for resources and exchange opportunities, which made them rich (Noland, 2006, p. 199).

On one hand, international aid reinforced the regime by making the PDS become an aided food distributor. On the other hand, the aid also strengthened the growth of trading outlets. Most importantly, the severe interference of the regime has altered intended beneficiaries of the food received from relief organizations, which resulted in feeding only 3% to 15% of the population of the North Korea because of selective provisions.

Unauthorized supplies such as farm products, misappropriation of international aid, and illegal trade with Chinese accelerated the modification of the economic infrastructure inside North Korea. Military and police have played an important role to make this happen because
they have primary access to harvests and control human power, fuels, weapons, and transportations. They are also deeply involved in the loaning business (Noland, 2006, p. 208).

In July 2002, under the breakdown of the PDS, the government initiated large-scale policy changes (Haggard & Noland, 2010, p. 544). However, the beneficiaries of the policy reform were mainly military soldiers, who were given an abnormal wage raise. The reform was partly designed to eliminate black market activity, but it actually fostered it: The reform triggered a subsidence of currency, which intensified a gap between the people who had ability to deal with foreign exchange and those who did not. This also created a new class of urban poor who did not have access to foreign exchange (Noland, 2006, p. 208).

In August 2005, the regime tried to reverse this trend of “marketization from below” by recovering the PDS and prohibited personal trade of grain (Haggard & Noland, 2010 b, p. 545). The floods in 2006 and 2007 forced the government to practice the policies, including an increase of production quotas in grain and a crackdown on deceit and robbery. Haggard and Noland (2010) reported, “Through a reconstruction of aggregate food balances, an analysis of prices, and direct observation by nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and U.N. WFP (the United Nations World Food Program) observers, we now know that the food situation in North Korea was more precarious in 2008 than at any time since the famine” (Haggard & Noland, 2009, p. 393).

On November 30, 2009, the regime initiated a sudden impounding currency reform, which mandated people in North Korea to trade regulated amounts of their money for newly made banknotes. The reform was designed to break down the market to reinstate the central government’s control. However, it caused panic spending, and the price of rice and corn rose
by 6,000% to 8,000% and transaction costs also rose by 600% to 800% in the few months after the reform (Haggard & Noland, 2010, p. 550). The regime could not achieve the purpose of the reform because it actually drove North Koreans to the black market rather than away from it. Any reform that controls systems and people will not be successful unless the regime provides at least minimum food and daily necessities for citizens (Haggard & Noland, 2010, p. 551).

Economic Crisis in North Korea: Women’s Changing Status

In 1946, the local authorities of North Korea passed the Gender Equality Law, which not only professed equality in marriage, divorce, heritage, childcare, and aid request, but also prohibited prostitution, polygamy, and paramour (Haggard & Noland 2012). In the same year, the law on the Labor of Manual and Clerical Workers assured the same payment for the equal labor regardless of gender (Jung & Dalton, 2006). In 1958, Cabinet Decision 84 was enacted to involve more women in education and occupation. Social support mechanisms, such as nurseries and other household assistance, systematically reduced traditional women’s work. Haggard and Noland (2012) wrote, “The 1972 Constitution guaranteed equality, and subsequent legislation such as the Socialist Labor Law (1978), and the Infant Education Law (1976) elucidated legal guarantees with respect to maternity and childbirth” (p. 52). As a result, women could participate in the labor force contributing as farmers, teachers, and light industry laborers (Park, 2011). Despite this, women in North Korea could not achieve the same degree of economic status as men (Park, 2011).

The North Korean regime has undertaken a major economic transformation since the late 1980s. Throughout the economic transition, North Korean women have undergone
substantial changes, especially since the fall of the PDS (Haggard & Noland, 2012, p. 51). A large number of married women were dropped from state-owned enterprises (SOE) because of the conventional concept that women are not breadwinners. They were the first to be laid off and became coercively engaged in the small-scale informal sector by either earning low income or no income (Park, 2011, p. 160). According to a report about North Korea, about 70% of married women were completely unemployed at this time (Hanguk Ilbo, 1991).

The economic crisis forced women to bear the double burden of economic and household responsibilities (Beneria & Feldman, 1992; Pitkin & Bedoya, 1997), and the reduction of welfare caused women to take on duties in health care, education, and other household matters for their families (Park, 2011). Many women had to relocate to find jobs and worked as household servants, sex workers, and manufacturers of goods to be exported (Parrenas, 2001; Pyle 2001).

The failure of the national economy promoted individual production and barter through informal markets. Farmers markets opened throughout the nation and worked as the first place for trading (Park, 2011). The regime tried to eliminate the black markets by calling them “anti-socialist activities,” but it had no choice but to agree to accept them due to the inability of the PDS (Park, 2011).

Therefore, farmers markets were sanctioned as general public markets. For example, the Tongil Market in Pyongyang was given permission to operate as a business market in 2003. However, in 2007, the officials tried to crack down on the markets again with strict regulation of the market exchange (Park, 2011). In 2009, traders were allowed to do their business only
five hours each day with only authorized items such as farm products, excluding rice, private goods, and imported products (Park, 2011, p.164).

Despite the eradication, the number of markets was increased. In a survey of North Korean defectors conducted in 2008, 51% of married women among 300 respondents answered that all their earnings came from the market trading, and some researchers roughly evaluated that money in unofficial markets is two times more than the nation’s annual budget (Haggard & Noland, 2012, p. 55).

Unemployed married women became engaged in marketing activities to feed their families (Choi, 1999). In addition to these unemployed women, several women working in government sector abandoned their work to get involved in trading activities. Though wives of party cadres were banned to participate in barter, many of them were engaged in personal exchanging activities, which easily became profitable because they were linked with the state officials (Lankov & Kim, 2008). In the same survey, 95% of women traders said that they had to bribe officials so that they would not be reported to the judging committee (Haggard & Noland, 2012).

The marketization process provided opportunities to certain privileged women to make fortunes; however, the market activities were only a means of survival for most women. Some women who seriously suffered from the famine desperately bartered illicit items, including Chinese classic goods, South Korean DVDs and videos, and natural materials. Those bootleg going activities led women traders to buy off the officials. In this way, North Korean women who led markets became the driving force of North Korea’s “marketization from below” (Park, 2011).
Hegemonic Masculinity and the Status of North Korean Women

In 1968, Kate Millett, a radical feminist theorist, wrote “a manifesto for revolution” about how patriarchy or male-dominance is supported (Donovan, 2012, p. 143).

Government is upheld by power, which is supported through consent (social opinion), or imposed by violence. Conditioning to an ideology amounts to the former. But there may be a resort to the latter at any moment when consent is withdrawn—rape, attack, sequestration, beatings, murder. Sexual politics obtains consent through the ‘socialization’ of both sexes to patriarchal policies. (Millett, 1970, p. 111)

Millett’s theory is highly reflective of Antonio Gramsci’s theory of hegemony, which is about obtaining and maintaining domination of ruling classes and claims that societies sustain their order not only by force but also by ideological consent. Millett argues that patriarchal ideology justifies male superiority by making women show and adopt male-obedience behaviors (Donovan, 2012). She also said, “This ideology permeates every aspect of culture and touches every aspect of our lives—even the most personal” (Donovan, 2012, p. 143).

Male supremacy over female is the core concept of hegemonic masculinity. Donaldson (1993) wrote, “A fundamental element of hegemonic masculinity, then, is that women exist as potential sexual objects for men while men are negated as sexual objects for men” (p. 644). Many gender study scholars, as Donaldson suggests, insisted that hegemonic masculinity is both an individual and a group activity and viewed it as “exclusive, anxiety-provoking, internally and hierarchically differentiated, brutal, and violent” (Donaldson, 1993, p. 645).

As a cultural ideal, the social aspect of hegemonic masculinity is what maintains male-supremacy and is what many men are persuaded to advocate it because it is advantageous to them (Donaldson, 1993, p. 646). Connell (1983) wrote, “Hegemonic masculinity is naturalized in the form of the hero and presented through forms that revolve around heroes: sagas, ballads,
westerns, thrillers” (p. 185). These cultural mediators stabilize a system of superiority and suppression in the gender hierarchy (Connell, 1993, p. 83).

The strong charismatic male leadership is the core characteristic of the North Korean society. The first and founding leader of North Korea, Kim Il-sung, led and controlled the society for about a half-century. He is the most honorable and prestigious national hero in North Korea and even created the national ideology, Juche (self-reliance). Kim Il-sung is called the benevolent “Fatherly Leader,” or the Great Leader, and the North Korean constitution identified him as the nation’s Eternal President. His birthday, called the Day of the Sun, is the most important and greatest national holiday of North Korea. After his death in 1994, his eldest son, Kim Jong-il, succeeded the regime, and when he died in 2011, Kim Jong-un, the youngest son of Kim Jong-il, took over the regime as the same symbolic position and official titles with his father and grandfather.

Gramsci calls journalists, politicians, advertisers, musicians, actors, and academics as “organizing intellectuals” of the dominant ideology because they become the “weavers of the fabric of hegemony” (Donaldson, 1993, p. 646). Donaldson (1993) considered them as the most powerful agents to propagate hegemonic masculinity because they “regulate and manage gender regimes: articulate experiences, fantasies, and perspectives; reflect on and interpret gender relations” (Connell, 1983; Donaldson, 1993, p. 646).

The North Korean government strictly controls all information inside the state as well as produces information when needed. Although the number of mobile phone users has rapidly increased—about one million users out of 24 million inhabitants estimated by early 2012 (Reporters Without Borders, 2012a), the users were under strict surveillance by the regime, and
according to Reporters Without Borders (2012b), North Korea has continuously ranked at the bottom of its annual Press Freedom Index from its first issue in 2002. The Korean Central News Agency, the state-run news agency, is the only source of information for entire media channels in North Korea (Ford & Kwon, 2008). In addition to media, the North Korean government and the Korean Worker’s Party (KWP) control culture and art through its Propaganda and Agitation Department as well as the Culture and Arts Department of the KWP’s Central Committee.

The North Korean regime is a totalitarian dictatorship inspired by Stalin. Ehrlich (1981) criticized the suppression of women in oppressed socialist nations and insisted that the questions as the following must be asked:

Why are there so few women in decision making positions in social states? Who does the house work? Why are lesbianism and male homosexuality suppressed? . . . Are women equally represented in all occupations? . . . How secure is the woman’s freedom of choice in matters of sexuality and reproduction? . . . Who decides these matters—the woman, or the mostly male leadership? . . . In sum, if patriarchy still exists in socialist countries, why? (p. 230)

Though North Korea had reformed and sanctioned domestic laws to support a socialist society, Ehrlich’s questions remain unsolved in the North Korean society. In 1945, several local governments of North Korea put an end to the historical hierarchical family official listing system. Equivalent pay for equivalent labor was warranted by the 1946 Statute on the Labor of Manual and Clerical Workers (Jung & Dalton, 2006). The Toddler Schooling Law (1976) and the Socialist Labor Law (1978) were prescribed, followed by legislation of the 1972 Constitution, which warranted gender equality (Noland, 2012).

Kim Il-sung declared that technologies, electric home appliances, and processed foods would give freedom to North Korean women (Noland, 2012, p. 52), which specified in the 1972 Constitution (Ryang, 2000; Shin, 2001). However, like many other oppressed socialist nations,
North Korean women still had to take the responsibilities of what they used to have. Park (2011) said, “In the authoritarian culture so prevalent in North Korea, the concept of equality was alien to both men and women” (p. 160).

When the economy of North Korea started to fluctuate during the mid-1980s, married women were the first ones who left behind in the work force, and in some provision, the responsibility of housewives became the major, ordinary roles (Jung & Dalton, 2006). Moreover, as the economy deteriorated throughout the 1990s, the government eliminated from the 1972 Constitution a sentence that stipulated that the nation “shall liberate women from the heavy family chores” (Park, 2011).

