

“Patriotism Begins with a Love of Courtyard”

Rescaling Charismatic Landscapes in North Korea¹

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ABSTRACT

Moments of developmental commemoration seem acutely important within the political articulations of North Korea. National Tree Planting day and other days in which political institutions engage with the nation's landscapes and topographies are seen as vital with Pyongyang's narrative of political charisma and theatrics. Sometimes elements of these articulations and campaigns appear with a distinct local or historical focus, and whose narrative subjectivity seems somewhat removed from the grander or more contemporary political thematics.

This paper seeks to engage and consider with these possibly more abstract and diffuse moments of political narrative, utilising a methodological framework supported by the work of Heonik Kwon and Byung-ho Chung and their reconsideration of Clifford Geertz and Max Weber's analysis on the place of charisma and theatre within political interactions, by Denis Cosgrove and Noel Castree in their articulation of landscape and terrain as symbolic and socially or politically constructed and finally by recent reconfigurations of the nature and utility of the scale as process from the work of Geographers such as Neil Smith and Erik Swyngedouw.

In particular the paper encounters the courtyard of a Mr Ri Song-ryong and his family and a number of other participants and terrains within North Korea's political narratives and

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campaigns. With methodologies and conceptual structures in mind it analyses the substructures and transformative powers present in these political-social manifestations, assessing the impact on landscape and terrain and the utilities of scale, scaling and re-scaling in the transference of charisma from one temporality or terrain to another.

Keywords: North Korea, Charismatic Politics, Political Geographies, Scale, Constructed Landscapes.

RESUMEN

Los momentos conmemorativos del desarrollismo parecen tener suma importancia para las articulaciones políticas de Corea del Norte. El Día Nacional de Plantación de Árboles y otras jornadas singulares en las cuales las instituciones políticas se comprometen con los paisajes y la topografía de la nación, se perciben como vitales para el discurso de Pyongyang sobre el carisma político y la teatralidad. A veces, los elementos de estas articulaciones y campañas aparecen con un enfoque local o histórico distinto, con una subjetividad narrativa que parece un tanto alejada de las temáticas políticas grandiosas o más contemporáneas.

En este trabajo se busca involucrar y considerar estos momentos, posiblemente, más abstractos y difusos de narrativa política, utilizando un marco metodológico apoyado en los trabajos de Heonik Kwon y Byung-ho Chung y su reconsideración de Clifford Geertz y el análisis de Max Weber sobre la posición del carisma y el teatro dentro de las interacciones políticas; de Denis Cosgrove y Noel Castree en su articulación del paisaje y terreno simbólico y social o políticamente construido. Y, finalmente, en las últimas reconfiguraciones de la naturaleza y la utilidad de la escala como proceso, a partir de la obra de geógrafos como Neil Smith y Erik Swyngedouw.

En particular, el documento coincide en el huerto del señor Ri Song-ryong y su familia, así como con toda una serie de participantes y terrenos propios de las narrativas y las campañas políticas de Corea del Norte. A partir de determinadas metodologías y estructuras conceptuales, analiza las subestructuras y poderes transformadores presentes en estas manifestaciones político-sociales, valorando el impacto sobre el paisaje y el terreno y las herramientas de escala, escalando y re escalando en la transferencia de carisma de una temporalidad o terreno, a otro.

Palabras clave: Corea del Norte, carisma político, geografía política, escala, paisajes construidos

RESUM

Els moments commemoratius del desenvolupisme semblen tenir gran importància per a les articulacions polítiques de Corea del Nord. El Dia Nacional de Plantació d'Arbres i altres jornades singulars en les quals les institucions polítiques es comprometen amb els paisatges i la topografia de la nació, es perceben com vitals per al discurs de Pyongyang sobre el carisma polític i la teatralitat. De vegades, els elements d'aquestes articulacions i campanyes apareixen amb un enfocament local o històric diferent, amb una subjectivitat narrativa que sembla un tant allunyada de les temàtiques polítiques grandioses o més contemporànies.

En aquest treball es busca involucrar i considerar aquests moments, possiblement, més abstractes i difusos de narrativa política, utilitzant un marc metodològic recolzat en els treballs de Heonik Kwon i Byung-ho Chung i la reconsideració de Clifford Geertz i l'anàlisi de Max Weber sobre la posició del carisma i el teatre dins de les interaccions polítiques; de Denis Cosgrove i Noel Castree en la seva articulació del paisatge i terreny simbòlic i social o políticament construït. I, finalment, en les últimes reconfiguracions de la natura i la utilitat de l'escala com a procés, a partir de l'obra de geògrafs com Neil Smith i Erik Swyngedouw.

En particular, el document coincideix al hortet del senyor Ri Song-ryong i la seva família, així com amb tot un seguit de participants i terrenys propis de les narratives i les campanyes polítiques de Corea del Nord. A partir de determinades metodologies i estructures conceptuals, analitza les subestructures i poders transformadors presents en aquestes manifestacions polític-socials, valorant l'impacte sobre el paisatge i el terreny i les eines d'escala, escalant i re escalant en la transferència de carisma d'una temporalitat o terreny, a un altre.

