

A THIN LINE BETWEEN 'US' AND 'THE OTHER': Multiculturalism and representation
of North Korean defectors in South Korean cinema

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<p>Tiivistelmä – Abstract</p> <p>More and more immigrants have entered South Korean society in the recent few years. With the demographic changes in South Korean society, multiculturalism is getting more and more attention in the society. Cinema, as one of the main media outlets in South Korean society has also been interested in representing multicultural population in numerous films, specifically in independent films. Contemporary South Korean cinema has told stories about struggles of newly arrived immigrants. However, due the the characteristic of South Korean multiculturalism which mainly focus on ethnically different migrant groups, ethnic Koreans including North Korean defectors have been excluded from the multicultural discourses in South Korean society. In this sense, the present study explores media representation of North Korean defectors as ‘the Other’ with South Korean multiculturalism. The aim of this this is 1) To figure out how North Korean defectors who are ethnic Koreans are othered in the multicultural South Korean society, 2) To analyze North Korean defectors’ representation issues embedded in the media, 3) To encourage other researchers to conduct studies about this topic in the perspective of multiculturalism. In order to accomplish the aims, Critical Discourse Analysis was employed for the analysis method. With the use of CDA, cinematic texts of the film, The Journals of Musan were analyzed. The results showed strong criticism of capitalist South Korean society, placelessness of North Korean defectors and limited representation of North Korean defectors being incompetent, innocent and illegal. To conclude, it is important to include ethnic Koreans within South Korean multicultural discourses, not to other minority groups in the society, and to diversify representations of the Other.</p>	
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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Multiculturalism has gotten attention more than ever in current South Korean society. South Korea is experiencing different ethnic and cultural groups in the society due to the increasing number of foreigners and immigrants (Lee & Misco, 2014; Kim, 2009; Kim, 2015; Rhee, 2016). Due to demographic changes caused by the influx of foreigners and immigrants, there have been a growing number of multicultural discourses articulated in South Korean society.

The majority of studies regarding multiculturalism in South Korea have argued that South Korean multiculturalism is deeply related to ethnic nationalism presented with the term, “Dan-il minjok (“unitary nation”) or “Han minjok,” which has influenced Korean people’s attitude towards the concept of multiculturalism (Draught, 2016; Lee & Misco, 2014). Due to the long-lasting belief of mono-ethnicity, it was relatively new for South Korean people to live with ‘the Other’ which caused South Korean people to have hostility toward ‘the Other’ and to feel intimidated by “foreign threats” (Lee & Misco, 2014). However, this explanation does not apply to South Korean people’s attitude towards people who share the same bloodline, ethnic Koreans such as North Korean defectors (Bae, 2016).

Even though North Korean defectors make a small part within migrant population in South Korea, they have a unique position in South Korean society due to historical and socio-political reasons. Korean peninsula went through Korean War during 1950-1953 and was separated into two – North and South Korea. Ever since, Korean peninsula has been one of the few divided countries in the world. North Korean people has long been considered as “us” to South Korean people throughout the Korean history as people from two Koreas share the same ethnicity and a huge part of history. Therefore, North Korean defectors are not considered as complete others considering how other migrant groups with different ethnicity

and nationality are treated as complete others in the society (Bae, 2016). However, two Koreas have been separated and have developed differently for a long period of time. Therefore, there exist socio-cultural differences between people from two different societies. South Korea has developed to a capitalist, democratic and globalized society, while North Korea has become a communist, socialist and isolated society (Kim, 2012). Due to these socio-cultural differences, North Korean defectors are not considered as complete “us” either, which caused the ambiguous position of North Korean defectors in South Korean society.

Most of the efforts to understand North Korean culture and people are limited to the focus on the “Han minjok” discourses (Lee & Misco, 2014), which put an emphasis on the sameness and similarities between two Koreas and do not focus on the differences between two Koreas. Due to the fact that North Korean people share the same bloodline as South Korean people, multicultural discourses in South Korea which mainly put an emphasis on ethnic nationalism as the biggest problem, do not tend to focus on North Korean defectors (Bae, 2016). Despite sharing the same ethnicity, North Korean defectors are still marginalized in the society and considered as the Other since there exist clear socio-cultural differences between people from two Koreas. In this sense, it is important to conduct researches about North Korean defectors from the perspective of multiculturalism in South Korea and include North Korean defectors in the South Korean multicultural discourses.

In terms of representation of the Other, media has the ability to shape people’s thoughts and attitudes toward ‘the Other’ (Kamenova, 2014). This is the reason it is essential to examine how media representations reconstruct multicultural discourses. As South Korea is paying more and more attention to multiculturalism, South Korean cinema has tried to shed a light on multicultural issues and gained much attention (Bae, 2016). Currently, there is a

genre called ‘다문화 영화 (*Tamunhwa Yonghwa*, multicultural film)’ which specifically handles multicultural issues embedded in South Korean society.

In terms of representation of North Korean defectors, South Korean cinema only recently started to pay attention to North Korean defectors. Nowadays, there has been an effort to tell stories about real lives of North Korean defectors. The stories about the struggles North Korean defectors have faced in South Korean society were specifically told in independent films (Bae, 2016). Therefore, there have been scarce studies which specifically linked representation of North Korean defectors and multiculturalism so far. This is the reason more studies on representations of North Korean defectors in multicultural South Korean cinema need to be conducted.

For the reasons mentioned above, I will examine how North Korean defectors are represented in contemporary multicultural South Korean cinema in this thesis.