Jung and Dalton (2006) insist that for more than a half century, the cult of Kim Il-sung and Kim Jong-il, who died in December 2011, had dominated North Korea with powerful patriarchal components stretching out the entire state by emulating conventional or Confucian family formation. Further, in traditional Marxism, the term of “woman” was interpreted to be the “mother” or “mother-labor,” which had little focus on other aspects of gender. For instance, though the North Korean government made all sorts of laws regarding reproduction, laws on sexual brutality and intimidation have never existed (Jung & Dalton, 2006).

Hegemonic masculinity also helps explain the relationship between masculinity and diverse crimes and why men commit more traditional and severe crimes than women (Messerschmidt, 1993). The theory was also adopted in case studies of male crimes, for example murder in Australia, rape in Switzerland, and aggressive violence in the United States (Newburn & Stanko, 1994).
Economic recession and side effects of political reform have made North Koreans escape their country primarily for China, and more than 20,000 have settled in South Korea from the exodus. Most of them are women, and currently, the refugee problem regarding gender is rigorously reported (Amnesty International, 2004).

Inside North Korea, many women experienced marriage failures because of their frequent migration from home to feed their families by bartering at faraway venues in the country. In the late 1990s, many husbands and wives were forced to separate because of the famine. In a survey, over 85% of North Korean refugees in China said that they lost their family members due to the famine (Joeun Butdul, 2000, pp. 32-33). It also created higher divorce rates because desperate married women became sex workers to survive inside and outside North Korea (Park, 2011). This family collapse elevated teenage trafficking among those who could not be fed by their parents (Park, 2011).

Furthermore, economic difficulties have raised domestic violence against women, and many women defectors said that they escaped their country only to avoid physical, mental, and verbal violence from their husbands (Citizen’s Alliance for North Korean Human Rights, 2005; KINU, 2003). Trafficked women from North Korea show some outstanding differences from trafficking victims in other countries (Kootstra, 1999; Vocak & Nijboer, 2000; Silverman et al., 2007). The relatively unique differences of the North Korean trafficking victims when compared to those in other countries are as follows:

- The age range of the North Korean women victims were much wider, which includes women between in the late teens and in the 60s, while the age ranges of other cases are between the late teens and the early 20s (Kim et al., 2009).

- Many victims were married and had children, which was a rare case for victims in other countries (Kootstra, 1999; Vocak & Nijboer, 2000; Silverman et al., 2007).
Most of the victims never experienced prostitution before.

The victims’ education level was higher than those of other countries (Kootstra, 1999; Vocak & Nijboer, 2000; Silverman et al., 2007). Most North Korean victims graduated from high school or college.

Most victims were employed and had stable careers, such as instructors, engineers, office employees, manufacturing workers, and farm workers. However, they never received payment for a long time for their labor. Thus, they had to find a way to survive by any means possible. In an interview with a North Korean victim in 2008, she said that she was dispatched to a footwear-manufacturing factory after finishing high school. She couldn’t receive any compensation except a bowl of corn-soup for lunch though she worked from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. during weekdays for about a year. In fact, the workers of the factory had never been paid since 1998 (Kim et al., 2009).

In another interview, another victim said that her father is a doctor and a member of the party, which secures an upper-middle-class lifestyle, and she was a teacher upon graduation from college. However, in the late 1990s, her father couldn’t get paid due to the economic crisis. Her family was dying for hunger, so they crossed the border to earn money (Kim et al., 2009).

In addition to the famine, several aspects (i.e., desperate food shortage and unpaid labor) contributed to the exodus and victimization of North Korean women, which caused them to rely on personal capability for survival (Park, 2011). For example, human-rights abuses have become frequent and prevalent (Park, 2011). Sexual harassment in workplaces used to be the major type of violence against women in North Korea. Despite the decrease of this kind of sexual harassment, a different type of sexual harassment, so-called “chance assault,” emerged.
North Korean security officials demand sexual favors by taking advantage of the women’s vulnerable situation while investigating their minor violation against law (KINU, 2007, p.231). Prostitution also became one of survival strategies for North Korean women, especially for female college students (Park, 2011).

Another domestic cause of the increased number of emigrants is the decreasing number of marriageable North Korean men. North Korean men are mandated to serve in the military for ten years, which often results in death or injury due to accidents, abuse, and especially malnutrition. This results in an insufficiency of marriage-eligible men in North Korea, creating a skewed ratio between men and women (Park, 2011). Many North Korean men also died from labor-related incidents in extreme conditions such as coastal areas in Russia (Lintner, 2007). Eventually, inside North Korea, women can hardly find a marriage-eligible “good man” (Kim et al., 2009, p. 161).

In addition to these economical and domestic circumstances in North Korea, the high demand in China for wives, sex-slaves, and sex-industry workers accelerated the trafficking of North Korean women. A report specified that the trafficked women comprised approximately 30% to 90% of marriages in a rural town in China (Coomaraswamy, 2003). Buying trafficked women is less expensive choice for Chinese men, especially for the disabled, uneducated, and poor (Kim et al., 2009). The trafficked women also met the demand of the booming sex-related industry in increasing big cities in China, which hardly satisfied with the number of local Chinese women for the sex-related business (Kim et al., 2009).
Frame Analysis

Framing analysis sees news texts as a composition of systematized emblematic instruments that communicate to individuals’ memory to build meaning (Zhongdang & Kosicki, 1993). It differs from other approaches, such as agenda-setting and priming to news texts, which regard news texts as psychological stimulus with objectively identifiable implications (Livingstone, 1990). Next, framing analysis admits the structural formation of text and the diverse perception of news texts that enable empirical shortcuts in news creation and digestion (Van Dijk, 1988).

Further, framing analysis keeps the organized steps of collecting information from news texts to identify important components that are probably consumed by individuals. However, researchers’ intelligent interpretation of news texts does not establish the validity of framing analysis (Anderson & Sharrock, 1979). At last, framing analysis does not accept the idea that frames in news texts can solely exist without considering audiences of the texts (Zhongdang & Kosicki, 1993). Kinder and Sanders (1990) postulated that frames work for not only “devices embedded in political discourse” but also “internal structures of the mind” (p. 74). The former is equal to the idea of media frames, and the latter can be translated in individual frame. These schemes were also explained with demonstrating and understanding of news (Scheufele, 1999).

Gitlin (1980) and Entman (1991) further adopted political perspective to define frames. Gitlin (1980) described frames as “largely unspoken and unacknowledged, [which] organize[s] the world both for journalists who report it and, in some important degree, for us who rely on their reports” (p. 7). With related perspective, Entman (1991) explained audience frames as
personal “information-processing schemata” and media frames as “attributes of the news itself” (p. 7). Friedland and Zhong (1996) encapsulated those concepts that frames work for “the bridge between . . . larger social and cultural realms and everyday understandings of social interaction” (p. 13). Thus, in elucidating frames, researchers should take into consideration both media frames and audience frames (Scheufele, 1999).

Gamson and Modigliani (1987) described a media frame as “a central organizing idea or story line that provides meaning to an unfolding strip of events. . . . [It] suggests what the controversy is about, the essence of the issue” (p. 143). With a similar view, Tuchman (1978) defined media frames as “The news frame organizes everyday reality and the news frame is part and parcel of everyday reality. . . . It is an essential feature of news” (p. 193). Further, media frames work for occupational routines for writers and journalists to rapidly capture and categorize stories and information and “to package it for efficient relay to their audiences” (Gitlin, 1980, p. 7).

Entman (1993) provided a further clarification about the way media offer audiences schemas to describe events and explained that core components of framing consist of choice and significance. He wrote, “Framing essentially involves selection and salience. To frame is to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, casual interpretation, moral evaluation, and or treatment recommendation for the item described” (Entman, 1993, p. 52).

Entman (1993) said that media text includes frames, which are clarified by the existence or omission of particular “key words, stock phrases, stereotyped images, sources of information, and sentences that provide thematically reinforcing clusters of facts or judgments” (p. 52). He
also argued that the main duty of decoding a textual message is to clarify and depict frames (Entman, 1993).

Journalists observe the rules of “objectivity” (Entman, 1993, p. 56). They also deliver a major framing of the news texts that keep most readers from objectively evaluating a case because of lacking a general grasp about the concept of framing (Entman, 1993). Framing also highlights a certain side of reality while hiding other aspects. Thus, it plays a significant role especially in political news because policymakers challenge other politicians as well as journalists to ask support (Entman, 1989; Riker, 1986). In this context, Entman (1993) said, “The frame in a news text is really the imprint of power” (p. 55).

By agreeing with Entman, Zaller (1992) further explained that framing occupied the primary power in the democratic practice because dominant policymakers supervise how important political and social issues are framed by journalists. Gulati (2010) indicated that the news media choose the portion of background, certain facts and translations, and particular sources to adopt and quote in news stories. These judgments have a significant power on how a social issue is argued and the actions taken by politicians (p. 367).

Media Description and Politics

Researchers found that the news media would rather reflect the stories provided by the key players of the policy practice (i.e., officials in the U.S. and Chinese government) to support dominant perspectives than expose the circumstances of the conflict (Gulati, 2011; Kingdon, 2002). Common practices of news organizations, such as beat reporting and dependence on
governmental sources, restrict views and information that possibly might be added in the coverage (Gans, 2005; Klinenberg, 2003; Tuchman, 1978).

Further, different or opposite views that do not comply with traditional news formats are generally excluded, as a person or groups seem to have thoughts that may weaken the legitimacy of founded organizations or stand against to the ruling ideology and middle-class ethics (Larson 2006). Alternative opinions are reported only when conflicts exist among major policymakers, especially when the disagreements are expressed by the voice of members of Congress, policymakers in the execution level, or professionals adjacent to the policy procedure (Althaus, 2003; Bennett, 1991; Bennett et al., 2006; Mermin, 1999).

Additionally, press releases also exert great influence over public opinion. For instance, Turk (1986) discovered that state government public information officials in Louisiana increased the importance of those state governments in the media via media releases, which also happened in an international environment (Turk & Franklin, 1987). In this manner, less democratized governments interrupt directly and constantly influence the media through the dominant policies as well as by possession of the press (Pajnik, 2010, p. 50). For example, regarding Slovenian media, which moved from the state ownership of the media in the 1990s, Pagnik (2010) wrote, “Despite the re-regulation of the media systems in most countries in the region, then, there has been only limited success in establishing a truly democratic system” (p. 50).

Dinan and Miller (2007) claimed that when big business is intimidated, for example, “spin doctors” appear to manoeuver the public with the media, which ultimately result in damaging democracy. Herman and Chomsky (2002) contend that political economic aspects
affect subjects and problems of major press that judge the value of observation, restricting the threshold of public debate.

In the explanation of “propaganda model,” Herman and Chomsky (2002) claimed that the media propagandize and work for the high-powered business associates, including advertisers, which control them with money. In U.S. media, what is newsworthy is primarily defined not by the journalists or the public but by the investors and the advertisers. In other words, the media are forced and formed in what they do by the power elite and gigantic conglomerate, which keep hegemony in U.S. society.

In Hegemony or Survival, Chomsky (2005) argues that the dominating elite in the U.S. society have chased an "Imperial Grand Strategy" after World War II, so that they can control international hegemony by political and economic strategies. To give strength to this value, the media have been forced to present images that support their agenda by completely ignoring democracy and human rights issues.

Herman and Chomsky (2002) also argued that the deficit in the federal budget, globalization through technology, and total privatization of media industry accelerated commercialization of media. For example, the U.S. media industry has been massively centralized for the last two decades. It was ruled by 50 big corporations in 1986. However, six huge media conglomerates—Viacom, Disney, Time Warner, CBS, News Corporation, and Comcast—control 90% of the U.S. media today (Lutz, 2012).

James Ledbetter also indicated that under continuous conservative political and financial pressure, even public broadcasting had little difference from the private-owned media. About the media programming, he said, “They share either the avoidance or the defanging of
contemporary political controversy, the kind that would bring trouble from powerful patrons” (as cited in Herman & Chomsky, 2002, p. xv).