Paraules clau: Corea del Nord, carisma polític, geografia política, escala, paisatges construïts

Prefatory Note:

As much as possible the Romanization of Korean words in this article conforms to the practice styles and approach of the appropriate country, Romanization strategies being considerably different between the two Korean nations. There is one exception to this. For ease of use and continuity of style, the author has not adopted the North Korean conventions for the spelling of the names of its leaders and so hyphenates first names in the style of South Korea.

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“Monday is the Tree-Planting Day, the significant day when President Kim Il Sung kindled the first torch for the movement for planting trees...To turn all mountains into golden and treasure ones is the behests of the President and leader Kim Jong Il and their lifetime desires...Only when lots of trees are planted and cultivated is it possible to protect the land and turn the mountains and fields of the country into a socialist fairyland...Whoever plants and cultivates even a single more tree is a true patriot.” (*Rodong Sinmun*, 2015a)

Rodong Sinmun, the national newspaper of North Korea's article marking National Tree Planting Day in 2015 is of course not the sort of journalistic exercise the reader might encounter on days of arboreal commemoration elsewhere in the world. While Arbor Day is an important day in both the United States of America, Japan and South Korea -to name but a few-, and the United Nations has now instigated an International Day of Forests (United Nations, 2015), the reader can su-

rely never expect the occasion to be marked with such fervent, nationalistic ardour as is apparent from Rodong Sinmun's statement. The reader could be familiar with other aspects of North Korean statecraft and governmentality, such as its acute and distinct personality cult surrounding the Kim family, its determined nuclear and military aspirations, assertions and capacity and its curiously aggressive, urgent, hectoring diplomatic denunciations of other nations (Saxonberg, 2013). Equally the reader might be familiar with North Korea's position within the narrative of the Cold War and the post-Cold War, of its seemingly determined failure to transition to more conventional forms of politics and governance and of its disastrous period of economic, social and environmental collapse following 1992 (Noland, M et al, 2001). However the reader is unlikely to be that well versed in the tone, tenor and content of North Korea's conception of what else might be patriotic or nationalistic outside the realm simply of whole hearted, full-voiced veneration of the latest member of the Kim family to assume its Premiership.

This paper seeks to therefore extend and develop the reader's conceptual framework surrounding North Korean political process and praxis, allowing a glimpse at the wider eco-system of political and nationalistic energies that make up the landscape of political narrative for its residents. The paper will utilise and engage with terminological, methodological and conceptual tools derived from the field of academic Geography to examine the enactments, performances and embedding of national level thematics within the more personal, local level of the everyday. Doing so through themes of political narrative manifest in North Korean in 2013, such as the "Patriotism begins with a love of courtyard" campaign, the paper concludes with a consideration of such campaigns as being carrier signals for both political authority and legitimacy and national mythology and mythography.

Methodologies, Conceptions and Literatures - Charismatic Politics

As is perhaps clear from the introduction and from the concerns of this paper, its author is in disciplinary terms a Human Geographer as much as he is connected to the field of North Korean or Korean Studies more generally. While in due course the paper will introduce the conceptual framework through which it will consider the nature of transfers and interactions within and between social and political classes in North Korea, there are a great many more frames considered by and underpinning the author's research and production that the reader equally may not be aware of, and which require some introduction prior to the main task of the paper. Politics and political manifestations in our current global hegemony of Social Democracy and Neo or other Liberal forms of Capitalism, are of course not commonly referred to as charismatic or utilising charisma. Politics

elsewhere has become less and less charismatic as the 21st century has gone on, its action and enactments more and more managerial, functional and reductive. North Korea of course is an outlier in many things, and in its political forms, typologies and structures this is absolutely the case.

Within North Korean studies the current bench-mark work on the nature of its political manifestation must surely be Kwon and Chung's (2012) landmark work, *Beyond Charismatic Politics*. This text and sparked much consideration of the nature of North Korea's politics and the impact of its historiographical record and narrative on the perceived and presented legitimacy of its regime and system. The author of this paper has utilised Kwon and Chung's thesis along with analyses derived from the field of Geography to assert that not only in North Korea is there a charismatic politics, but that this political form itself begets what could be termed a charismatic landscape. Further, he has sought to examine how these constructions in the case of North Korea might impact and transform its landscape.

In *Beyond Charismatic Politics*, Kwon and Chung establish a framework for understanding and analysing North Korea's political space from the perspective of a politics of 'theatrics'. This conception of theatrical politics expands the realm of political and ideological practice into the commemorative and demonstrative spaces of politics, into gymnastics and 'mass' displays and into the monuments and monoliths that once supported the personality cult of Kim Il-sung and that work to support Kim Jong-un's reign. Such theatrics and theatricality demands that these spaces, places and concepts share, at some level a degree of charisma deriving in political science from 'Weberian' conceptions of political governance (Weber, 1947). Kwon asserts that a theatric form of politics has been evidenced and analysed by the Dutch anthropologist Clifford Geertz in his studies of the pre-colonial, 19th century Negara-era state of Bali and its repertoire of complex, performative rituals of state and power (Geertz, 1980).