1.2 Aim of the Study

Aims of this thesis are the following:

1. To figure out how North Korean defectors who are ethnic Koreans are othered in the multicultural South Korean society
2. To analyze North Korean defectors’ representation issues embedded in the media
3. To encourage other researchers to conduct studies about this topic in the perspective of multiculturalism

In order to accomplish this goal, this thesis seeks to answer the following research question.

RQ: How are North Korean defectors represented in contemporary multicultural South Korean cinema?

1.3 Structure of the Study

In order to answer the research question, there will be following sections in this thesis: media representation of the other, multicultural South Korea and North Korean defectors, methodology, results, discussion and conclusion. For the section, media representation of the Other, the literature review of the concept of representation and ‘the Other’, and media representation of the Other will be included as research rationale. In the section, multicultural South Korea and North Korean defectors, context and discourses of South Korean multiculturalism and North Korean defectors in South Korean society will be reviewed. Textual analysis from the perspective of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) will be employed as the research methodology of this thesis and there will be justifications of the selection of the methodology for the study in the methodology section. Also, data collection and more detailed analysis procedure will be included in this part. The South Korean film, *The Journals of Musan*, will be analyzed and the findings of the analysis will be presented in the results. In the discussion and conclusion section, there will be interpretations and discussions of the findings, also research questions will be answered.

2 MEDIA REPRESENTATION OF THE OTHER

2.1 Representation of the Other

2.1.1 What is representation?

Along with the increase in population moving to a new life destination, a great number of media scholars have been conducted researches with a focus on media representation of these new people in the society, so-called “the Other”. In order to explore how media has represented “the Other” in the society, it is noteworthy to know about the concept of “representation” first.

The definition of representation by Stuart Hall (1997) is, “the production of meaning of the concepts in our minds through language” (p. 16). He elaborated further that representation connects concept and language so that we can refer to objects, people or events in real life and even those in imaginary worlds. He also provided two representational systems. First system concerns mental concepts/representations. It is about “different ways of organizing, clustering, arranging and classifying concepts, and of establishing complex relations between them” (Hall, 1997, p. 17). This conceptual system, in other words, conceptual maps, enables mental representation of the concepts of things in the world. In order to exchange and share meaning and concepts, we need a common language. Thus, the second part of Hall’s systems of representation is language. A common language enables us to connect the concepts with signs, which means written texts, certain sounds or visible images with meaning. In other words, signs are a translation system, which translate our ideas into words, sounds or images so that people can communicate with other people with these translated signs. ‘Language’ here has a broader meaning. It also includes things which are not linguistic, such as visual images, gesture, fashion, traffic lights and even music. Along with Hall, Foucault was also interested in representation (Hobbs, 2008). However, Foucault focused more on the representation of knowledge, the context of how the representations are

formed, obtain meaning, and are applied (Hall, 1997; Hobbs, 2008, p. 6). Foucault related representation to the notion of discourse and affected researches regarding representation and discourses (Hobbs, 2008, p. 7). Webb (2009) also discussed representation and covered various terms and issues regarding representation in her book, "Understanding Representation." According to her, what matters in terms of representation are: "who is performing the representation; what does it mean; and what effects does it have" (p. 2). She discussed main issues regarding representation including representation in mass media. She argued that mass media has a "huge signifying power" (pp. 108-109). She asserted, regardless of the form of the media, mass media widely influences the world by repeatedly telling stories and ideas. Consequently, it is easy that mass media representations look like truths (Webb, 2009, p. 109). This is the main reason why media representations matter. Mass media tends to repeat dominant, mainstream representations, which can result in having power to create an ideology which can affect people's perception of 'the Other' (Webb, 2009; Bourdieu, 1975).

2.1.2 'The Other' and othering

Numerous scholars discussed 'the Other' and othering (Hall, 1997; Valdivia, 2017; Korte, 2007). In his book chapter, "The Spectacle of the Other," Stuart Hall (1997) explained how stereotyping creates the notion of "the Other". According to Hall, stereotyping is the set of representational practices which exaggerate certain characteristics about a person and fix them. In this sense, stereotyping is the process of reducing, essentializing, naturalizing and fixing the differences. In addition to this, Hall called stereotyping "a strategy of 'splitting'" (Hall, 1997, p. 258) and argued that it regards the division between what is normal and what is not. Therefore, stereotyping distinguishes what is accepted and what is not, what is appropriate and what is not, what belongs and what does not, insiders and outsiders,

ultimately, Us and Them/The Other. As a result, it causes exclusion of ‘what is different’. In other words, stereotyping “fixes boundaries, and excludes everything which does not belong” (Hall, 1997, p. 258). This division and exclusion cause the bonding of ‘us’ and expel ‘the Other’ who are somehow ‘different’. In addition, Hall argued that there is a relevance between stereotyping and power. Power directly affects the excluded group, ‘the Other’ in the society. Power categorizes people following social norms and makes the excluded group as ‘the Other’. Valdivia (2017) discussed the concept of othering. His definition of othering is, “a strategy that reinforces the mainstream by differentiating individuals and groups and relegating them to the margins according to a range of socially constructed categories” (p. 133). In other words, othering is about categorizing groups of people into in-group and out-group. According to Valdivia, othering is related to the concepts such as marginalization, in-group and out-group and social differences. Concepts of in-group and out-group employed to theories such as social identity and self-categorization theory are also connected to social categorizations such as we and they, us and them, which can lead to othering. Korte (2007) pointed out that social identity strengthens similarities within in-group and differences of out-group. He also argued that out-groups/the Other tend to be discriminated, marginalized and stereotyped due to this tendency of social identity.