Furthermore, Herman and Chomsky (2002) found that not only news but also editorial stance would be affected by those authoritative groups, which resulted in producing reports with substantial bias. This prejudiced coverage often focused on the victims of the enemy state to make the image of the state evil, and hence deserving of the U.S. intervention and antagonism. To explain this double standard, Herman and Chomsky (2002) said, “only political factors can explain the differences in quality of treatment of worthy and unworthy victims” (p. xx).

These political factors, particularly within the U.S., cause leaders from other countries and leading international individuals frequently blame the U.S. for its foreign policy and its repercussions for the international community. However, U.S. media have rarely featured the alternative idea that would deviate from the agreed-upon thoughts by elites, which would be considered as biased or implausible to U.S. audiences. Even domestic but legitimate sources, such as scholars and policy researchers, hardly get a chance to give a voice if the elites reached an agreement (Mermin, 1999).
CHAPTER III
RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The issue of human trafficking has been addressed as a desperate phenomenon, especially since 2000, among the U.S. governments, international institutions, and non-government organizations (Trafficking in Persons Report, 2012). However, researchers and activists disagree on the definition of human trafficking and how to best address the issue.

So far, academics have focused on archiving the horror of human trafficking (e.g., Bales et al., 2009; Kangaspunta, 2003; Kligman & Limoncelli, 2005; Skinner, 2009), evaluating the scope of the issue (e.g., Raymond & Hughes, 2001; Weitzer, 2007; Zhang, 2007), and explaining the origin of human trafficking and the efforts to fight it in the various nations (e.g., Friman & Reich, 2007; Gallagher, 2006; Kyle & Koslowski, 2001; Nieuwenhuys & Pécoud, 2007; Outshoorn, 2004).

A Lexis-Nexis Academic search through the world’s 50 major newspapers over five years (2002-2006) of human trafficking incidents showed several thousand stories on human trafficking. The U.S. and British newspapers, such as The Washington Post, The New York Times, The (London) Guardian, and The (London) Times, reported the most articles in the research (Marchionni, 2012, p. 154). In a content analysis of human trafficking coverage conducted on these four newspapers between 2002 and 2006, the results displayed that stories about sex trafficking were dominantly reported in these four leading international newspapers by occupying about 50% of the sample stories (Marchionni, 2012, p. 154). However, stories about forced labor, which researchers concluded as a dominant criminal act, received scarce or no attention across all the newspapers (Marchionni, 2012, p.155).
In a study that examines the descriptions of human trafficking used by U.S. newspapers, Gulati (2011) found 66 news articles in *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post* between 1980 and 1994, which makes an average of 4.4 articles each year, but during the next 5 years, the number of articles grew to 10 a year (p. 368). In 2000, reports of human trafficking appeared 56 times in *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post* combined.

The coverage continuously escalated for a few more years. For instance, between 2000 and 2006, 76 articles were published in *The Times and The Post*, which implies 15 articles written on average per year (Gulati, 2011, p. 369). The study found that *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post* rarely reported the issue of human trafficking before 2000 (Gulati, 2011, p. 369). However, in 2000, the two papers started to publish about 70 articles in total each year, and the stories appeared on important spots in the newspapers such as the front page or the op-ed pages (Gulati, 2011, p. 369).

In Gulati’s study, the examined news coverage demonstrated similar problems discovered in other studies about human trafficking involving foreign policy that reached agreement among the major policymakers (Bennett, 1991; Bennett et al., 2007). Gulati (2011) did not see any evidence that the press influenced the foreign policy agenda. However, he said, “The analyses suggest that the news agenda is influenced by the policy agenda and that the news coverage served to legitimize the consensus in Washington while marginalizing alternative perspectives” (p. 375).

The examined articles depended heavily on law enforcement officers and government personnel. The news coverage suggested that criminal organizations were the main cause of
the human-trafficking incidents and proposed expanding work forces for law enforcement as proper action by improving legal regulations and aiding victims (Gulati, 2011, p. 375).

Farrell and Fahy (2009) examined 2,462 newspaper reports that particularly wrote about human trafficking. They found that between 1990 and 2006 as a result of the various foreign policies emphasized on national security and the recognition, arrest, and summons of traffickers, public framing about the issue has been modified (Farrell & Fahy, 2009). Further, the study revealed that trafficking was framed as a security matter of the United States, especially between 2003 and 2006 (Okech et al., 2012, p. 489).

In a study of the framing of human trafficking in Slovene press between 2003 and 2005, Pajnik (2010) stated that Slovene media displayed the tapered feminist perspective because it mostly focused attention on criminal and illegal nature about the issue, neglecting a more comprehensive analysis of the issue at stake (p. 49). Berman (2003) echoed this point arguing that the media tend to generate social talks that trafficking and gendered migration are a metonym for violation and a chance for the reinforcement of borderline regulation to protect citizens (p. 39).

Pajnik (2010) also stressed, "More complex social and economic circumstances are neglected. Trafficking is framed as a global panic in mediated representations, which helps to construct a context in which the anti-trafficking paradigm is promoted as a 'natural response'" (p. 49). This media description of human trafficking, he argued, is inappropriate because immigration is necessary for some people to simply survive depending on the status of the immigrants’ nations and the transformation of the world order (Pajnik, 2010, p. 49).
According to Pajnik (2010), the media support government because it is the information provider of government policy. Media help to conceptualize “trafficking and other forms of gendered migration” as crime (Pajnik, 2010, p. 49). This resulted in “tightening border regimes, authorizing police to decide the suitability of an asylum application and keeping migrants, trafficked women among them in more than 180 detention centers in Europe” (Pajnik, 2010, p. 49). Gulati (2011) said that human trafficking has been framed in the media reports by marginalizing alternative perspectives about the issue and opposing viewpoints of the dominant policy, which justified the mainstream view of the issue and way to combat it (p. 367).

The media mainly discuss the government policy, and journalists frame news stories by reflecting the agenda of major policymakers and policymaking processes (Jones & Baumgartner, 2005; Kingdon, 2002; Jacobs & Shapiro, 2000) especially when it comes to agreements on foreign policies among the elite (Mermin, 1999). Gulati (2011) discovered in his research that the articles on human trafficking are framed to emphasize the authoritative view of the issue and ignore criticism of the dominant policy (p. 364). However, this is not always the case. As Gulati aptly pointed out, under certain circumstances the media could escape the government frame to provide diverse perspectives in their reports on foreign practice (Gulati, 2011, p. 364).

Lee and Byun (1997) researched U.S. and South Korean broadcast journalists’ perceptions about North Korea. In this study, they considered two hypotheses: firstly, both countries’ perceptions of North Korea would be predominantly negative, and secondly, little difference would be detected in the perceptions of North Korea between the two nations. The first hypothesis was accepted; however, the second was rejected.
Lee (2000) conducted another study through survey analysis. He compared the perception of U.S. newspaper editors to those of South Korean newspaper editors regarding North Korea. The results were similar as the previous Lee and Byun’s study with a larger gap for the second hypothesis (p. 390). Lee (2000) concluded that the extremely negative perception (86.8% for the U.S. editors and 64.7% for the South Korean editors) of both nations’ journalists were natural because “the two countries [the United States and South Korea] have been adversaries of North Korea since the Korean War and North Korea’s current political, social and economic situations seem to be unreasonable and unacceptable by American political, social and cultural standards” (p. 400).

In his study, Lee asked the editors from both countries to write down five to ten things that came to their mind when thinking of North Korea for a minute. Reflecting on the results of the survey, Lee questioned why more of the U.S. editors pointed out “militarism/nuclear development/military threat” (60% for the U.S. editors and 26% for the South Korean editors), despite the fact that South Korea would be the first victim of North Korea’s military aggression. Furthermore, almost every U.S. news editor indicated famine (98%) while the South Korean editors showed less interest in North Korea’s famine (48%) (Lee, 2000, p. 403). Graff (2007) observed, “If journalism repeatedly frames the wrong problem, then the folks who make public policy may very well deliver the wrong solution. Therefore, to examine how each journalist’s perceptions and attitudes are different regarding the coverage is important in doing the analysis” (p. 54).

According to the U.S. Forces Korea Command History Office, the Korean War (1950-53) ended with deaths and casualties as follows:
“Military casualties for North Korean and Chinese forces combined are estimated at 615,000 - 750,000 killed and 789,000 wounded. South Korean forces killed, 137,899; wounded 450,742 U.S. dead, 36,940, of which 33,665 were killed in action and 3,275 were non-combat deaths; wounded, 103,284. Military casualties for other UN forces: more than 3,700 killed; wounded, more than 12,500. Civilian casualties—dead and injured—on both sides have been estimated at 2.5 million” (Fisher, 2013).

The United States and South Korea had antagonistic relationships with North Korea, and hostile postwar incidents, including North Korea’s nuclear threat, reinforced their negative perspectives and the tension between them and North Korea. However, Great Britain has a slightly different relationship with North Korea. While the U.S. and South Korea have never posted an embassy in North Korea, Britain opened an embassy in Pyongyang in July 2001. Robin Cook, former British foreign secretary under Tony Blair, said, “The opening of diplomatic relations is not in any way an approval of the conduct of the regime. But it may well be helpful in resolving . . . the strong tension between it and South Korea” (Fernandes, 2000). The British government website specifies the mission of the British Embassy in Pyongyang as follows:

“The British Embassy in Pyongyang supports British interests in the DPRK. Our work concentrates on two main foreign policy areas: counter-proliferation and human rights. We support small-scale projects aimed at improving the lives of the most vulnerable in DPRK society. We also encourage people-to-people links through educational and cultural exchanges, and offer consular and visa services” (www.gov.uk).

Thus, the media coverage of the North Korean women defectors and victims of human trafficking was also examined to discover any difference in framing the news stories depending on the different political and diplomatic relationship of the United States and Great Britain with North Korea.
To examine international coverage of the victims of North Korean women, textual analysis was applied to major newspapers of the United States, Great Britain, and South Korea between 1995 and September 2013. The newspapers examined for the analysis included The New York Times, The Washington Post, Los Angeles Times, and USA Today for the U.S. newspaper. The (London) Times, The Guardian, The Independent, and The Telegraph for the British newspaper, and Chosun Ilbo was selected for the South Korean newspaper. This research seeks to answer the following questions:

- How differently did Western and South Korean newspapers frame the issue of the North Korean women defectors and victims of human trafficking?
- How differently did U.S. and British newspapers frame the issue of the North Korean women defectors and victims of human trafficking?

These research questions were answered using textual analysis, and the methodology of this study is discussed in detail in the following chapter.
CHAPTER IV

METHOD

A textual analysis of leading newspapers was conducted to examine how the coverage of the North Korean women defectors and victims of human trafficking has been framed in U.S., British, and South Korean newspapers. First of all, four U.S. and four British newspapers, which represent the West, and the primary South Korean newspaper were compared. Secondly, U.S. and British newspapers were compared to determine differences, if any, regarding the coverage of the research topic. Despite their dwindling numbers, the newspapers are important to consider because they “remain a distinct and important source of influence for citizens” (Scott, 2009, p. 535).

The articles selected for this research were published between January 1, 1995 and September 18, 2013. This period was selected because it covers the most severe famine years in North Korea (1995 and 1996), which triggered Korean women’s escape from the country. Newspapers for the three countries were chosen depending on their influence and daily circulation. Four U.S. newspapers, The New York Times, The Washington Post, Los Angeles Times, and USA Today were selected, and 47 closely relevant articles were found. For British newspapers, The (London) Times, The Guardian, The Independent, and The Telegraph were selected, and 37 news reports were carefully selected for the analyses.

While The New York Times is considered the most powerful U.S. media source among policymakers and other media institutions (Dearing & Rogers, 1996), The Washington Post is also a widely read newspaper by elites and state policymakers in the United States (Teitz 1999). The four British dailies are also major and prestigious newspapers. This study used the South
Korean newspaper *Chosun Ilbo*, founded in 1920, because it is one of the most widely read and top ranking newspapers with a circulation exceeding 1,800,000 (2010) (Seo, 2011).