Kwon and Chung utilise this analytic lens to consider North Korea's historiographical and narrative approach and voluminous cultural output including operas such as *Sea of Blood* and films such as *The Flower Girl*, but they also apply this lens to manifestations of an institutional culture of revolutionary commemoration as seen in the Revolutionary Martyrs Cemetery in Pyongyang and the national repertoires of gift giving and exchange with the key example being the International Friendship Museum at Manpok Valley. Combined, these varied forms of political practice form a praxis of theatrical or charismatic politics. This praxis of course enacted in the landscapes of North Korea, the performance requiring a terrain in which to occur and develop. Hence charismatic or theatric politics would be enacted or performed upon charismatic landscapes. But how might a

landscape, a natural space become charismatic or theatric, let alone connected with politics or political narratives. For the conceptual answers this paper must move the reader to the realm of academic Geography.

Constructed and Charismatic Landscapes

In his book, *Social Nature: Theory, Practice and Politics, the British Human*, Geographer Noel Castree (2001) deploys a tripartite set of definitions addressing contemporary conceptions of nature. Firstly, Castree notes that “The familiar distinction between society and nature indicates a long-standing assumption that nature is external and different to society” (Castree, 2001, 6). Such thinking he regards as representative of much of the Platonic root of ‘Western’ or ‘modern’ political or social theorisation, roots in which universalised concepts must inherently be rendered into dualistic modalities of being or not being. Thus, the social, political and human world is essentially and radically different from the world of the natural and the environmental. Castree also notes that since the European Enlightenment, which embedded Platonic dualism within the roots of philosophic and social ordering, there have been other cases of such a process including “other dualisms organizing our thought, such as rural-urban, country-city and wilderness-civilisation” (Castree, 2001, 6). Secondly, nature can be mistakenly understood as ‘intrinsic’, in the sense that there is something innate, ineffable and finite about natural or environmental spaces, different from human or social existence though they appear to be in a state of constant flux. Castree, however, reminds us that the “pessimist among the ‘humans and environment’ tradition of geography take the Malthusian line that natural resources are fixed in quantity, such that population levels will outstrip them with disastrous consequences” (Castree, 2001, 7). Finally, Castree identifies that nature is also equally mistakenly understood as ‘universal’. This universalism allows for the conception that events or situations in nature will always follow a similar pattern. It thus follows that “a hydrologist studying how pesticides leak from fields of a certain soil type into rivers might use a general theory of soil water movement” (Castree, 2001, 7), but nature may also be considered universal in a ‘Gaian’ sense in that current human interaction with the natural runs counter to world order and that such action will be subject to a necessary and inevitable correction at which point the world will revert to a universal mean.

Following the lead of Castree and other ‘critical geographies’, it thus appears that multiple conceptions of nature and the natural, their interaction with political form and governmental narratives, might be possible. Aside from Castree’s framing of both mistaken and multiple approaches to nature and the natural, Denis Cosgrove’s -another British Human Geography- (1984) analysis of the con-

cept of 'landscape' could also play a key role in these interactions. Cosgrove separates land from landscape in a way that echoes the 'Platonistic' dualism of disconnection between nature itself and social or political conceptions of the natural. Placing the concept of landscape well within the field of social/political construction, he asserts that "the landscape idea represents a way of seeing – a way in which some Europeans have represented themselves and to others the world about them and their relationships with it, and through which they have commented on social relations" (Cosgrove, 1984: p. 1). Cosgrove's 'way of seeing' embeds the natural and the world of social relations well within these representations and within those forms of being, relating and producing which they represent. Thus, nature and the natural are captured within the realm of economic relations and modes of production. Indeed, Cosgrove employs the Marxian designation of capitalism's mode as being rooted in the disconnection between producer and the 'natural' ownership/control of his production, recognising that at the time of Marx's writing the latter primarily related to control of the land and/or resources is derived from the land itself. It follows, therefore, at times of modal shifts that "the land, both objectively and subjectively is implicated, and we should therefore expect it to undergo radical change during the period of the capitalist transition" (Cosgrove, 1984: p. 61).

Cosgrove identifies a number of examples of both narratives and representation of land and nature within the output of cultural production at times of modal shift, and the more practical, actualised affect upon natural landscapes at times of either colonial or capitalistic exploration. For Cosgrove, the transference of the natural in urban spaces and around the home is central to the process of relational formation during the development of capitalism as a mode of production. He focuses particularly on the application of theory to practice in Italy, identifying the social and political movement from feudalism to proto-capitalism, and its subsequent arrest in an underdeveloped state as a useful exemplar through which to analyse this process. Leaving behind the commitment demanded by cyclical seasons of agriculture and rurality, co-opters and controllers of newly generated capitalistically-derived wealth and status aimed to construct Palladian architectural pieces within new planned urban environments, which had as their mirrors carefully planned gardens and country-scapes. Cosgrove quotes Turner on this matter; "Renaissance landscape ... exists to serve mankind. Its fields and groves are carefully groomed and only rarely give way to wild ravines, spectacular vistas or deserted places" (Turner, 1963, as quoted in Cosgrove, 1984: p. 100).