2.2 Media Representation of the Other

Throughout the years, scholarship has shown a great interest in media representation of minority groups who are considered as ‘the Other’ (see Fürsich, 2010; Kamenova, 2014; Law & Lee, 2012; Ng, Choi & Chan, 2018; Vestre, 2011; Nakamatsu, 2005; Kumpis, 2015; Lie, 2008). Fürsich (2010)’s study about media and the representation of others provided a general overview of media scholarship within cultural-critical paradigm with a focus on representation of others. According to Fürsich, in terms of the media representations of

minority groups, scholars have had a great interest in problematic stereotypes. Media tends to stereotypically represent minority groups through excluding them from media coverage or by limited representations of them. Media has depicted minority groups as “different, exotic, special, essentialised or even abnormal” (Fürsich, 2010, p. 116). Fürsich asserted that there are historically established stereotypical representations and several factors kept these stereotypical depictions to be continued; genre conventions, production practices or economic pressure. There are three factors that keep traditional stereotypical representations persisted. First of all, the fact that mass media is omnipresent, saturated and repeated makes traditional representations last longer. Second, commercial media that targets mainstream audiences is not able to represent in more complicated way rather than just traditional way. Lastly, it is often elites of the society that take control of the media so that changes in traditional representations are not easy to make. Kamenova (2014) argued that media is capable of framing attitudes and discourses and affecting the reactions and behavior within the society. She stated further that media’s ability in influencing what people think is strengthened when society lacks direct contact of ‘Otherness’ and particularly immigrants who are considered as ‘the Other’. In real life, very few people who fall into category of majority have had direct contact with immigrants (Kamenova, 2014). Kamenova (2014) asserted that this is the reason those few people in the majority group tend to perceive the immigrants depending on the knowledge and information through media. She also put an emphasis on the importance of media discourse that it is related to relations between “we” and “the Other.” By taking a look at othering in media, it is possible to know about the Other and how they feel about being othered, accepted and rejected, also their perceptions of us (Kamenova, 2014). In this regard, it is appropriate to explore media representation of the Other for the present study which is about multicultural ‘Other’ in the society.

In order to analyze media representation of ‘the Other’ in South Korean cinema, it is necessary to explore examples from other East Asian counterparts regarding representing ‘the Other’ in media. As North Korean defectors are immigrants, I focused on representation of immigrant groups in the media. Hong Kong and Japan share the similarities with South Korea for being capitalist, globalized societies to which more and more immigrants move. Hong Kong is a multi-cultural country being the one of the international cities in Asia. It is known that Hong Kong has both Eastern and Western cultures, being harmonious multicultural society where various ethnic minorities live peacefully (Law & Lee, 2012). However, Law and Lee (2012) pointed out that the image of open and harmonious society is self-positioned by the Hong Kong government and indicated that multiculturalism in Hong Kong is problematic. According to him, in fact, the population Hong Kong consists of majority group of ethnic Chinese and minority groups of non-Chinese people. Despite the fact that there exist various ethnic minority groups in Hong Kong, multiculturalism in Hong Kong failed to ensure equality, safety, freedom from discrimination to ethnic minorities (Law & Lee, 2012). Consequently, ethnic minorities have experienced severe discrimination and exclusion in the society (Law & Lee, 2012). In this context of multiculturalism in Hong Kong, a study by Ng, Choi and Chan (2018) showed that media in Hong Kong portrays asylum seekers and refugees in a very negative way. Asylum seekers and refugees are framed as “fake refugees” and “criminals” justifying anti-refugee atmosphere in the country. The other example terms to describe asylum seekers and refugees were: “huge government cost,” “work illegally and earn money,” “crime committed,” and “abusing the system,” which negatively represent asylum seekers and refugees in Hong Kong. This atmosphere is taken advantage of for political reasons, as appeared in Ng, Choi and Chan’s research results that “pro-establishment”

side of camps intended the negative depiction of asylum seekers and refugees to gain public opinions supporting tougher refugee policy.

Taking a look at Japanese society, numerous foreigners and immigrants have entered Japanese society (Vestre, 2011; Kim & Oh, 2012). There are various migrant groups such as those who remained after the war, migrant workers, foreign brides and ethnic Japanese people moving back to Japan etc. (Vestre, 2001; Kim & Oh, 2012; Nakamatsu, 2005). *Zainichi*, Koreans living in Japan, are one of the biggest ethnic minority groups who came to Japan by immigration. Representation of *Zainichi* Koreans in Japanese media has been influenced by historical contexts (Kumpis, 2015). Migration of Koreans started along with the beginning of colonial rule of Japan in Korea, from 1910. Korean migrant workers usually had low-paid and dangerous jobs (Lie, 2008). In addition, not so many *Zainichi* Koreans were well-educated then (Lie, 2008), so that Japanese people saw Koreans as having low status and being uneducated, being involved with physical, dirty and dangerous work (Lie, 2008, p. 5). Furthermore, Lie (2008) argued that negative rumors about Koreans affected the image of Koreans very negatively. After the war, there were changes but these changes did not affect pre-war stereotypes of Korean people as being criminals, doing illegal things and being violent etc. (Lie, 2008, p. 147) and these stereotypes continued after the war as well. Kumpis (2015) argued that Japanese mass media greatly influenced the process of constructing negative stereotypes towards Korean people, particularly in the late twentieth century. More specifically, international issues were often discussed in media, for example, Yasukuni shrine visits of Japanese public officers, visits of South Korean president to disputed islands or military threats by North Korea. These international diplomatic issues constantly created negative stereotypes towards a certain culture, as well as *Zainichi* Koreans. The results of Kumpis (2015) showed that most of the images of *Zainichi* Koreans are negative. The

analysis of the articles of The Japan Times, Zainichi Koreans are depicted as “disadvantaged, repressed, discriminated ethnic minority in unwelcoming Japanese society” (Kumpis, 2015, p. 63).