All relevant articles were examined for the U.S. and British newspapers. In *Chosun Ilbo*, 273 news reports were carefully selected from 542 available articles, and they were narrowed down to 84 through systematic random sampling, in which every $n^{th}$ component, event, or topic is chosen out of a population (Wimmer & Dominick, 2013, p. 99). The number of sample for *Chosun Ilbo* became 84, to make it the same number of articles as the combined number of Western articles from the United States (47) and Great Britain (37). After comparing the two sides, the differences of coverage regarding the defectors and trafficking victims of North Korean women between the U.S. and the British newspapers were also analyzed.

To collect samples, Lexis-Nexis and Access World News databases were used for U.S. and British newspapers, and DB Chosun Ilbo, which is the news database of *Chosun Ilbo*, was used to gather samples from the *Chosun Ilbo*. To search relevant articles regarding the defectors and trafficking victims of North Korean women, the following sets of terms were used for U.S. and British newspapers: “North Korea(n)” and “human trafficking” “North Korea(n)” and “women and defector(s)” and “North Korea(n)” “woman and defector(s).” “Pukhan” and “Inshinmaeae” and “pukhanyoeseong” and “talbukja” were used for the *Chosun Ilbo*, which stand for identical meaning with the English key words that search in the Lexis-Nexis and Access World News for U.S. and British newspapers.

Samples were carefully selected under the condition that they were dealing with the stories, news, and interviews regarding the subject of the study, the North Korean women defectors and victims of human trafficking. News reports were also selected when they
provided relevant and substantive information on the research topic, though the main theme of the reports was not the North Korean women defectors and victims of human trafficking. This study excludes editorials, columns, and blogs to narrow its focus on the sample on the news coverage and avoid opinionated articles. News summaries and news reports that include less than 150 words were also eliminated because of their lack of substantive information for the analysis. The selected articles were from the newspapers that maintain a circulation of at least 200,000.

Frame analysis was adopted in analyzing the selected articles by focusing on the rhetorical structures of the news text. Rhetorical structures of news discourse explain the stylistic selections chosen by journalists regarding their expected influences (Zhongdang & Kosicki, 1993). Gamson's five framing devices—metaphors, exemplars, catchphrases, depictions, and visual images—were used for the analysis, although visual images were exempted (Gamson & Modigliani, 1989).

Journalists use rhetorical devices to create perceptions, develop the significance of a topic, and improve the reality of a news report (Zhongdang & Kosicki, 1993). Rhetorical frames of news text relate to the propensity of news to promote the condition of factuality (Van Dijk, 1988). Examining rhetorical devices is helpful for journalists who use multiple sources, in order to maximize the impact of their investigation and interpretations (Zhongdang & Kosicki, 1993). Further, among other choices for framing news, lexical choices establish a significant dimension of building news discourse (Zhongdang & Kosicki, 1993, p. 62).

The selected news reports were coded for length of the articles, recurrence of words, and descriptions about the theme of the reports by concentrating on the nature of the
coverage, particularly looking into the existence of positive or negative comments. The coverage were also examined for themes, such as gender, social status, and credibility issues with sources used in the coverage, and how the newspaper adopted these issues to frame the defectors and trafficking victims of North Korean women.

The samples for textual analysis were examined by adopting the four roles of framing: defining issues, analyzing causes, assessing actions, and suggesting solutions (Entman, 1993; Tucker, 1998). This is important because how a story is framed affects the way society defines and perceives a problem, identifies causes and effects of the problem as well as functional resolutions to alleviate the problem (Entman 1993).

Most empirical studies on framing of power were done on a nation-wide scale (de Vreese et al., 2001, p. 108). However, Koenig (2006) postulates that the problem of transnational researches adopting framing exists in the gaps in the “discursive opportunity structure” that changes structurally, depending on countries and cultural background among nations (p. 62). However, Koenig (2006) also insists that these issues are compensated for the obvious benefits that “cross-national research reveals hidden national assumptions and enables the testing of theories in a way experimental or case study research cannot” (p. 72).

Therefore, transnational study keeps the most significant field of comparative study, including the cultural area. Thus, framing analysis is a proper method for this study because the analysis of the media text allows researchers to identify the way media discourse functions to empower and reinforce elite control and hegemony in a society (Tucker, 1998).
CHAPTER V

RESULTS

In analyzing the coverage in U.S, British, and South Korean newspapers on North Korean women defectors and victims of human trafficking, several frames emerged. Initially, selected Western (U.S. and British) newspapers were compared with South Korean newspaper to identify similar or dissimilar frames, following which the U.S. and the British newspapers were compared within the same parameters. The results of this analysis are presented below.

Common Frames between Western and South Korean Newspapers

The Absolute Antagonism toward North Korea

Stories published in Western newspapers exhibited antagonism against North Korea and its regime and degraded the country with negative and pessimistic depictions in Western newspapers. North Korea was described by terms that carried negative connotations. Few reports used neutral modifiers to introduce North Korea to Western readers. Western newspapers used words such as “secretive,” “repressive,” “repugnant,” “famine-stricken,” “isolated,” “impoverished,” “a hard-line Stalinist dictatorship,” “unpredictable,” “shaky,” “demonized,” “reeling,” “prickly,” “reclusive,” “the world’s largest prison,” “shuttered,” “hell,” “the most strictly controlled,” “a black box,” “hermit kingdom,” “the most oppressive,” “crisis,” “the world’s most decrepit communist nation to life,” “a moral darkness,” “an absence of humanity,” and “bankrupt.”

These words signify the Western world’s negative attitude toward North Korea even though most of the journalists had never been to North Korea when writing the news stories.
These terms mostly appeared in headlines or were placed in the beginning of reports. Therefore, North Korea and its government were framed with a dominantly negative perspective from the beginning of reports. For example, a report that described the North Korean government as “the world’s last Stalinist regime,” appeared in *The London Times*, on October 18, 2005, and it insinuates that the North Korean regime is repressive and controlled by a maniac reminiscent of Stalin; thus, it has to fall.

The negative modifiers used by Western newspapers to describe North Korea or its regime were rarely evident in the reporting by South Korean newspaper for two main reasons: Using modifiers (adjectives) to introduce nouns is not common practice in the Korean syntax; and anticommunist rhetoric is aggressively prevalent in South Korea than any other nations in the world. South Koreans have constantly been provided negative descriptions about North Korean and its regime throughout their lives via diverse types of South Korean media such as newspapers, magazines, movies, and books published by the South Korean government as well as nonofficial businesses.

The author of this study was born and grew up in South Korea while experiencing anticommunism. Being an insider, the author possesses significant knowledge about South Korean culture and society. This gives support to her claim that anticommunism has permeated South Korean culture owing to the hostile relationship between the two nations. Instead of using modifiers, the South Korean newspaper described horrible incidents in detail, including baby-killings, chemical experiments on human beings, public executions, and severe labor conditions in political prison camps. These incidents were reported many times in Western media as well. The information regarding incidents related to North Korea was predominantly
provided by North Korean defectors and victims of human trafficking. Many of them had experienced repatriation because the Chinese government regarded them as “economic migrants” and did not accept the defectors as political asylum seekers.

An article published on August 31, 1997, in *The New York Times* said that the Chinese government made a pact with North Korea, which “mandates repatriation of every North Korean defector caught in China to North Korea.” The deported defectors were treated horrendously by the North Korean government, and these mistreatments were reported in both Western and South Korean newspapers. They said that leaving North Korea without official permission is considered treason; thus, most of the deported defectors are imprisoned in the political prison camps, which were compared to the Nazis’ concentration camps in both U.S. and British newspapers.

Numerous women defectors were sold into forced marriages or became concubines to Chinese men who were unable to find a wife or a woman on their own. Many purchased brides were pregnant when they were deported to North Korea. In an article published on June 10, 2002, in *The New York Times*, a former prisoner said in an interview that the North Korean male guards took pregnant inmates away in a car. After injecting abortion shots to the confined women by force, the guards told them to go back to work immediately. Additionally, women who were impregnated by Chinese men or gave birth to their babies received more serious abuse, due to the negative views towards mixing the races. The article said that this forced miscarriage injection was routine and systematic procedure by the prison guards. The prisoners were ordered to kill the newborn babies by using a plastic sheet. The general policy regarding a live baby was to leave the baby until it died. Lee Soon Ok, a defector and accountant at a North
Korean political prison, said that she witnessed prison doctors killing newborn babies by pressing their necks with their feet.

The article also said that from March to May in 2000, more than 8,000 North Korean defectors, mostly women, were repatriated to North Korea from China to eradicate bride-trading and prostitution. In an article published on May 3, 2003, in The Washington Post, Lee, an escapee from a North Korean prison camp, said, “Beaten, starved and assaulted by horrors, you really have no fear of death. . . . At that point, you’re just a machine with no emotion.” An article published in The New York Times reported that the inmates were forced to work from 5 a.m. to 8 p.m. or more, and children had to work 10 hours every day. Many articles reported that starvation, beating, serious labor abuse, torture, and public and political executions are routine and prevalent in the political prison camps. For example, in an article published on November 5, 2009, in The Guardian described the experiences of a 54-year-old North Korean woman during her detention. She was successfully defected to South Korea in 2007, and her identity was only provided with the initial because of her relatives in North Korea. The article said, “L had her nails pried off with pliers, her lower teeth pulled out and water with hot chilies put up her nose.”

Some incidents were more frequently mentioned and more specifically described, especially in Western newspapers. For example, in an article published on October 4, 2003, in The Washington Post, Lee Soon Ok, the same defector appeared in The Guardian, provided an account about chemical experiments in a political prison camp that she escaped. In congressional committees in 2002 in Washington, she testified that she overheard researchers’ discussion about chemical and biological weapons trials. She also said that she was ordered to
delete many prisoners’ names from the prison rations record after they were taken behind a hill for a chemical experiment.

In British newspapers, three articles reported chemical or biological weapons experiments in North Korea through defectors’ accounts. One of those articles published on February 8, 2004, in *The Independent* mentioned that Lee Soon Ok, the same defector who appeared in *The Guardian* and *The Washington Post*, witnessed 50 inmates dying in women’s prison camp after they ate cabbage meshed with chemicals while researchers in white gowns observed. This incident happened in 1988. A few years later, she saw 150 fellow inmates dying by inhaling chemical gas on a hillside while officials in masks watched.

In an article published on October 21, 2006, *The Telegraph* reported about North Korea’s gulags for the disabled by saying, “There are extensive reports of other forms of torture, including chemical weapons tests and germ agent experiments. Those not used as laboratory guinea pigs are ordered to carry out back-breaking work” (McElroy, 2006). The article further argued that North Korea wanted to breed better people by eradicating those who had “inferior genes.” The article said, “Since the fall of the Soviet bloc, it is one of the last states to implement the practice. Pyongyang is also dedicated to the principle of racial purity. Women who have sexual relations with the minority Chinese community in North Korea are often purged” (McElroy, 2006).

Both Western and South Korean newspapers reported cannibalism in North Korea. The South Korean newspaper wrote about it through the second-hand experience of a woman defector imprisoned in a political prison with her entire family from 1975 to 2002 for 28 years. However, the U.S. newspapers reported it in detail with several direct quotes. In an article on
October 4, 2003, published in *The Washington Post*, a woman who escaped to South Korea with her husband by sailing in a fishing boat into a port city located in the coast of Yellow Sea said, “We started seeing cannibalism. You probably won’t understand. When one is very hungry, one can go crazy. One woman in my town killed her 7-month-old baby, ate the baby with another woman. That woman’s son reported them both to the authorities.” She continued. “I can’t condemn cannibalism. Not that I wanted to eat human meat, but we were so hungry. . . . They dug a fresh grave and dug up a body to eat meat. She said it tasted good.”