These new Italian capitalistic landscapes of constructed and mediated rurality or wildness represent one form of the symbolic conquering of nature. Castree goes on to analyse the more esoteric, forthright and adventuring examples in the formative years of the United States. The transformation of the natural and lands-

cape in America, although in one sense an expression of the same capitalistic impulse responsible for re-ordering social relations and conceptions with the wild in Europe, appears a great deal more abrupt and less considered than that encountered in Italy. The European prospectors and pioneers of the 17th and 18th centuries who settled North America encountered what they understood as an unmediated, unreconstructed wild. Cosgrove thus argues that “the actions of settlers down the length of the seaboard had little if anything to do with Golden Age fantasies...Those who cleared the forests, removed stones from the fields, ploughed up virgin earth... adopted practical attitudes and quickly learned the most efficient techniques for disposing of a wilderness” (Cosgrove, 1984, p. 170).

Cosgrove and Castree’s helpful and revealing analysis, the author of this paper hopes might support the reader so that it is not too much a conceptual jump to consider that their understanding of constructed, built or created landscapes might function perfectly adequately in the North Korean case, that a charismatic politics might act on and transform a charismatic landscape. We might consider Pyongyang in particular to be a key site for such a transformation. Pyongyang as an urban, capital space, locus of political and authoritative power in North Korea has had its architectures and structures carefully analysed by scholars for their embedding of political narrative and authority. Conceiving of Pyongyang as a constructed landscape as Cosgrove might have understood it has been best articulated by Joinau (2012) in his work “The Sun and the Arrow: A Topo-Myth Analysis of Pyongyang”. Joinau envisages the landscape of Pyongyang under construction, the cities axis being reoriented “...in order to correspond to the new ideological agenda. This axis rotates slowly during the 1970s and 80s...becoming eventually a new ‘destiny axis’...to the glory of Kim Il-sung’s personal myth...” (Joinau, 2014: p. 66). This paper’s author however has sought to move beyond the urban space and cityscape of Pyongyang in other work to consider the embedding of politics within the landscapes of forestry and grassland (Winstanley-Chesters, 2012 and 2013) and the developmental infrastructure of fishing and fungus (Winstanley-Chesters, 2014a and 2014b). Equally the author believes that moving backwards into North Korea’s charismatic historiography, reveals landscapes in which both history and politics are created and constructed. In particular the border spaces between Korean and Manchuria, site of the guerrilla struggles of Kim Il-sung and the United North East Anti-Japanese army, and the slopes of Mt Paektu (Baekdu) are replete with memorials and commemorative sites through which North Koreans are expected and educated to envision their nation’s developmental process. These sites are then amplified in political and cultural narratives to embed some of the legitimatory energies encountered on the ground within contemporary social, political and cultural practices.

Scale and Scaling

Having encountered the fields of political charisma and the enactment of that political form within the landscapes of North Korea, this methodological and conceptual review will finally consider the mechanisms by which the enactment is undertaken, in particular we will consider a second methodological tool sourced from academic Geography. Scale and Scaling like much else in the field of academic theory and methodology, in the case of Geography, been subject to extensive levels of debate and contestation. Originally deriving in terminological terms from Geography's interaction with Cartography and describing those relationships between spatiality as represented on the map or other cartographic device, the physical reality represented by that cartography and the research focus or experience of those encountering either the representation or its physical manifestation (respectively Cartographic Scale, Geographic Scale and Operational Scale), scale has moved on somewhat.

Eric Swyngedouw's statement that places represented or experienced through scales are "the embodiment of social relations of empowerment and disempowerment and the arena through and in which they operate" (Swyngedouw, 1997: p. 167), suggests a recent destination for the more socially and politically conscious scholar of Geography. Building from Henri Lefebvre's assertion that space and spatiality themselves are products, social products, political products, scholars have sought to examine and investigate, as Marston puts it "...how scale making is not only a rhetorical practice; its consequences are inscribed in and are the outcome of, both everyday life and macro-level social structures..." (Marston, 2000, p. 221). These more political active or minded scholars of Human Geography have sought to deploy constructivist or de-constructivist approaches to scale in their committed scholarly engagements with Neo-Liberal Capitalism and the hegemonic power of the Liberal nation state. Holding socially and politically active, reactive or resistive movements to co-opt, capture, reconfigure or 're-destine' power relations, subjectivity and agency from one scalar level to another, these scholars are of course some distance away from the research focus of this paper. However their methodological approach and conceptual frameworks are not.

Given the charismatic political construction manifest in North Korea, which utilises as one of the core elements of its authority and legitimacy a physical engagement in terrain and space within historical memory, so avowedly temporalized, namely the Guerrilla spaces of Paektu, generating, producing and engineering through both performance, narrative and assertion a constructed landscape, would it not stand to reason, that such as social and politically constructed space could be iterated and transmitted by the processes of scale and scaling? North

Korea's political and cultural cartography in a sense is operationalised by its bureaucracy and regime at the national level. It is theorised and de or re-temporalised by this higher scale and it may be that in many circumstances it can be functionally useful in remaining at such an extensive and expansive scale. However there are moments in which territorializing the charismatic spatial output of the wider, national production is a necessity in order to more realistically underpin or develop these narratives and their legitimacy content. At such moments we witness the transfer of charismatic content from one scale, the national and the institutional, to another, the locally spatial and the locally encountered. In these instances rescaling of the charismatic social and political constructions allows and supports the embedding and embodying of the narrative and productions, not just simply within the abstract body politic of North Korea, but in the physical bodies of residents and participants and in the spaces and topographies in which that charisma is performed and enacted. These spaces, re-scalings, temporal enactments are at the core of this paper's interest and to which it will now turn. To do so it will encounter three manifestations of such scalings and re-scalings, considering in particular those vectors, signals and processes by which they are operationalised.