3 MULTICULTURAL SOUTH KOREA AND NORTH KOREAN DEFECTORS

In order to analyze the representation of North Korean defectors in South Korean cinema in the perspective of multiculturalism, multicultural discourses articulated in South Korean context, the status of North Korean defectors residing in South Korea and the way North Korean people have been represented need to be explored before the analysis.

Prior to the literature review regarding South Korean multiculturalism and North Korean defectors in South Korean society, it is important to briefly present a historical context of the division of South and North Korea and differences between two Koreas. After Japan's colonization rule over Korean peninsula was over, Korean peninsula was divided into North and South Korea separately by foreign forces such as socialist Russia and capitalist United States (Stallings, 2013). Due to the influence of China and Russia, North Korea developed as a communist, socialist society whereas South Korea developed as a capitalist, democratic society being influenced by United States (Stallings, 2013; Kim, 2012). Consequently, two different governments were settled in each Korea – Democratic People's Republic of Korea in North Korea and Republic of Korea in South Korea. After the division of Korean peninsula, two Koreas have developed differently. In North Korea, Kim Jong Il's military-first economy and policy focused on the idea of protecting North Korea from "enemy" outside of North Korea, which leads to international isolation of North Korea (Stallings, 2013). In South Korea, president Park's military government dictatorship made South Korea much wealthier, but many South Korean citizens had to sacrifice their lives due to the dictatorship and people started to fight for true democracy and freedom (Kim, 2012). Also, unlike North Korea, South Korea opened a door to the international community and actively interacted with other countries, which made South Korea develop into a globalized society (Kim, 2012).

3.1 Multiculturalism in South Korea

3.1.1 Emergence of South Korean multiculturalism

Total population of South Korea in 2018 was 51,629,512, and registered foreigners in South Korea in 2018 was 2,367,607, which was approximately 4.6% of entire South Korean population (KOSIS - Korean Statistical Information Service). According to KOSIS, registered foreigners had gradually increased, by 3.5% in 2014 to 4.6% in 2018. This shows that more and more foreigners enter South Korea and contribute to demographic changes in South Korean society. The term, “multiculturalism” has become an important concept within South Korean society as South Korean population has gone through these demographic changes and has accepted a lot of migrant population recently (Kim, 2009; Ahn, 2012).

Parrenãs and Kim (2011) argued that there are several factors for the increasing number of immigration and presented that those factors are: the shortage of labor forces, low birth rate, and rapidly aging population. This can be applied to Prey (2011)’s explanation for immigration tendency in South Korean society. According to Prey (2011), South Korean society lacks labor forces, has low birth rate, and rapidly aging population, which results in the increasing number of immigrants. This led to the high level of dependence on migrant workers and foreign brides to solve these issues.

South Korea is one of the countries with the lowest birth rates, also, is one of the most rapidly aging countries in the world (Prey, 2011). Consequently, South Korea has been suffering from lack of labor forces and has highly depended on migrant workers from other Asian countries. Prey (2009) argued that migrant workers are mainly employed to the jobs in manufacturing and construction industries which more and more native Korean people tend to avoid, so-called 3D jobs (“dirty”, “dangerous”, and “difficult”), which led to the increase in migrant worker population (Prey, 2011).

The late 1990s' explosive increase in number of "international marriages," there has been a steady increase in marriage migrant population as well (Prey, 2011). As South Korean men in rural areas had difficulties in getting married due to the lack of women in rural areas, they started importing brides from other Asian countries such as China, Vietnam, Cambodia, the Philippines, Thailand etc. (Prey, 2011). The increase in numbers of marriage migrants resulted in a policy shift towards multiculturalism and the South Korean government put an effort to establish policies to handle 'multicultural families' issues in the society (Prey, 2011).

The two biggest migrant groups in South Korean society are migrant workers and foreign brides. Besides those two groups, there are other migrant groups such as ethnic Koreans from different countries and cultures, including North Korean defectors (Bae, 2016). However, ethnic Koreans population tends to be excluded from the South Korean multicultural discourses due to mono-ethnicity myth and the problem with the usage of the term, 'multiculturalism' in South Korean society (Bae, 2016).

3.1.2 Mono-ethnicity myth

Researchers have argued that mono-ethnicity ideology is embedded in South Korean multiculturalism (Lee & Misco, 2014; Draught, 2016; Prey, 2011). The mono-ethnicity ideology has influenced South Korean citizens for almost a century, which also influenced shaping Koreans' perception on diversity and multiculturalism (Lee, & Misco, 2014). Having lived in a mono-ethnic society for a long time, Korean people have not been familiar with the concept of multiculturalism and how to live with 'the Other'. Draught (2016) argued that South Koreans have viewed themselves ethno-racially pure for a long time, therefore it is a new and unfamiliar idea that South Korean society is becoming a migration destination. According to Lee and Misco (2014), Korean people have considered themselves as being in a collective "we," while persons who are ethnically non-Koreans are viewed as 'the Other'.

The concept of “we” is well-represented in the term, ‘Han minjok’, which means “a sole ethnic group.” In addition to that, Draught (2016) mentioned the concept, “Dan-il minjok (“unitary nation”),” which is a similar concept to “Han minjok,” in his journal article, “South Korea’s National Identity Crisis in the Face of Emerging Multiculturalism.” He argued that South Koreans base their identity on the concept of one-nation state, so-called “Dan-il minjok,” which presents Korean ethnic nationalism. In addition to that, Prey (2011) stated that the citizen and the nation are inseparable in South Korea due to the perceived ethnic homogeneity of South Korean society. He also pointed out that the spirit of “Han minjok” has had a great impact on so-called “mono-ethnicity myth” in South Korean society, which is considered as the biggest problem to the development of South Korean multiculturalism.