Accounts about North Korea and the horrible situation of the North Korean defectors were framed to increase antagonism against North Korea and its regime. Most articles did not provide any in-depth political or socio-cultural information about the North Korean society. It is interesting that while North Korea has been studied for decades by international researchers, the newspapers missed this core issue impacting North Korean women defectors. While actively reporting the inhuman incidents and severe conditions of the North Korean women victims of human trafficking, no newspaper clearly recognizes these women as victims. Instead of identifying the North Korean women defectors as victims, newspapers on both sides simply focused on aggressively criticizing North Korea.

South Korea: a Powerless and Ineffective Stakeholder

South Korea and its government were mostly portrayed negatively in both Western and the South Korean media. The U.S. newspapers blamed the South Korean government for its passive response to resolving problems of North Korean defectors. *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post* consistently reported that the South Korean government was not ready for the tens of thousands of prospective refugees because of a lack of resources, though the
government announced that it would keep a policy of permitting asylum to all North Korean refugees.

An article by The New York Times reported that nine defectors entered a lawsuit against the intelligence agency of South Korea because they were tortured by its agents during the official investigation. A spokesman from the South Korea’s intelligence agency denied the charge by explaining that the defectors were mad because of a diminished settlement fund from the South Korean government.

An article on May 3, 2003, published in The Washington Post reported about a vote organized by the U.N. Commission on Human Rights, which criticized North Korea’s human rights record and displayed “deep concern” for the situations in North Korea, including hiding aided foods from the starved North Koreans. The article failed to provide information about specifics of the vote, but it emphasized that the voting was one of punitive voices from the Bush administration regarding mistreatments of North Koreans. Further, it reported that Rho Moo Hyun, the president of South Korea who is also as a human rights lawyer, did not participate in the vote which startled human rights activists. In the report, Chun Ki Won, an internationally renowned South Korean Christian aid worker who was imprisoned in China because of his work that helped North Korean refugees, criticized the president’s action by saying, “South Korea should be ashamed that foreign countries are saying what we are afraid to say on behalf of fellow Koreans.”

In the same article, Tim Peters, director of Helping Hands Korea, said, “There should be outrage toward the government here. Nothing can top the irony of a human rights Nobel laureate [former president Kim Dae Jung], followed by a human rights lawyer, and neither of
them raising the issue of human rights.” After strong criticism by human rights activists, the article provided President Roh Moo Hyun’s account by beginning “Roh defended his position.” An article published on December 24, 2011, in *The Washington Post* ran an interview with Hahm ChaeBong, the president of the Asan Institute for Policy Studies in Seoul, who said, “We are powerless to influence North Korea’s behavior. We have tried everything at this point.” Additionally, one of the articles published in *The New York Times* said that South Korea is already divided by regional contenders, which dates back to centuries, and the unification between South and North Korea could aggravate regional antagonisms.

Further, several articles published in both Western and South Korean newspapers dealt with the ineffectiveness of the settlement education and job training program provided for the defectors. For example, in an article published on May 29, 2009, *The London Times* mentioned that North Korean defectors used to be welcomed as heroes in South Korean society when they were rare, but now the defectors said that many South Koreans regard them as “yokels” and have a preconceived idea that they are unpopular employees in workplaces.

In an article published on July 8, 2009, in *Los Angeles Times*, a few defectors from Hanawon, the official debriefing and educational center for all North Korean defectors in South Korea, expressed their feelings about living in South Korea. In the article, one woman defector introduced as a pianist said, “I was surprised at the reality of South Korea compared to my anticipation. I thought it would be the start of my happiness. But it was the start of a hard life. The toughest was to feel the eyes of South Koreans and the stereotypes.”

The article also mentioned a report published in 2008 by a South Korean legislator, which discovered that about 75% of the residents at Hanawon experienced depression or other
psychological illnesses. A lot of residents thought about suicide because of their traumatic experiences while escaping. In the report, a woman pastor said that she heard of an old woman who had contemplated going back to North Korea until, during an illegal phone call, her daughter told her not to return because they would all be killed if she did.

*USA Today* interviewed a defector about the classroom education setting of Hanawon and said, “What can you really learn in three months? The classes need to be more hands-on. They just got here in pursuit of freedom. And they’re locked in again. It’s like prison for them.” *Chosun Ilbo* mentioned that South Korean human rights activists do not trust the statistics provided by the South Korean government. Further, it said that many South Korean human rights activists keep insisting that the government need to take a more serious action on the issue of the North Korean defectors because of the limitations of non-government organizations. Many South Korean organizations for North Korean defectors consisted of dedicated activists who gave their own money and risked their lives to help the defectors. However, according to *The New York Times*, which provided a survey result conducted by a South Korean newspaper, 69 out of 100 defectors replied that they would rather go to Western nations, such as the United States, Canada, and Australia, rather than live in South Korea.

These descriptions of South Korea and its government, provided by Western and South Korean media, give an impression that the South Korean government not only fell short of solving issues regarding the North Korean defectors but also failed to deal with the domestic ramifications within China, as well as overlooking international and diplomatic consequences.
Untouchable China: the Unidentified Cause of the Trafficking

China can play a critical role in improving the horrendous situation of the North Korean defectors and victims of human trafficking. However, China has never changed its view that all North Korean defectors must be repatriated because they are not political asylum seekers but economic migrants. Because of China’s unyielding attitude, hundreds of thousands of North Koreans, primarily women, have suffered and faced mistreatment by traffickers, their buyers, and the Chinese and North Korean officials (Davis, 2006).

Both Western and South Korean newspapers failed to identify numerous crimes committed against North Korean women defectors, including human trafficking. Hundreds of thousands of North Korean women were deceived into crossing the border by brokers promising employment opportunities. Once on Chinese land, however, women were handed over to brokers involved in criminal organizations, such as human and drug trafficking, prostitution, and child labor abuse. Furthermore, because of China’s philosophy that favors boys, a severe gender-imbalance ratio caused gender-selective abortion and desperate demands for marriageable women. This has resulted in a significant increase in wife trafficking and bride trading especially in rural areas. However, no newspapers clearly identified the social problems as a cause of grave concern for North Korean women defectors. Instead of illuminating the social causes in China that resulted in organized crimes, both Western and South Korean newspapers superficially framed the trafficking issue as a diplomatic problem between China and North Korea by following Chinese accounts (Davis, 2006).

In an article on January 2, 2003, The Daily Telegraph said, “North Korea is a headache for China” because its missile projects provided strong opportunities for the United States to
set up an Asian missile defense. The newspaper also said, “China is the leading source of fuel and food for the bankrupt Stalinist regime and for years has half-tolerated the presence of some 250,000 starving North Koreans crossing into north-eastern China in search of food to take back to their families.” The article implies that China has helped impoverished North Koreans and its hungry defectors. However, the aid cannot justify the overbearing attitude toward severe human rights violations regarding the North Korean women defectors.

The New York Times interviewed Wang Liping, a Chinese restaurant owner near the border, who said, “Why did we have such bad luck, getting North Korea as a neighbor? If we were next to South Korea, just think how much richer we would be.” China was described as a victim in the article. Many articles from U.S., British, and South Korean newspapers have continuously criticized the Chinese government for deporting the North Korean defectors. However, most articles would rather choose to report the Chinese government’s political and diplomatic stance regarding North Korean defectors than recognize China’s mistreatments of the trafficking victims, such as denial of political refugees, repatriation of the defectors, and Chinese officials’ involvement in the trafficking (Snyder, 2012).

On June 1, 2010, Chosun Ilbo published an article about what William Pesek said in his Bloomberg column. He said that China had influenced North Korea by enormously giving aid, such as food and oil. He voiced his concern that the United States was interested in its economic expansion after the collapse of the North Korean regime through the exodus and that is why “sugar daddy” (China) does not kill the “big mosquito” (North Korea). The article said stopping aid to North Korea would force the regime to open the door to the international society, and it would ultimately help stabilize North Korea politically and provide support to its
citizens. However, this is an opinion of a U.S. journalist published by a South Korean newspaper; Pesek’s piece leads South Korean audiences to view the issue of North Korean defectors not as a human rights issue but only as a political interest of China, the United States, and the two Koreas.

The Chinese government has never officially accepted North Koreans as refugees and has deported all defectors, when captured, even though the government was fully aware that the deported people were, subsequently, wrongfully accused of treason, and then sent to political prisons. China still defines all North Korean defectors as economic migrants without exception, but this is incongruous because the North Koreans deported from China go to the political prisons in North Korea. In an article published in *Chosun Ilbo* on September 3, 1999, the Chinese ambassador, Mr. Wu, responded that China and North Korea had the ability to resolve the issue of the North Korean defectors, and human rights activists should not blame the Chinese government for deporting the defectors. Unfortunately, the miserable situations of the North Korean defectors have worsened, and China’s stiff attitude remains unchanged since the article ran in 1999.

Neither governments nor newspaper reports charted any significant course of action against China other than verbal blaming or making a simple token statement on human rights issues regarding North Korean defectors and victims of trafficking. The only exceptions in this regard were the human rights activists, who have resisted Chinese policy consistently, often at great risk of their own lives in the process (Davis, 2006).
Christians Involved with the United States

Christians and Christianity were often mentioned (salient factors) throughout the analysis. First of all, Christian human rights organizations, which were financially backed by churches mostly in the United States and South Korea, played a major part in helping the North Korean defectors enter South Korea or live a better life in China or North Korea with aid. Chun Ki Won, a South Korean pastor nicknamed “the modern times Moses,” had been jailed and tortured in a Chinese prison for seven months for helping 12 defectors enter South Korea.

The pastor and his Christian organization, Durihana (two will become as one), developed an “underground railroad,” which is a 2,500-mile trip from the border of China to Southeast Asian nations, such as Cambodia, Thailand, and Laos. Several articles reported about this journey including The Washington Post, which said, “Along this ‘underground railroad’ across rural China, defectors sleep in shelters or abandoned buildings, helped by religious activists and brokers.” The Independent mentioned that if someone has a Bible in North Korea, he/she is considered a spy because the Bible is evidence of contact with the outside world, which can cause apprehension or execution. Several South Korean articles also dealt with the sufferings of Christians in North Korea.

A Chosun Ilbo article published on February 23, 2000, reported the public execution of North Korean missionaries in North Korea, which also said that most of the executed people were defectors. In another report by Chosun Ilbo, a defector from Yoduk, a notorious political prison of North Korea, said that he saw inmates transferred to a strictly-controlled, guarded holding area, where inmates were destined to be sentenced to death because they talked about the Bible and Shakespeare.
Missionaries operating aid programs for defectors have faced extreme hardships due to the Chinese government. For example, *The Independent* reported that the Chinese government offered benefits to informers, announced an arrest quota to regional police, and ordered a shutdown for currently operating churches. It also said that punishment for helping defectors was about 2,200 British pounds of penalty or custody. In the article, a Western human rights activist said, “Police put up posters saying it was the duty of all Chinese people to arrest and denounce the refugees, and it is like something out of the Cultural Revolution.”

Without the devoted or even rash attempts of the Christians, the North Koreans would be entirely on their own. According to an article published in *The Independent* on January 29, 2003, this grave situation in China made a lot of activists seek international attention from Christians, as it was the only course of action.

About two months after this article, an article published in *Chosun Ilbo* reported that an investigator for a human rights organization based in the United States confirmed that baby killings, torture, and forced abortions were conducted by the North Korean regime in prisons and detention centers. This was the first article that appeared in a South Korean newspaper mentioning the involvement of a U.S. organization about the issue.

The United States is not the direct stakeholder in the issues of the North Korean defectors and victims of human trafficking. However, since 2003, the United States has often appeared in both Western and South Korean newspapers, and it was frequently involved with Christian organizations and prominent individuals. An article published on November 21, 2004, in *The New York Times* said, “In the United States, the campaign to ease the plight of fleeing North Koreans is increasingly a mainstream cause.” It also reported that Concerned Women for
America, which is a public-policy institution and has a membership of 500,000, arranged prayer groups for North Korea’s executed Christians. The article also reported the sanction of a law supported by the re-elected President Bush, which allows for the payment of $20 million each year, providing support to North Korean defectors.