Patriotism begins with a love of courtyard

10

"It is bounden duty and revolutionary moral obligation of the service personnel and people of the DPRK to thoroughly embody Kim Jong Il's patriotism..." (*Ro-dong Sinmun*, 2014a)

When we consider the nature of patriotism more generally and conventionally in the social and political productions of the contemporary wider world there appears a particular texture and tone to the conception. Having been rehabilitated from enlightenment critiques, Jean-Jacques Rousseau's co-option of nationalistic fervour to underpin the modern, nation state and its democratic ideals (so under threat according to Rousseau as to require constant patriotic buffering), patriotism now serves generally the nation state and its governmental-political-industrial complexes. Citizens are patriotic when they celebrate their nation's success in war in combat, they are patriotic when they defend it from defeat and subjection, when they resist the oppressor, when they commemorate the hero, when they successfully marry their own personal commitments to wider repertoires of social and politically acceptable practice and praxis.

North Koreans therefore in an age of what has been termed *Songun* - 'military first politics' - (Vorontsov, 2006), it can easily be imagined would be patriotic if they celebrated their nation's military altercations with its enemies, they would

be patriotic if they expressed loyalty to their political and scientific leadership when they developed new technologies of resistance or defence and they would be patriotic when they commemorated the historical narratives of struggle against past colonisers and subjugators, in particular the Japanese. Of course in a sense this is very much so, especially in the presentation given by North Korean media output and official publications. Pyongyang has an elaborate and extensive socio-cultural system of commemoration of national heroes and liberators. The Revolutionary Martyrs Cemetery, Victorious Fatherland Liberation War Museum, Sinchon Massacre Museum and innumerable memorials, statues and pilgrimage sites scattered around the country make sure that the citizenry of North Korea do not lose focus on the nature and importance of their nation's military and liberation struggles (Kim, 2015 and Cathcart, 2013). An equally extensive temporal repertoire of commemorative events, days, programmes and festivals embeds these spaces of commemoration within a calendar of patriotism, which impacts deeply on North Korean's social and political lives.

Utilising an intriguing deployment of the tools of revolutionary modelling originally masterfully used by the institutions of the People's Republic of China under Mao's Great Leap Forward (Shapiro, 2001), North Korea has focused the revolutionary energy of the mass upon its leadership characters. Thus Kim Il-sung, Kim Jong-il and Kim Jong-un are transformed within this framework of commemoration and veneration into revolutionary models, in spite perhaps of their distance (in the case of the two later Kim's), from the actual topography and temporality of that revolution. This what is done, enacted and iterated by the Kim's is almost intrinsically patriotic. The quotation that begins this section attests to the necessity of embodying that patriotism within institutional practice, in particular in its case, the service personnel of the Korean People's Army. The text goes on to suggest connections between the defence of the territorial boundaries of the nation itself, Kim Jong-il's patriotism and its internalisation or embodiment: "The history of his ceaseless inspections of outposts standing guard over the country in the death-defying spirit was cherished deep in the mind of the service personnel" (Rodong Sinmun, 2014a). And finally the connection of this patriotism, commemorative will and science and technical capability is apparently manifest in North Korea's space programme, "The intense loyalty of the scientists to implement without fail the patriotic behest of him to glorify the country as a space power brought about such a miracle as the successful launch of Kwangmyongsong 3-2..." (Rodong Sinmun, 2014a).

Such cases and their articulation of a patriotic sensibility are of course singularly aggressive and combative. They are also in a sense exclusionary and cannot hope to include the entirety of North Korea's population within their repertoire of practice and action, as not everyone can currently be a member of the service per-

sonnel (even in such a highly militarised state as North Korea during the reign of Kim Jong-il). But North Korean political narratives demand universality of applicability and connection, an ultimately patriotism must have a mode in which it can be diffused beyond the scope and spaces of military and service personnel. This paper wishes to assert that just such a diffusion was undertaken in the preceding year.