Researchers argued South Korean multiculturalism that mono-ethnicity ideology is one of the biggest obstacles to South Korean multiculturalism as mentioned above. However, these arguments do not apply to the situation of ethnic Koreans, particularly North Korean defectors. North Korean defectors share the same bloodline as South Korean people but still are marginalized in the South Korean society. Bae (2016) pointed out that ethnic Koreans including North Korean defectors fall into the category of “Han Minjok (ethnic Koreans),” which led South Korean media to put an emphasis on Korean brotherhood and similarities of two Koreas. She elaborated that this tendency to ignore differences between two Koreas caused North Korean defectors to be underrepresented in South Korean multicultural discourses.

3.1.3 The term, “multiculturalism”

Concerning South Korean multiculturalism, a great number of scholars argued that the usage of the term, ‘multiculturalism’ in South Korea is problematic (Rhee, 2016; Bae, 2016; Watson, 2012). Rhee (2016) pointed out that the term, ‘tamunhwa’ (다문화);

multicultural/multiculturalism) is controversial as it mainly focuses on multicultural families, excluding those who do not fall into the “tamunhwa families” group, which only include marriage migrants and their multicultural and multiracial children. In other words, international students, migrant workers, ethnic Koreans, and North Korean defectors are often being excluded in multicultural discourses in South Korean society. Bae (2016) asserted that there are two different viewpoints on the usage of the term, “multiculturalism” in South Korean media. She elaborated further that one of the viewpoints is that South Korean multiculturalism put too much emphasis on cultural aspects. The other viewpoint is that South Korean multiculturalism has focused more on diversity of race and ethnicity, not cultural diversity (Bae, 2016). According to her, it is more likely that South Korean media portrays multiculturalism with a focus on racial and ethnic diversity rather than cultural diversity. She also pointed out that since the focus is on race and ethnicity, multicultural South Korean cinema has the tendency to exclude ethnic Koreans such as North Korean defectors in the discussion. Moreover, Watson (2012) provided three different aspects on the term, “multiculturalism” in South Korean society as the following: (1) assimilation, (2) multicultural pluralism, and (3) respect for cultural plurality, in his article, “Paradoxical multiculturalism in South Korea.” First of all, assimilationist aspect of South Korean multiculturalism sees the mainstream South Korean culture as “greater” than other cultures, which Watson asserted that this viewpoint is connected to U.S. multiculturalism. He also pointed out that this assimilationist approach to multiculturalism is very problematic since it can lead other cultures to be given up, to lose cultural specificity and to be assimilated to mainstream culture. As a South Korean example of assimilation, he explained that South Korean society encourages foreign wives to be more like traditional Korean wife, for example, to put on traditional Korean clothes. Second, South Korean multiculturalism is also

affected by the European multicultural pluralism (Watson, 2012). Cultural pluralist approach respects cultural diversity, but this approach still expects diverse cultures to be integrated into a mainstream culture. Lastly, Watson (2012) stated that there is an aspect which regards multiculturalism as an “equal respect for cultural plurality,” which countries such as Australia and Canada pursue. In such multicultural states, every culture has an equal status. Therefore, the term “multiculturalism” has been interpreted very differently in South Korean society, which causes confusion in South Korean people’s perception about multiculturalism and about how to live with these multicultural population.