The topic of the article was a refugee camp in Mongolia, from where refugees could then be transferred to other nations for settlement. The article said that U.S. advocates asked the Bush administration to push Mongolia because the South Korean government was very cautious not to anger North Korea. Suzanne Scholte, president of the Defense Forum Foundation centered in Washington, D.C., stated, “If the U.S. weighed in with Mongolia, it would seal the deal. The U.S. needs to counterweigh this opposition.”

The *Los Angeles Times* reported that in March 2006, a South Korean pastor and human rights activist, Chun Ki Won, met Michael Horowitz, an activist and former Reagan administration appointee, as a director of the conservative Hudson Institute’s Project for International Religious Liberty based in Washington, D.C. As a lawyer, Horowitz helped draft the North Korean Human Rights Act and told the pastor that the United States made an agreement to receive some North Korean defectors. On October, 16, 2006, the *Los Angeles Times* reported pleas by a North Korean woman defector, who was repeatedly drugged, trafficked, and tortured after escape from North Korea.

In this article, her plea was sent to Deborah Fikes, administrator of the Ministerial Alliance of Mainland in Texas, a human rights organization with international influence. She conveyed the defector’s plea to her fellow Texan, President Bush, by requesting his aid, through proper means via the U.S. State Department and National Security Council. *The Washington*
Post reported what Deborah Fikes said: “If you’re a follower of Christ, this should be one of your number one priorities, speaking out for the oppressed, and I can’t think of anybody more oppressed than the North Koreans.” In the same report, the White House published a statement saying, “The United States is gravely concerned about China’s treatment of Kim Chun-Hee (a North Korean woman who was about to be deported to North Korea after being caught by Chinese police)” and reminded China of its responsibility as a participating nation in the U.N. Refugee Convention (Snyder, 2012).

In an article on March 10, 2011, Chosun Ilbo said that orphans from defectors are the most tragic and serious victims of the issue related to the division of the Korean peninsula. The orphans, estimated at 20,000, had rarely received any help. Further, the newspaper reported that Republican Senator Richard Burr supported the bill named as the North Korean Refugee Adoption Act of 2011. On November 5, 2009, The Guardian reported that Kim Jong-il had terminated religious groups, citing Christian Solidarity Worldwide (CSW) (Tran, 2009); in the same period, The Washington Post reported, “Christians have become the alpha and omega of the North Korean issue” (Faiola, 2005).

Differences between Western and South Korean Newspapers

Several differences were discovered between Western and South Korean newspapers in describing the issue of the North Korean women defectors and victims of human trafficking. Regardless of North Korean officials’ explanations or justifications, all the analyzed articles severely criticized the North Korean regime and negatively described the issue throughout the whole examined period, which is from 1995 to 2013. However, a few differences were found
between Western and South Korean newspapers in ways that negatively framed North Korea. As explained in the beginning of this chapter, Western media frequently used strong negative adjectives as modifiers to introduce and describe North Korea and its regime. With the modifiers, such as “repugnant,” “famine-stricken,” “unpredictable,” “hell on earth,” “an absence of humanity,” and “bankrupt,” North Korea was framed as an undeveloped, isolated, impoverished, and troublesome nation at its worst. However, the South Korean newspaper rarely described North Korea with modifiers.

The most obvious difference discovered between Western and South Korean newspapers was how they described Kim Jong-il. Until he died in December 2011, he was the absolute power figure as “Dear Leader” in North Korea. Western newspapers published many stories about Kim Jong-il while the South Korean newspaper rarely published stories about him. For example, *The London Times* described Kim Jong-il as “the pantomimically grotesque ‘Dear Leader’.” The newspaper also published a few women-related stories with provocative titles about Kim Jong-il, such as “Who’s that girl? Kim’s companion has country guessing; North Korea,” and about his son, Kim Jong-un, such as, “Kim’s former girlfriend ‘executed over sex tape’.”

On October 8, 2011, two months before Kim Jong-il’s death, *The Telegraph* published a story about Kim’s indulgent interest in the finest food and wines. The article said that decades of famine enabled North Koreans to discover wild foods while their kitchens were mostly empty and they always worried about their next meal. The tone was sarcastic: “There is nothing wrong with being a foodie—except when you are the leader of a small, impoverished country where almost everybody else is eating grass” (Demick, 2011).
However, the article, written by Barbara Demick with more than 3,000 words, focused primarily on the leader’s eating habits and even provided an analysis by the former director of the CIA’s Center for the Analysis of Personality and Political Behavior. Jerrold Post, the director who also analyzed Saddam Hussein and Osama bin Laden, identified Kim Jong-il as a ‘malign narcissist,’ mainly based on his eating routines. In many Western newspapers, Kim Jong-il or North Korea were described as erratic and a leadership cult because of the Kim family’s communist dynasty. The Washington Post wrote that Kim Jong-il was born on a sacred mountaintop, and shining arrows and a double rainbow indicated his birth. USA Today also repeated this hagiographic description while also reporting about the nuclear confrontation with other nations. The article described Kim Jong-il as a “diminutive dictator with wired hair and a taste for Mao jacket, hard liquor, young women, and slasher flicks” (Wiseman, 2003). The article started with an episode in which Kim Jong-il fired his longest-serving bodyguard and send the bodyguard’s entire family to prison, because the bodyguard dared to use Kim Jong-il’s ashtray in his private elevator. Further, the article described Kim Jong-il as a legendary womanizer, avid Web surfer, and CNN viewer (Wiseman, 2003).

In both Western and South Korean media, the North Korean women defectors and victims of human trafficking played important roles as information providers about the inner circumstances of North Korea and witnesses of horrendous incidents. However, the South Korean newspaper described the North Korean women defectors, as victorious individuals who had elevated their social status by realizing financial success, achieving the highest level of education, and successfully integrating themselves into the South Korean capitalist society.
Stories about Lee Ae-ran, a woman who defected in 1997 with nine family members to South Korea, appeared in four separate articles in the *Chosun Ilbo*. She struggled to make a living in South Korea as an insurance planner while studying to earn a doctorate degree from the most prominent women’s university in South Korea. She was also described as a passionate activist of protesting China’s deportation of North Korean refugees who were caught in China. The article said, “In the early days in South Korea, I felt that I am useless here [*sic*].” She said in another article, “It is a mistaken notion that North Korean defectors are not good employees. Please grant us the time so that we can prove ourselves. Give us some time because we need time to keep up things here [*sic*].” Among the North Korean women defectors, many of them had strong educational backgrounds. In an article in June 2012 of *Chosun Ilbo*, a reporter stated that a woman defector, who used to be a physician in North Korea, had entered the doctoral program of a top medical school in South Korea. In an interview with the *Chosun Ilbo*, this woman said, “I couldn’t buy one kilogram of rice with my salary, but I’ll lead to unify medical systems between the two Koreas.”

The U.S. and British journalists often used similar political figures and metaphors to describe the North Korean leader and the country, which never happened in the South Korean newspaper. For example, on September 23, 2004, *The Independent* compared Kim Jong-il to Adolf Hitler and George Bush. Another article in the *Los Angeles Times* about Chun Ki Won called him a “modern-day Moses”. The North Korean regime was frequently compared to the Stalinist dictatorship, and its leader was also associated with other infamous dictators or terrorists, such as Saddam Hussein or Osama bin Laden. The political prison camps in North Korea were compared to the Nazis’ concentration camps in Western newspapers. For example,
The London Times compared the North Korean political prisons to the Nazi death camps. In an October 16, 2006, article published in the Los Angeles Times, while expressing sympathy to North Koreans jailed in political prison camps, a renowned human rights activist said, “There were people in my shoes living in Washington in the 1930s and 1940s who, if they worked harder and smarter, could have rescued some of my people in Adolf Hitler’s concentration camps.”

The North Korean women defectors and victims of human trafficking predominantly appeared in both Western and the South Korean newspapers as information providers about inner circumstances of North Korea, witnesses of horrendous incidents, and testifiers of their experiences. However, South Korean news stories displayed some differences in describing the North Korean women defectors. Besides the three roles, they were also framed as victorious individuals who raised their social status through financial success or high-level education by being successfully integrated into the South Korean capitalist society.

Differences between U.S. and British Newspapers

A few distinctive differences were found between U.S. and British newspapers in the coverage of human trafficking, including the length of the news reports. Many studies revealed the important relevance between the volume of the news report and its conceived significance. The length of the news stories could indicate the importance of the reported theme to the media industry and its audience. For example, a news story longer than 1,000 words appearing on the front page can be regarded as more significant to the audience than a news story shorter than 400 words buried somewhere in the middle section of the newspaper.
Articles were classified by length, which is small (up to 500 words), medium (501-1,000 words), and long (more than 1000). Out of the 84 news stories of U.S. and British newspapers analyzed in the study, more than 54% of the articles published in the U.S. newspapers were longer than 1,000 words, including many articles more than a few thousand words, while in the British newspapers, 37% of the analyzed articles were longer than 1,000 words, and many articles were only a few hundred words long. The long and middle-length articles occupied 94% of the U.S. newspapers and 76% of the British ones. Both countries’ newspapers predominantly published the stories in the foreign affairs section while the South Korean media published in sections for political or social matters.

Another difference discovered by analysis was that the U.S. news stories were predominantly focused on political perspectives while the British newspapers, especially The Guardian, dealt with socio-cultural aspects in relation to the theme. For example, on August 11, 2011, The Guardian published a report discussing gender inequality that influenced the demographic imbalance in Asian nations, especially in China and India. The article said that China used to be an enthusiastic defender of gender discrimination as the leader of the communist nations.

However, China’s rigorous birth regulation policy resulted in sex-selective abortions because of its traditional patriarchal systems. The absence of a son implies the extermination of the family succession and the lack of unity between maternal and paternal ancestors. It continued to explain that the disproportionate gender component ratio caused the “wife trafficking" in China to become a mushrooming business (Attane, 2006). In another article published on December 12, 2012, The Guardian reported about the North Korean women’s
double burden because of the country’s economic crisis. The article said that men were unable to make enough money for their families, which became the women’s burden and introduced the Korean culture as “traditionally patriarchal and the Yi Dynasty, which ruled until the early 20th century, restricted women further by entrenching Confucian ideology.” These socio-cultural aspects of the issue were never covered in the U.S. newspapers.

The tone of the coverage was also analyzed, and both countries' newspapers shared severe negativity toward North Korea and its regime. However, a slight difference was discovered among descriptions of South Korea. The U.S. newspapers were more prone to criticize the South Korean government harshly for its attitude and lack of action.

In the British newspapers, the journalists sometimes wrote articles with subjective interpretations. For example, in The London Times, Richard Lloyd Parry described North Korean people as an “unidentified mass, passive and victimized at best, scarcely worthy of sympathy of any but the most abstract kind” and called North Korea a “zombie nation” by borrowing Martin Amis’s description of North Korea as “so mortally ashamed of itself that it can hardly bear to show its face.” Another interesting journalism practice discovered in the British newspaper was the frequent reference to historical figures while reporting stories. For instance, The London Times compared a female spy caught in South Korea, who disguised her true identity as a defector, to Mata Hari, Josephine Baker, and Melissa Mahle, all women who used their charms for espionage.
The goal of this study was to analyze how major newspapers of Western countries (the United States and Great Britain) and South Korea used politics and gender as frames in covering the North Korean women defectors and victims of human trafficking. This framing analysis revealed that politics and gender were significant factors in framing the issue of the North Korean women defectors. Examination of news stories regarding the issue can be divided into the four different functions of frames: defining problems, diagnosing causes, assessing actions, and suggesting solutions. In covering North Korean women defectors and victims of human trafficking, Western newspapers and the South Korean newspaper reported the issue in a manner that was illustrative of these four framing functions.

The Important Role of Politics

South Korea has been “caught between two conflicting identities: the alliance identity that see the United States as a friendly provider and the nationalist identity that pits Korean identity against the United States” (Suh, 2004, p. 169). North Korea is a significant component of South Korea’s perception of national identity because of the sense of ethnic homogeneity shared by the two Koreas, even today.