First articulated within a picture article in *Rodong Sinmun*, but later utilised more widely in North Korean publications and materials, 2013's 'Patriotism' campaign was connected to the annual important Spring Land Management Campaign, held in April. This campaign itself is connected to practices of commemoration through its perceived moment of foundation in April, 1946, when Kim Il-sung, Kim Jong-suk -his first wife- and their son, Kim Jong-il -then only three years old-, climbed Munsu Hill to plant trees in an effort to rectify the deforestation that had occurred under Japanese colonialism (Kim Il-sung, 1947). This author has written elsewhere (Winstanley-Chesters, 2012) of the incredible importance of tree planting in North Korean and more generally Korean political practice. Images of political leaders and important members of their social class planting trees abound in the Korean historical record, from Count Terauchi Matsutake, first Colonial Governor General, to Park Chung-hee and Kim Il-sung and even to Kim Jong-un (Winstanley-Chesters, 2014c). However these moments of symbolic enactment are usually very obviously carefully staged in a particularly public site, so that their message and content is both contemporaneously visible and commemorated in future. Extraordinarily this campaign was focused not on dramatic, military public spaces, but on the home space of North Koreans themselves. 'Patriotism begins with a love of courtyard' first appearing in North Korean media output on March 26th, 2013 presented the reader with familial scene, apparently taken at the house of a Mr Ri Song-ryong in Sowon-ri, Byeokseong, South Hwanghae Province (Rodong Sinmun, 2013). Mr Ri, his wife and two children are standing in the courtyard of their house, planting what looks to be a small Ussuri Poplar (*Populus Ussuriensis*) together. Ri's family must be fairly affluent for North Korea, or are at least presented as such in the image, as they wear what seem like new shoes and Wellington boots, possess shiny new plastic buckets and accoutrements, a relatively spacious outdoor area and even what looks like a pet dog. Their ideological/political commitment to the status quo and the Korean Workers Party is demonstrated by one of their children's membership in the Young Pioneers, signified by the red neckerchief tie.

The Ri family by their affluence and appearance represent perhaps the most theoretically and potentially patriotic of North Korean families, they have done well (relatively) within its economic and socio-political system and are deeply connected to its institutions and their attendant practices. They manifest their

patriotism through the act of planting a tree during the Spring Land Management Campaign, doing so in their own private physical space and within the relational, social space of their family unit. This tree stands representative, both a signifier of the Party or institutional policy and its charismatic narratives and a manifestation of both their love for each other as a filial, familial unit and their incorporated love and patriotism for the Korean nation and space.

Such a combination of localized paradigms of love, affection, and passion coupled with incorporated, enacted and manifested patriotism has its root, at least for the theoreticians of 2013 presumably responsible for the campaign, in a text authored by Kim Jong-il in 1972, "Let Us Improve and Intensify the Work of Dong and Neighbourhood Units!" (Kim Jong-il, 1972). In North Korean terms, this text is to local and neighbourhood governance what the "Theses on the Socialist Rural Question" in 1964 was to agricultural and developmental policy, an ideological prism through which national themes in party policy and theory could be reflected and perhaps refracted down upon more local issues (Kim Il-sung, 1964). Kim Jong-il's assertion in this text that "patriotism stems from one's courtyard" is rooted in the developmental themes of its time, namely improvements in sanitation and building and housing design. The texts from 2013, which focus on the patriotism embedded within local or courtyard motifs (Rodong Sinmun, 2013), engage in similar developmental framing; however, by our age the policy has developed a conservational or environmental sheen.

What the "patriotism begins with a love of courtyard" campaign permits is a scalar shift in ideological and narrative manifestation from the grand, national and institutional level to a more approachable, local, and familial level, through the construction of social-political relations at that level. At this scale patriotism and their enactment and construction into nature and the environment are translated to a more social level, the political and Party thematic, embedded within personal interactions and relationships. As Swyngedouw (1997) and other social or critical geographers might see it, here the state is empowering itself through enacting and re-embodying social processes within the landscapes of personal and familial life.

Revolutionary modelling and rescaling

It must be apparent that in some senses Ri Song-ryong and his family are classical and typical revolutionary models, in the Maoist or Stakhanovite sense (Meisner, 1978 and Lu, 2001). Embodying correct socio-political practice through a rescaling of political narratives and processes from the grander scope of national and historical scale (in which legendary or slightly abstracted individuals or communities accomplish something apparently unlikely or near impossible), to

the local, contemporary scale (in which you, the reader, the participant, must interact and accomplish those practices within your own life), revolutionary modelling in North Korea in general has manifested around the personages of the Kim family, or those groups of politically committed revolutionary pioneers that forged either the initial institutions and structures of North Korea or fought for the eventual Liberation of Korea during the pre-colonial times (Winstanley-Chesters, 2015). Ri Song-ryong and his patriotic family however represent the re-scaling of the notion of the revolutionary model into a different landscape.

This section of the paper will leave behind Mr Ri, his family and their courtyard for different socio-cultural spaces, but spaces nonetheless that are re-scaled through the process of revolutionary modelling to become socially and ideologically exemplary in such a way as to privilege processes over rather more dramatic outcomes. It is something of a cliché to declare that Pyongyang's roads have rather less traffic than is usual for an East Asian city. In recent years North Korea's Party and institutional elite appear to have bought many more vehicles and its roads have much more traffic (Armstrong, 2012). This has not so far encouraged Pyongyang's city authorities to invest in more traffic lights and other organisational infrastructure, accordingly drivers at its intersections and junctions are still directed by a group of fashionably uniformed police women known as the Traffic Command Corps. These women have been the subject of the academic and touristic gaze in the past (Mizrahi, 2013), and the focus of Kim Il-sung and Kim Jong-il's interests (Branigan, 2009), but 2014 saw an extraordinary moment of focus in which a member of their team gained international prominence (Daily Telegraph, 2014).