3.2 North Korean Defectors in Multicultural South Korea

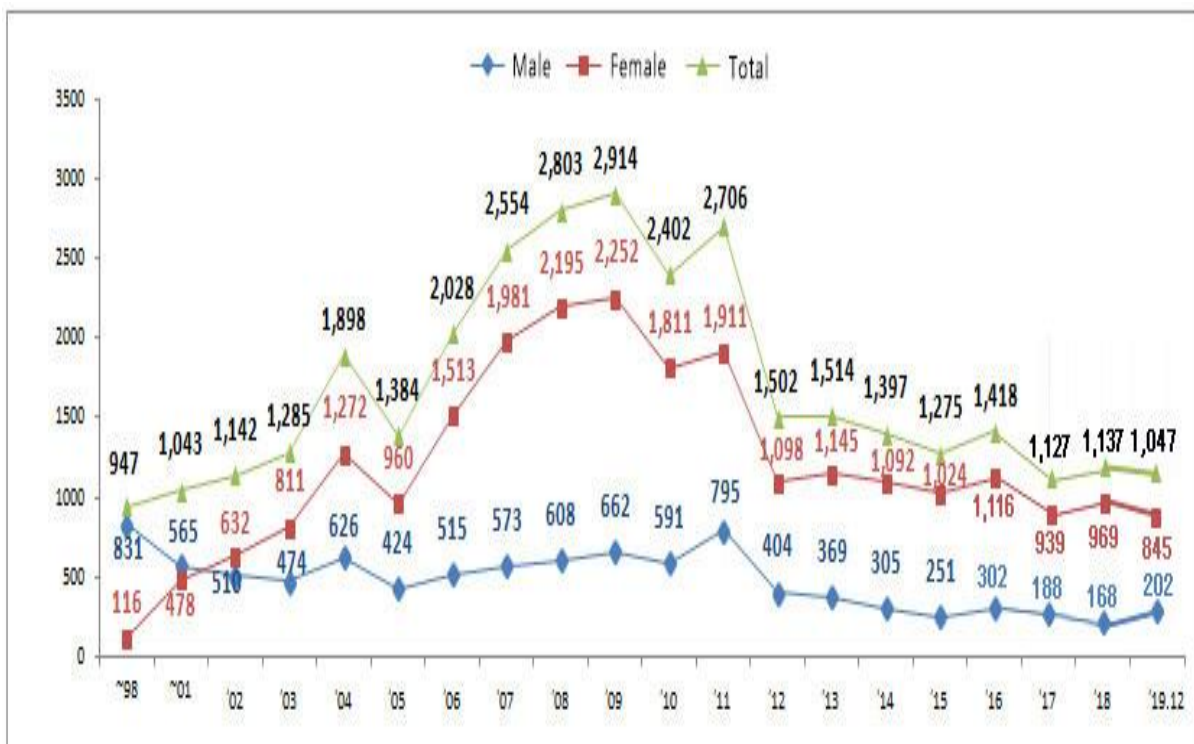


Figure 1. Number of North Korean defectors entering the South since 1998 (Ministry of Unification)

According to Ministry of Unification of South Korea, a total of 33,523 North Korean defectors have moved to South Korean society as of December 2019. As in *Figure 1*, more

than 1,000 North Korean defectors enter South Korea each year, comprising one of the migrant groups in South Korean society.

3.2.1 Support for North Korean defectors in South Korea

As of June 2019, a total of 33,022 North Korean defectors entered South Korea (Ministry of Unification). When North Korean defectors arrive in South Korea and are proven to be real defectors and not spies, they get various forms of governmental supports.

After entering South Korea, North Korean defectors are sent to *Hanawon* (House of Unity) where North Korean defectors get education for the resettlement in South Korean society (Tara, 2011). Hanawon is run and supported by the Ministry of Unification of South Korean government. North Korean defectors receive all the education they need for adjusting to South Korean society. Also, medical care and counseling service are provided for them while they are staying at Hanawon. The Ministry of Unification of South Korean government support North Korean defectors in various ways after completing Hanawon education programme. For example, North Korean defectors are provided public apartments funded by the Korean National Housing Corporation and local government. In addition, North Korean defectors are offered a career counseling service. Through this service, North Korean defectors receive professional advices on their career in South Korea and get job opportunities. There are employment support centers throughout South Korea, and North Korean defectors are provided three-week job training programme funded by the government. South Korean government also helps North Korean defectors in their education as well. One example is that North Koreans are allowed to enter South Korean universities without any severe competition as long as they hold high school diplomas. In this sense, Ministry of Unification of South Korean government offers special protection and assistance to North Korean defectors to help North Korean defectors to adapt and settle down in South Korea

considering political, economic, social and cultural spheres of their future lives in South Korea (Ministry of Unification).

3.2.2 Struggles in adapting to South Korean society

Despite all the governmental supports for the settlement of North Korean defectors in South Korean society, North Korean defectors still face struggles in the process of their settlement (Choi, 2018; Bae, 2016, Tara, 2011). North Korean defectors feel lonely, isolated and marginalized in South Korean society after their resettlement (Choi, 2018; Tara, 2011). It is notable that most of North Korean defectors encounter bias and discrimination against them (Choi, 2018; Bae, 2016), which makes North Korean defectors less satisfied with their new lives in South Korea.

Choi (2018) argued that the struggles are related to South Korean public's attitude toward North Korean defectors. According to Choi, more and more South Korean people have negative feelings regarding the government supports and subsidies and doubt governmental policy to assist North Korean defectors. In this sense, it can be difficult for North Korean defectors to co-exist with South Koreans in South Korean society. Another factor that makes North Korean defectors' adaptation difficult is that there is a gap between the aims of all the governmental supports and the reality (Choi, 2018).

Bae (2016) found it problematic that subsidies North Korean defectors receive from the government are not enough for the defectors to make a living in South Korean society, particularly in big cities. In addition, it is difficult for North Korean defectors who newly arrived in South Korea to work on a regular basis due to their lack of understanding about South Korean economy and culture (Bae, 2016).

Tara (2011) put an emphasis on the differences between two Koreas in terms of North Korean defectors' suffering in the process of adjustment to South Korean society.

What she argued was that adaptation process of North Korean defectors into South Korean society is challenging because two Koreas have had different systems for over three generations, therefore, it is inevitable that North Korean people are not familiar with the South Korean cultures, social systems and norms, specific terms in language as well.

3.2.3 Successful defectors and defector youth as future hope

Although North Korean defectors have suffered while they try to adapt to South Korean society, there are defectors who successfully adapted to South Korean society. According to Tara (2011), it is mostly intellectuals who received college or higher level education when they lived in North Korea. These intellectuals tend to adapt to South Korea society successfully as they understand that there exist differences politically, economically and culturally. Some of the intellectuals worked with outside world when they were in North Korea, therefore, they were more exposed to capitalist systems, which makes them to adapt better to capitalist South Korean society (Tara, 2011).

Defector youths also experience difficulties in South Korean society. Tara (2011) argued that it is difficult for defector youths to be accustomed to South Korean educational system and perform well in South Korean schools because it is very different from education in North Korea. In addition, South Korean schools are extremely competitive (Tara, 2011). As a result, many North Korean defector youths drop out of school. Those who survived until high school get a huge benefit when they enter universities. However, even after entering the university, often they suffer due to financial constraints or academic competition and drop out of universities as well (Tara, 2011).

Tara (2011) emphasized that despite all the difficulties defector youths face, they can grow as a future hope to North Korean defectors in South Korean society. They have experienced both South and North Korean societies. As they are young, they are able to adapt

to South Korean society more quickly and easily, as a result, they can grow as a future hope to connect two societies (Tara, 2011).