However, the territorial break-up in 1945 generated the “unnatural” circumstance of one Korean family being separated into South and North parts. Both Koreas insisted on the legitimacy for representing the whole ethnic Korea by adapting different ideologies: anti-colonialism/anti-imperialism (North Korea) and liberalism/anti-Communism (South Korea) (Shin
& Burke, 2008). These respective ideologies are connected to national identity and used to define each nation’s patriots and traitors (Shin & Burke, 2008).

Due to the collapse of the Soviet Union, the efficiency of anti-Communism as a political strategy was diminished (Shin & Burke, 2008). South Korea initiated a “Northern” policy to foster better relationships with former “enemies” such as Russia and China, but South Korea’s perception of North Korea was still predominantly negative (Shin, 2006). The high cost of Germany’s unification motivated President Kim Dae Jung to initiate the “Sunshine Policy,” which separated the economy from politics and offered economic assistance to North Korea to extend “peaceful co-existence” for a long time to reduce economic responsibilities in the event of reunification (Shin, 2006). This policy achieved the historic inter-Korean summit in Pyongyang in 2000 and helped change many South Koreans’ perceptions of North Korea from antagonist to collaborator (Shin, 2006).

However, the policy met an intensive negative reaction from South Korean conservatives because they thought that the danger from North Korea had not been reduced. The South Korean’s dispute between progressives and conservatives about North Korea has been introduced as the “South-South conflict” or “a house divided” (Shin, 2006). Thus, Chosun Ilbo’s negative interpretations of North Korean issues, including the trafficking, and criticisms of the liberal South Korean government run by President Kim Dae Jung and Rho Moon Hyun (1998-2008) are not surprising because the Chosun Ilbo is the most conservative and dominant newspaper in South Korea (Seo, 2011).

The Sunshine Policy continued in Roh Moo Hyun’s administration, which led to a conflict with President George W. Bush’s strict position against North Korea, straining the relationship
between the United States and South Korea. While the United States sees North Korea as a security problem, particularly considering its nuclear entrenchment program, South Korea closely connects North Korea to matters of identity. Most South Koreans view the North-related issues as inter-Korean issues, with the goal of eventual reunification of the peninsula. Thus, the conflict between the U.S. and South Korean presidents over North Korea and strategic foreign policy may explain the negative coverage about the South Korean government by the U.S. newspapers. Studies about public opinion have discovered that the news media frequently establish the agenda for not only conceptions of other nations but also public debate of important policy problems (Perry, 1985). In fact, researchers of Korean affairs see South Korean media channels as political players, and their obvious “campaigns” for or against certain political issues have accomplished many successful outcomes to transform South Koreans’ views regarding North Korea and the United States (Larson, Levin, & Baik, 2004).

South Koreans think of North Korean human rights issues as the pain of ethnically homogeneous Koreans described as “compatriots,” “brethren,” “brothers,” and “miserable victims of national division” (Shin & Burke, 2008, p. 292). However, the U.S. politicians are prone to conceive the humanitarian issue of North Korea within broader terms, emphasizing “violations of human rights by the ‘authoritarian’ and ‘evil’ state or regime” (Shin & Burke, 2008, p. 292).

The different political approaches of South Korea and the United States toward North Korea led to different approaches to the issue. South Korea’s policies included economic engagement during the liberal administrations led by Kim Dae Jung (1998-2003) and Rho Moo Hyun (2003-2008), but most conservatives of South Korea think that humanitarian aid would
reinforce the dictatorial government rather than help those in desperate need (Shin & Burke, 2008). This may explain the U.S. and South Korean newspapers’ lack of coverage of the South Korean government’s recent efforts to communicate with the North Korean government by supporting the North economically.

In the analysis of editorials and columns on North Korea published in Chosun Ilbo and Hanhyoreh, which respectively represent conservative and progressive views in South Korea, Chosun Ilbo displayed more negative views than Hankyorhe in all categories: “peace and unification,” “North Korea and East Asia security,” “humanitarian/human rights issues,” “economy/trade,” and “South Korea politics” (Shin & Burke, 2008, p. 296). Especially on security, South Korean politics, and humanitarian issues, Chosun Ilbo particularly showed more negative tones, and the results also revealed that the U.S.–North Korea relations substantially influenced inter-Korean relations (Shin & Burke, 2008). Thus, the results of this study revealed that the perceptions of the American and South Korean conservative public and politicians toward North Korea were reflected in the coverage of the human rights issues of North Korea, including the trafficking.

Some researchers who study international relations suggest that China’s economy is strong enough to influence the current international economy and bring stability. Moreover, China is capable of trading with U.S. corporations, taking an operational role in gatherings, such as the G-20. As North Korea’s sole true partner, China also wanted to go in front of the Six Party Talks on North Korea’s nuclear issue (Tow & Loke, 2009).

In 2009, when Hillary Clinton visited Asian nations, such as China, Japan, South
Korea, and Indonesia as the secretary of state, she expressed her confidence in the Obama administration that Asia would remain an essential factor for the U.S.’s “strategic agenda” (Tow & Loke, 2009). She stressed the significance of sustaining a substantial partnership between the United States and Asian allies and her support for the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), describing, “the U.S.-Japan alliance as a ‘cornerstone’ of for the U.S. foreign policy” (Clinton 2009). Clinton’s statement also implied that President Obama’s foreign policy does not differ from Bush’s, which is “policy of engagement and functional cooperation with China” (Tow & Loke, 2009).

Due to the growing international concern on Asia’s security, the United States was compelled to shift from a Japan-focused strategy to multilateral engagement with Asian nations (Tow & Loke, 2009). The historical U.S. bilateral defense strategy, “hub and spokes” or the “San Francisco System,” still plays an important role in Asian security policy; however, the key players of the region must adjust to broad changes in Asia’s progressively liquid balance of power (Tow & Loke, 2009).

Therefore, a significant security issue impacting Asia today are how bilateral U.S. security strategies can be adapted to assimilate a soaring China, alleviate constant defense issues between Asian countries, and mitigate nuclear expansion (Goodman & Green, 2008). To achieve this goal, it is necessary that the United States takes a reformative step towards harmonizing the partnerships with Japan as well as China. This could be achieved through a strategic dialogue between the United States, China, and Japan (Funabashi, 2008). The United States’ strong focus on China is driven by two major concerns: East Asian regional security and
the international economy. This may explain the media’s scarce criticism of the Chinese
government in coverage of the trafficking issue.

Absence of Gendered Inequality in the Coverage

Until the exodus, North Korean women had been invisible victims living in an extremely
authoritative and patriarchal society. The great famine in the 1990s led them to experience far
worse levels of victimization. In the economic crisis, they were the first laid off just because of
their gender. Under economic hardships, many of them suffered domestic violence by their
husbands afraid to lose the hegemony of male dominance that structures patriarchal society.
Many refugees said that they defected from North Korea only to avoid physical, psychological,
and verbal abuse from their spouses (Citizen’s Alliance for North Korean Human Rights, 2005, p.
20; KINU, 2003, p. 172).

However, domestic violence against women is not only North Korean women’s problem.
In the United States, 75% of victims classified as “intimate-partner homicide” were women, and
about 33% of all women killed were murdered by her male spouse or partner while only three
percent of all men killed were murdered by their female partners (Rennison & Welchans, 2000).
Meloy and Miller (2010) said, “Our (U.S.) policies and practices addressing violence against
women are far from ideal, and our knowledge base about women’s victimization is far from
perfect” (p. 38).

Farrell and Fahy (2009) wrote, “The trafficking of persons emerged as an international
social problem framed largely as a violation of women’s human rights, but over time it
increasingly was defined as a crime problem, necessitating criminal justice system responses” (p.
618). However, both Western and South Korean newspapers failed to discover the two main
social problems of trafficking: women’s rights violations and criminal issues, and the victimization of the North Korean women while reporting the issue.

Johnson (1999) insists that informing and educating the public about violence against women is one of the most important roles of media, but by failing to report one of the fundamental causes of the trafficking, which was inequality between genders, both Western and South Korean newspapers failed to inform and educate people about the situations of the North Korean trafficking victims. By focusing on political criticism against the victims’ nation, North Korea, and by failing to identify multidimensional causes, both Western and South Korean newspapers have not fulfilled their roles as media to implore the victims’ situations.

Excluding aid from dedicated human rights activists, the victims have been on their own for defecting to the liberal countries. In addition, the governments of directly involved nations, such as North Korea, South Korea, and China, have not provided any fundamental solutions to the victims’ troubling situations because of these countries’ political calculations. Most victims are framed as illegal smugglers by China and traitors by North Korea; thus, the international media can raise awareness of the North Korean trafficking victims by recognizing the root causes of the problem and by suggesting proper solutions to the trafficking issue. In conclusion, both Western and South Korean newspapers perpetuated hegemonic masculinity by failing to report the important gender related causes in the trafficking issue.

Defining Problems

In the coverage of the North Korean women defectors and victims of human trafficking, Western and South Korean newspapers occasionally recognized the gravity of the issue. However, their efforts to define the issue were very limited. The U.S., British, and South Korean
newspapers generally agreed on two perspectives in defining the problems: First, the economic crisis of North Korea generated the North Korean defectors; second, the issue is hard to resolve because it involves China and North Korea and includes border security problems between the two nations.

However, the attitude displayed in the coverage of each country’s newspaper greatly depended on the political stance and strategy of their policymakers. The hostile political relationships of South Korea and the two Western nations against North Korea prevented possible coverage of the socio-structural problems in China, which affected the victims of human trafficking.

Both South Korean and Western newspapers portrayed North Korea and its government negatively by agreeing with their countries’ major policymakers. Thus, positive information about North Korea never appeared in any analyzed articles. However, North Korea’s industry was far more developed than South Korea’s until the early 1970s. Further, North Korea passed revolutionary gender equality acts in the late 1940s, predating the North Korean regime; however, these positive representations were never mentioned in the articles.

The newspapers from the three countries used the victims as major sources in their news stories and obtained valuable information from the victims. Reporting on the situation is difficult because journalists cannot enter that country freely; they must rely on defectors, who risk their lives to escape from North Korea by becoming traitors.

However, Western journalists showed doubts when using informants as reliable sources in early stories regarding North Korean defectors. In July 1996, The New York Times reported torture in prison camps in North Korea, using the victims as witnesses and testifiers in the story.
Nicholas D. Kristof, the writer of the article, said, “It is impossible to know if the defectors are describing what they really endured, or what South Korean intelligence officials told them to recount” (Kristof, 1996). The credibility issue occurred in using the victims as news sources mainly for the U.S. newspapers. In another article, Norimitsu Onishi reported, “Scraps of information provided by defectors often prove unreliable, influenced as they can be by the organizations that shelter and support them while also championing political or religious causes” (Onishi, 2006). However, in most reports, the accuracy of information provided by the victims was never questioned by newspapers, especially the *Chosun Ilbo*.

The North Korean victims of human trafficking not only provided inside information about North Korea, but also testified as to what they witnessed and experienced for the sake of improving the situation of the North Korean defectors and future victims of human trafficking. However, the newspapers of the three nations failed to identify human trafficking as a crime in the same context because most articles rarely provided socio-cultural background in the news stories and were reported as one-time incidents without follow-ups. Thus, many of the victims’ testimonies about horrible incidents, including infanticide, rape, and forced abortion, were reframed as antagonism against North Korea; these incidents are still happening to an increasing number of victims, because the circumstances have not changed.

**Diagnosing Causes**

The economic crisis of North Korea and the corruption of its regime were described numerous times in the reports, but a lack of marriageable women, wife-trafficking, and criminal organizations for human trafficking in China were rarely discussed. Despite plenty of evidence given by the North Korean women victims, the U.S. and South Korean newspapers framed the
human trafficking of the North Korean women as one of the many human rights issues related to the situational and diplomatic problem between China and North Korea. Numerous North Korean women have been trafficked, raped, and forced to work as sex-slaves (Davis, 2006). The causes of these incidents in China were not identified; possible explanations may include selective abortion, disproportion of gender balance, son-favoring tradition, lack of marriageable women, and corrupt Chinese officials.