Ri Kyong Sim, district traffic controller within Pyongyang City People's Security Bureau's Traffic Command Corps, one of those responsible for organising and directing the city's traffic, suddenly became a feature on North Korea's main news channels. On the 5th of May Ri was granted a number of the most prestigious awards in North Korea's gift. She was made a 'DPRK Hero', was granted a 'Gold Star Medal' and made a member of the 'Order of National Flag First Class', all granted by one of the most senior institutions in the government The Presidium of the Supreme People's Assembly. Why should such a person, in a fairly low position, undertaking a job which, in the North Korean institutional hierarchical pyramid in Pyongyang is fairly close to the bottom be according such extraordinary treatment? The original *KCNA* coverage reported that "Ri dedicated herself to ensuring the traffic order in the capital city and displaying the heroic self-sacrificing spirit of safeguarding the security of the headquarters of the revolution in an unexpected circumstance..." (*KCNA*, 2013).

North Korea's Rodong Sinmun newspaper and its television output on KCTV were, even given their initial reporting of such an apparently important moment, not entirely clear as to what had actually occurred. But it became apparent that Ri Kyong Sim had in the midst of a traffic accident rescued or protected a pair of images of Kim Il-sung and Kim Jong-il. Images of the leaders (and of Kim Jong-suk, Kim Il-sung's first wife and Kim Jong-il's mother) are protected by law in North Korea, revered objects which serve to remind citizens of their position at the base of the revolutionary pyramid, to assert and reinforce the regimes assertion of 'fatherly love' and to transmit its perceived charisma and authority. There are a number of examples during the Guerrilla period in which Kim Il-sung and his fellow supporters fought and harassed Japanese forces on the borders of Korean and Manchuria and from during the Korean War, when representations of important figures and physical relics of moments in those key struggles in the construction of North Korean national identity and mythology become vital to current political commemoration (*Rodong Sinmun*, 2015b). Ri Kyong Sim it seems was to be a new defender of such revolutionary narrative and imagery, her act of defence a rescaling of more urgent narratives of both national construction and defence, in line with Swyngedouw and others (Swyngedouw, 1997 and Smith, 1984) conception of this process' production of embodied social and political relations. Ultimately made this is made even more explicit by the KCNA's assertion later in the month that Ri "...devotedly defended the security of the headquarters of the revolution in the unexpected situation and rescued portraits of the great men of Mt Paektu" (KCNA, 2014). The process of social and political production rescaled in the contemporary North Korean present right back to the mythic period of the resistance to colonial power and subjectivity.

While Ri is by no means the only individual or group of individuals whose contemporary experience or interaction with a landscape impacted or embedded within North Korea's charismatic political narrative is rescaled through this process of revolutionary modelling so as to support the transfer of that narrative and its charismatic content from one scale of socio-political relations to another. In 2014 and 2015 for instance, scientific endeavour and academic research has been a key element of North Korea's developmental agenda. *Rodong Sinmun* in particular has carried a number of picture articles focused on institutions such as the Academy of Koryo Medicine (*Rodong Sinmun*, 2014b), the State Academy of Sciences (*Rodong Sinmun*, 2014c) and Biotechnology Branch Academy (*Rodong Sinmun*, 2014d). In all of these articles groups of scientists are shown engaging in their particular specialism surrounded by the landscape determined by their empirical methodologies, such as research greenhouses, clinics with medical facilities and laboratories replete with autoclaves and other technical paraphernalia. These are scientists and researchers from our contemporary time, entwined with the landscapes of North Korea and the context of its socio-political rela-

tions: as they currently manifest. However *Rodong Sinmun* also editorialises their activity in language such as “...our scientists and technicians serve in advance units in the decisive battle for the defence, system and life...For them there is no fortress invulnerable. They are revolutionaries...” (*Rodong Sinmun*, 2014e). Just as Ri Kyong Sim’s contemporary encounter with the landscape of charisma is rescaled, these anonymous scientists and academics find their everyday research terrain transmogrified into a revolutionary space, a landscape akin to the de-temporalised and de-territorialized truly charismatic landscapes of North Korea’s nationalist mythologies.

Finally before concluding, this paper will encounter instances of a reversal of this process, in which figures, instances and terrains from North Korea’s revolutionary, charismatic and semi-mythic past are themselves re-territorialised in the present by a rescaling, not simply of socio-political relations, but of topographic physicality. To do so this paper will encounter one of the more diffuse and abstract instances of charismatic connections between narrative and topography; the memorialisation of a group of birch trees at Lake Samji. The Samji ‘incident’ is incorporated within those narratives of guerrilla struggle surrounding Kim Il-sung and his supporters in the 1930’s (Biography, 2002). The importance of Mt Paektu to North Korean narratives of authority and legitimacy does not need to be overstated; Paektu is both the site of Korea’s genesis myth and legendary site of foundation for Korean kingship with the birth of Tangun (Mason, 1999). Naturally the mountain and its connected landscapes would play a role in a useful role in a mythology and mythography of national foundation. Accordingly both Kim Il-sung and his first wife Kim Jong-suk engaged in military struggle and harassment of/with Japanese colonial forces around its terrain, a struggle which is now key to North Korean politics and commemoration. While of course the mountain’s topography is incorporated and scaled in many assertive and impositional ways within North Korea’s politics and narrative, such as the inscribing of Kim Jong-il’s signature in a rock face towards its summit and the preservation of ‘sacred’ architectures upon it such as the ‘secret guerrilla camp’, It is those trees at Lake Samji which perhaps better demonstrate the process so far as topographic features are concerned.