3.2.4 North Koreans' representation in South Korean cinema

Based on the researches mentioned above, it is important to explore how North Korea is being represented in order to explore North Korean defectors' representation specifically in contemporary South Korean cinema. North Korea and North Korean people have been one of the main themes for South Korean cinema for a long time (Bae, 2016; Byun, 2001). There have been changes in the way South Korean cinema represents North Korea and North Korean people. Bae (2016) explained that representation of North Korean people in South Korean cinema varied across time. Korean War influenced South Korean films in 1950s and featured North Korean people particularly in war films (Bae, 2016; Byun, 2001). After this period of time, anti-communist ideology affected South Korean cinema and North Koreans were only negatively represented in anti-communist propaganda films (Bae, 2016). Since President Kim Dae-jung (1998-2003)'s Sunshine policy, which takes the friendly approach toward North Korea influenced South Korean cinema, representation of North Korean people emerged again in the South Korean films (Bae, 2016; Byun, 2001). During this period, films like *Swiri* (Kang, 1999), *The Spy Lee Chul-jin* (Jang, 1999) and *Joint Security Area* (Park, 2000) were commercially successful (Bae, 2016; Byun, 2001). Until now, there have been a great number of South Korean films depicting North Koreans, particularly in commercial films. Bae (2016) argued that filmmakers in 1990s started to question why Korean people who share the same bloodline hate each other. Those filmmakers in 1990 also put an emphasis on the brotherhood of two Koreas when making films (Bae, 2016). This trend continued and commercial films in 2000s also tended to focus on the similarities between two Koreas (Bae, 2016). Due to the increasing influx of North Korean defectors into South

Korean society, South Korean cinema started to depict North Korean defectors in the films in a different way. According to Bae (2016), North Koreans started to be considered as “internal others,” not brothers of the same ethnicity, which affected South Korean’s belief in mono ethnicity. Chung (2016) argued that one of the ways contemporary South Korean cinema depicts North Korean defectors is to represent the struggles and painful reality North Koreans have to encounter adapting to South Korean society, mostly in independent films such as *Hello, Stranger* (Kim, 2007), *Jultakdongsi* (Kim, 2007), *The Journals of Musan* (Park, 2011) and *Dance Town* (Jeon, 2010).

4 METHODOLOGY

4.1 Analysis Method

Due to the characteristics of a CDA study to be critical and interpretive, I found it necessary to reveal my background before presenting the analysis results. Born and raised in South Korea, I have been educated in a certain way in terms of North Korea. In the elementary school, when I first got educated about North Korea and the division of two Koreas, the education was influenced by Sunshine policy which argues that it is necessary to help North Korea financially and to take an amicable attitude toward North Korea. I learned that North Korean defectors share the same bloodline as ‘us’ South Koreans and it was not our choice to be divided into two Koreas. Growing up, I have seen and experienced two perspectives about North Korean people, either ‘us Koreans’ or enemies. Since I started my master’s programme majoring in intercultural communication, I have broadened my perspective on various cultural issues in the world and found out that there can be another perspective on the matter. Regardless of how it has been said that North Korean people are “us Koreans”, the reality is that they are considered as the Other in the society. I realized at this point that the reality is not the same as what I have learned and found it necessary to conduct researches about this matter. As I am a South Korean person born and raised in South Korea, educated in a certain way, it is possible that my background and my personal opinion about the thesis topic affected the analysis and discussion of this thesis in certain ways.

To be able to successfully analyze cinematic representations of North Korean defectors in South Korean contemporary cinema, a qualitative textual analysis from the perspective of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) will be employed for the analysis of this thesis.

4.1.1 Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA)

Critical Discourse Analysis (hereafter, CDA) is “a type of discourse analytical research that primarily studies the way social power abuse, dominance, and inequality are enacted,

reproduced and resisted by text and talk in the social and political context” (van Dijk, 2005).

In other words, the main concepts of CDA are, “discourse, power, dominance, social inequality” (van Dijk, 1993) and CDA concerns the relationship between them.

Fairclough (1995) asserted that the aim of CDA is to “systematically explore the opaque relationship of causality and determine between a) discursive practices, event, and texts, and b) wider social and culture structure, relations and processes” (Fairclough, 1995, p. 132).

Main tenets of CDA provided by Fairclough and Wodak (1997) are as follows:

- 1) CDA addresses social problems
- 2) Power relations are discursive
- 3) Discourse constitutes society and culture
- 4) Discourse does ideological work
- 5) Discourse is historical
6. The link between text and society is mediated
7. Discourse analysis is interpretative and explanatory
8. Discourse is a form of social action.

Van Dijk (1993) approached CDA with a focus on “the role of discourse in the (re)production and challenge of dominance” (van Dijk, 1993, p. 249). He elaborated that dominance is executed by social elites’ usage of social power, which causes social inequality. He also stated in terms of dominance and inequality in CDA approach that CDA is motivated by societal problems, which results from dominance and inequality of the society. What makes CDA ‘critical’ is that it concerns the process of power reproduction (Ramanathan & Tan, 2015). In other words, CDA is sociopolitical, focusing on the problems which exist in the real world (van Dijk, 1993).

Among the theoretical approaches of CDA, van Dijk (1998) formed ideological square, which regards positive representation about Us and negative representation about Them.