Media outlets, backed by politicians, used the testimonies of the victims to demonize North Korea, failing to use the victims as tangible sources to raise awareness of the larger issues of human trafficking and rape of women. Farrell and Fahy (2009) posit that the public framing about human trafficking has changed from 1990 to 2006; the study also discovered that human trafficking was framed as a security matter, especially between 2003 and 2006 in the United States. (Okech et al., 2012, p. 489). As researchers argued, the major policymakers of the United States likely wanted to increase public antagonism against North Korea in relation to the North Korean nuclear programs.

Both U.S. and British newspapers portrayed the North Korean leader, Kim Jong-il, as a “weird maniac” and “woman-addict” and ridiculed him (Wiseman, 2003). Their disrespect of the North Korean leader also degraded the reputation of North Korea and prevented readers from approaching the grave issue logically and intellectually. In other words, the Western newspapers made readers think of North Korea as a strange and mysterious place run by a lunatic leader.

The U.S. and British newspapers showed a similar attitude toward North Korea and human trafficking. However, it was reported only in the U.S. newspapers that the Bush
administration held a strong interest in the issues concerning the North Korean women defectors. These concerns may have been initiated by President Bush’s fellow Christians and prominent human rights activists in the United States. The number and the length of the examined articles also support that the U.S. policymakers were more interested in the issues than were the British policymakers.

Only South Korean newspaper, the Chosun Ilbo, successfully contextualized stories of the North Korean women defectors. North Korean defector Lee Ae-ran was described as a “South Korean dream achiever,” and the newspaper featured her several times in separate stories (Ahn, 2013). However, the success stories, including Lee Ae-ran’s, mostly highlighted an individual’s personal effort; thus, this framing could provide readers with an impression that success or failure in South Korea entirely depended on individual responsibility.

The success stories of these individuals represent a small percentage. Most women defectors need extra care and further help in climbing the social ladder, because many of them have no contacts in South Korea, are alone, and have suffered from traumatic experiences, including rape, abortion, labor, and mental abuse, in China and North Korea. On August 7, 2007, a Chosun Ilbo article mentioned that most North Korean women had medical and mental problems, such as hepatitis B, drug-resistant tuberculosis, and chronic gynecological infections (Kim, 2007).

Assessing Actions

A great number of North Korean women cross the border between South and North Korea simply to survive. Some cross the border to make money and provide food for their families as breadwinners, because otherwise they would die from starvation. Some of them
crossed the border because they were deceived by men belonging to crime organizations, who offered them job opportunities. Most of women defectors have to bribe brokers and Chinese and North Korean officials; even then, they are sold to the sex industry or Chinese men who are unable to find a woman as a wife or a sex slave.

In many articles, North Korean women refugees reported that they repeatedly were repatriated by Chinese officials and crossed the border again after escaping from political prison camps for survival. Some of them have successfully entered South Korea by making tremendous efforts and with the help of human rights activists. However, many of them were suffering from physical and mental diseases from horrendous and harsh experiences that were hard to endure as women and as humans. They often said in interviews with the newspapers that they felt guilty thinking of families and relatives who were left behind in North Korea, because they couldn’t eat good meals as they did, and they would be punished if North Korean authorities knew about their escape. In an article from *The Washington Post*, the director of Hanawon said, “When they start to make progress they feel guilty. One hundred percent of the time, when you throw a birthday party for these young people, they cry for the family they left behind. They want to eat warm rice with their families again” (Harden, 2009).

These situations of the North Korean women defectors have not changed since the major exodus started in the mid-1990s. Despite their agony, the North Korean women defectors have constantly made an effort to reveal the grave circumstances of North Korea. They have tried to raise international awareness on the issue and have repeatedly refused deportation to North Korea. So far, human rights groups have been able to raise public awareness through a hearing of the House International Relations Committee, a human rights
conference in Tokyo, a hearing of the U.N. Committee for Human Rights, and a hearing of congressional committees in Washington, D.C.

Suggesting Solutions

On April 12, 2009, an article published in *The New York Times* said, “In recent years, about 80% of defectors have been middle-aged women, many with children in tow,” though they used to be mostly single young men. The article also mentioned that in a survey of the North Korean defectors, 90% had been imprisoned in political prisons. An article published on July 28, 2004, in the *Chosun Ilbo* reported that among the 450 North Korean defectors who came from a Southeast Asian country (the article did not provide name of the nation), 70% were women and 80% to 90% of the defectors were from Hamkyong province in the northeast of North Korea (Lee & Kim, 2004).

A few articles published in Western newspapers also reported that the North Korean women defectors who came to South Korea were mostly from Hamkyong province, which shared a border with China and is the most mountainous and the farthest area from the capital city of North Korea (Rosenthal, 2000). The women in this area have suffered the most from famine among North Koreans, because the public food system failed first there and has limited natural resources and environment for food (Park, 2011). Most of North Korean women crossed the border to escape starvation as well as oppression of the North Korean regime, which both caused severe human rights issues.

China maintains that all North Korean defectors are economic migrants by identifying them as illegal workers or smugglers, and the claim has hardly been challenged since the great exodus started in the 1990s. As discovered in other studies regarding human trafficking, this
study also revealed that both Western and the South Korean newspapers mainly reflected the government policy by focusing on the authoritative view and delivering the agenda of major policy of the issue, especially depending on their political relationship with North Korea.

Therefore, the news media can play an important role in consensus in the policy-making process by what they select to report and by how they frame the issue. During the last two decades, the U.S. policymakers and human rights activists have implemented many strategies to formulate public awareness and have sought support for their anti-trafficking endeavors (Fahy & Farrell, 2009). Controversially, the most effective strategy was to link the human trafficking issue to “border criminal justice and national security threats” (Fahy & Farrell, 2009, p.617). However, as Pajnik (2010) said, “Immigration is crucial for certain people’s survival because of economic and political situations of their nation as well as the change of the world order” (p. 49), and more complicated socio-economic problems must be assessed in media framing of anti-trafficking (Pajnik, 2010).

In the case of the North Korean trafficking victims, their desperate political and economic circumstances should be measured in establishing an anti-trafficking strategy. Further, by focusing on serious human rights abuses in the case, the involved governments, international organizations (e.g., the U.N.), human rights and women’s rights organizations, and international media have to work together to help the trafficking victims not to be repatriated by Chinese officials and to provide the victims with chances to defect to liberal nations.

To achieve this goal, media must not heavily depend on government sources, which mostly reflect the powerful politicians’ perceptions and opinions. Gulati (2011) argued that the news media select certain background, facts, and translations, and especially particular sources
to choose and cite in news stories. Researchers discovered that the news media would rather provide the stories given by the policymakers to advocate dominant views than stimulate the circumstances of the argument (Gulati, 2011).

However, some researchers also showed that the media can help readers to provide alternative perspectives by getting away from the government frame. On September 2, 2009, in an interview with the *Los Angeles Times*, Laura Ling, U.S. journalist who was captured by North Korean guards while investigating the human trafficking of North Korean women, said, “We believe journalists have a responsibility to shine light in dark places. That was our goal on this story. We felt it was important to raise awareness about the harsh reality facing North Korean defectors who live in terror of being sent back to their homeland” (Ling & Lee, 2009). As Ling noted, journalists’ indefatigable spirit to seek truth and protect the weak against the strong can make great changes for the victims.

**Limitations and Future Research**

North Korea is the party to the trafficking victims; however, North Korean media could not be analyzed because currently they were unavailable. The study could have benefitted from examining the North Korean news media. Future research could analyze the North Korean media coverage of the trafficking issue to provide North Korea’s perceptions of the issue.

The study also could have been strengthened by combining it with other types of research methods, such as surveys and interviews of journalists who reported on the trafficking case to discover the ways the journalists framed their news stories.
In the analysis of editorials and columns on North Korea published in the major conservative and progressive newspaper of South Korea, the results showed that the two newspapers revealed different perspectives in certain categories, such as North Korean human rights and inter-Korean relationships (Shin & Burke, 2008). Additional analysis of the political leanings of the examined newspapers may have yielded different results of this study.

This study only analyzed the print media. The journalism industry has been drastically changed by new technologies, which have created diverse forms of media and expanded coverage to diverse audiences. The result of the analysis with the same theme of the study could be different, depending on media outlets, such as broadcasting, cable, and Internet media, by displaying alternative perspectives regarding the issue of the North Korean women defectors and victims of human trafficking.

**Conclusion and Recommendations**

The textual analysis of the coverage of North Korean women defectors and victims of human trafficking revealed that the political relationship between the United States, Great Britain, South Korea, and North Korea affected the way each country’s newspaper reported the issue. As Chomsky (2005) argued in *Hegemony or Survival*, the elite in the U.S. have followed an "Imperial Grand Strategy" after World War II to dominate international hegemony by political and economic strategies. To maximize this value, the media financed by the elite have been forced to provide particular views and opinions that support their agenda by ignoring democracy and human rights issues (Chomsky, 2005).
According to Chomsky, the North Korean trafficking victims are worthy victims for the U.S. policymakers because the great numbers and the horrible incidents of the victims may help the U.S. politicians further antagonize the enemy nation, North Korea. However, the trafficking victims must never be re-victimized by any nation’s politicians or journalists. The U.S. politicians must clearly acknowledge the circumstances and use their dominant influence in Asia as leverage to resolve the trafficking issue while seeking the multilateral security strategy in the region.

In spite of the increasing evidence regarding the cruelty of the North Korean dictatorship, no organization has been allowed to visit North Korea to investigate human rights violations. The predicament of North Koreans has not changed since the beginning of the exodus. Effective international pressure must be employed to change the inhuman stance and policy of the Chinese government with regard to North Korean refugees.

To adjust the attitude of the Chinese government towards North Korean refugees, journalists can play a significant role in enacting social justice, not by counting on governmental sources or defectors to obtain news stories, but by investigating the trafficking issues. To achieve this goal, journalists should publicize the Chinese government’s mistreatment of North Korean defectors and provide media coverage of victims of human trafficking and the government’s human rights violations on North Koreans. The media could publicize topics including the Chinese government’s failure to identify North Korean refugees as political asylum seekers; Chinese official’s collaboration in trafficking North Korean women; rejection of granting citizenship to children born from North Korean women defectors; Chinese government’s effort to eradicate North Korean refugees in China; arrest of human rights
activists who help North Korean refugees; and repatriation of the defectors to North Korea, which results in tortures, execution, and imprisonment (Snyder, 2012).

The value of news must be decided by journalists or the public, not by policymakers, media owners, or advertisers. Therefore, in reporting the trafficking issues, journalists must be able to observe objectively, not within ideologies or frames provided by politicians. Particularly when covering the actions of the Chinese government, journalists are often strongly encouraged to present the agendas of policymakers or media investors (Chomsky, 2005). Journalists should resist this pressure and fight to maintain their objective viewpoints.

By doing so, journalists will succeed in revealing the horrible situations of the trafficking victims and expose the victims’ situations to the international community. Further, if media succeed in clearly identifying the North Korean women defectors as victims of human trafficking and rape, more nations or human rights organizations will participate in finding an answer to their problematic situation by pushing the U.N. Human Rights Committee, as well as the Chinese, South Korean, and the U.S. governments.
REFERENCES


http://www.refworld.org/pdfid/47a6eba50.pdf


86


Hughes, D. M. (2000). The “Natasha” trade: The transnational shadow market of


United Nations.


doi:10.1177/1468794106058874


doi: http://dx.doi.org/10.1057/palgrave.ces.8100164


doi: 10.1080/09512748.2011.566349


Snyder, A. S. (2012, October 16). Fleeing North Korea through 'Asia's underground railroad'


discourse about the August 1995 Calvin Klein jeans advertising campaign.