Lake Samji in particular is recounted within North Korea’s historiography as a space at which Kim Jong-suk’s female guerrilla group rested on several occasions after altercations with Japanese forces elsewhere in the region near Mt Paektu. For that alone it would be a site of commemorative potential and connection given the importance of Kim Jong-suk within the history of the Kim dynasty. However following a particularly severe altercation in which Kim Il-sung was apparently nearly killed their developing relationship was both abstractly

confirmed and consummated in the most coy of fashions, a moment recounted by Kim Jong-suk's biography in the following terms

"Leaning on a birch tree on which spring tints were emerging, he [Kim Il-sung] posed with the commanding officers...One of them suggested to him that he should have his photo taken with Kim Jong-suk. Hearing this, Kim Jong-suk grew shy and hid behind the backs of the women guerrillas. They pushed her forward to his side. In order not to miss the moment, the "cameraman" clicked the shutter. For Kim Jong-suk, it was as good as a wedding photo..." (Biography, Biography of Kim Jong-suk, 132).

While the mountain ridge on Mt Paektu on which Kim Jong-suk saved Kim Il-sung's life is now a site of extreme levels of commemoration and forms part of an extensive educational programme for party and institutional civil servants, a visit to the charismatic topography meant to underpin their own contemporary ideological commitment, the birch trees at Lake Samji are now a key sight of revolutionary reflection and pilgrimage, the trees themselves participants in a yearly process of memorialisation, the revolutionary couple's charisma reflected and projected upon their bark, their interactions and engagements with the landscape and the energy generated by them rescaled through the process of this memorialisation and commemoration. For North Korean visiting this site temporalities are collapse by this rescaling, those revolutionary moments and campaigns of struggle, as well as the relationship which built and generated future generations of its leaderships are experienced in the present. These local pilgrims are brought into the terrain of the revolutionary moment, the slopes of Mt Paektu and the shores of Lake Samji becoming as current and manifest as Ri Song-ryong's courtyard.

Conclusion: Campaigns, Re-scalings, Topographies and Carrier Signals

Political social process the world over of course requires particular moments and spaces of crystallisation and possibility in order to deploy ideological conceptions and conceptual methodologies in such a way that they activate and are enacted upon the physical and social landscape; these are generally called political campaigns. While North Korea is unusual or an outlier in many of the ways of institutional functionality or governmentality, politics and the political process in outline under the writ of Pyongyang functions in a similar way, captured within the structures of the modern nation state as it is, and possessed of many of the same developmental and economic prerogatives, as sovereign entities and bodies the world over. Thus North Korean uses political, economic and social cam-

paigns to deploy messages, generate political authority and obtain or enact economic or technical development. This paper has of course encountered and considered a few of these campaigns as they articulated for both external and internal audiences by its media and publications infrastructure.

'Sui Generis' descriptions of North Korean politics are of course, given the suggestions in the previous paragraph not analytically useful or empirically valid. North Korea's politics is not unique and other nations have sought to maintain political and social infrastructures and approaches similar to it, other nations equally have acted diplomatically or militarily in ways the roots, ambitions, interests and outcomes of which were hard to discern, other nations have even sought to utilise extensive cults of personality. That is not to say that politics and the articulation and manifesting of political narratives in North Korea does not do interesting, sometimes extraordinary things which are worthy of study. This paper and author's framing of the impact and outcomes of North Korean political campaigns, their embeddings, enactments and articulations through the lenses of Kwon and Chung's charismatic and theatric politics, Castree and Cosgrove's symbolic, socially and politically constructed landscapes and Smith and Swynge-douw's reconfiguration of the nature of scaling, from one of pure cartography to one of social and political analysis and comment, has, it is hoped allowed the reader to encounter such political interactions in a new light – in a sense for them to have been rescaled themselves.

As Kwon and Chung make clear in their analysis of North Korean political interactions, it is not enough for a political figure, element, narrative or instance to simply be charismatic, its charisma cannot simply be innate, it must be actioned and actualised through an enacting and performance in theatrics (Kwon and Chung, 2012). Thus these campaigns as they are experienced on paper or as they are interacted with on the ground by North Korean citizens are not simply static moments of assertion, but through the act of rescaling become re-territorialised and re-temporalised in the experiential present. Rescaling allows the witness or viewer to experience something of the content of their charisma. Ri Song-ryong's courtyard would simply be a picture of Ri Song-ryong's courtyard on the page or on the screen, were its articulation not ultimately an act of rescaling. The transfer of one thematic or element of political charismatics from one scale to another, whether temporal or topographic (national to local, historical to contemporary for example), transmits and transforms the social-political process and its interaction with those landscapes and terrains involved, one to another, the act of transmission itself serving as a carrier-signal for the transformation. In this way rescaling itself becomes an actor in the social-political process of North Korea's charismatic politics, as much as those landscapes or participants who are themselves rescaled. Through such carrier signals, the spatial reality of Ri Song-

ryong's courtyard in Sowon-ri can be transformed into any courtyard and Ri Song-ryong's expression of patriotism through enactment on his own landscape can become any citizen's patriotic expression.

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