CDA is an appropriate analysis method considering the content of this thesis. First of all, CDA regards social problems. Multiculturalism in South Korea is appeared to be problematic as discussed above, causing social problems such as discrimination, marginalization and social exclusion. Furthermore, one of the core concepts of CDA is ideology, and ideologies such as mono-ethnicity belief and assimilation are embedded in South Korean multiculturalism, which makes CDA the most suitable analysis method for this thesis.

4.1.2 Textual Analysis

As mentioned on the above, textual analysis from the perspective of CDA will be employed in order to successfully analyze the cinematic representation of North Korean defector in contemporary South Korean cinema. The definition of textual analysis by McKee (2003) is, “a way for researchers to gather information about how other human beings make sense of the world” (McKee, 2003, p. 1). It is an analysis method used to understand how a variety of cultures make sense in the world. Therefore, textual analysis is widely used by scholars within the field of cultural studies and media studies. It is useful to employ textual analysis to interpret texts of all kinds – films, television shows, newspapers, advertisements, clothes, photos etc. Textual analysis is about analyzing “texts”. A text is, something with meaning which we can interpret including a book, film, even a piece of furniture. Therefore, film as a type of text will be analyzed in this thesis.

4.2 Data Selection

For the data selection, I first searched for the films in which North Korean defectors are main characters and the life of North Korean defectors in South Korean society are well-portrayed. In order to conduct an in-depth analysis, I decided to focus on the analysis of one film among the candidates I had from the searching results. Finally, the film, *The Journals of Musan* was

selected for the analysis. The selection was made because the film was made based on a real story of a North Korean defector, Jeon Seung-cheol, so that this film represents the reality of North Korean defectors in South Korea the best.

4.3 Analysis Procedure

Prior to presenting the actual analysis results, it is essential to explain the detailed analysis procedure of this thesis. As mentioned above, the film, *The Journals of Musan*, directed by Park Jeong-beom was selected and analyzed. I took 3 steps for the analysis. First of all, I reviewed several contemporary South Korean films which handles the story of North Korean defectors in South Korean society. In this process, I reviewed 4 films including *The Journals of Musan – Hello, Stranger* (Kim, 2007), *Jultakdongsi* (Kim, 2007), *Dance Town* (Jeon, 2010) and *The Journals of Musan* (Park, 2011). Second, I selected the film for the analysis based on certain standards as following: 1) Are main characters in the film North Korean defectors? 2) Does the film portray contemporary South Korean society realistically enough? 3) Does the film base its story on the real lives of North Korean defectors? As a result, *The Journals of Musan* was selected. Third, I decided to use Critical Discourse Analysis as the analysis methodology of this thesis. I specifically selected CDA as it is an efficient tool to critically analyze the discourses embedded in the media. With textual analysis from the perspective of CDA, I analyzed cinematic texts, mainly visual images and scenes, conversations between characters. In the analysis, I provided 7 screen shots of the film, which I screen-captured from the streaming site, Watchplay. With these screen shots, I was able to analyze visual representations in the film. In addition, I inserted 4 conversations retrieved from the film. As the film is in Korean language, I, as the writer of this thesis, translated these conversations into English. By analyzing the conversations, it was possible to look at the linguistic representations in the film. Other elements I included in the analysis, such as storyline,

character's social status and their personalities, attitude and behavior were described in the text of the thesis by words. In the analysis results, I created three different categories: Capitalist Seoul City, Placelessness, Incompetent, Innocent and Illegal. For the first category, Capitalist Seoul City, I presented how the film criticizes capitalist South Korean society and how North Korean defectors suffer from it. Second, in the category Placelessness, how North Korean defectors feel like there is no place to go and feel othered by the society was presented. Lastly, how North Korean defectors are represented as incompetent, innocent and illegal was presented in the last section.

5 RESULTS

The film, “The Journals of Musan” is based on a real story of a North Korean defector, Jeon Seung-cheol. To summarize the storyline of the film, Jeon Seung-cheol is a North Korean defector from a North Korean city, Musan. He makes a living by fixing illegal posters to the wall on the streets of Seoul city. He is in love with Sook-young, who goes to the same church as Seung-cheol, but he finds it difficult to approach her in church. Seung-cheol lives with a roommate, Kyung-cheol, who is also a North Korean defector. Kyung-cheol is a mediator working with a broker who helps North Korean defectors send money to their families in North Korea so that they can escape from North Korea and come to South Korea, which is illegal. Detective Park is a South Korean character who helps Seung-cheol adapt to South Korean society. He introduces Seung-cheol to a job position, but Seung-cheol is rejected and does not get the job due to the fact that he is a North Korean defector, whose identification number starts with 125, the number which indicates that the person is a North Korean defector. In the meanwhile, Kyung-cheol explains his illegal broker business to his North Korean defector friends and persuades them to pay a huge amount of money to save their families in North Korea. Seung-cheol follows Sook-young and finds out where she works. Seung-cheol is scolded by his boss for his poor working skills and gets insulted by that. In addition, some bullies who do the same job – fixing posters to a wall – follows Seung-cheol and assault him. Later on, Seung-cheol gets a job at the karaoke where Sook-young works. He also brings a dog, Paekku home and takes good care of him. After Sook-young finds out that Seung-cheol goes to the same church as her, she tells Seung-cheol to pretend that they don’t know each other at church. While working in the karaoke, Seung-cheol gets involved in a fight with customers. He gets fired when Sook-young catches him when he is singing with the hostesses working in the karaoke and he also loses his poster-fixing job. Kyung-cheol

also gets in trouble and is suspected of fraud by his North Korean defectors friends who gave Kyung-cheol a huge amount of money to bring their families to South Korea. Seung-cheol and Kyung-cheol both lose their jobs and have a fight with each other. After the fight, while Seung-cheol is not home, Kyung-cheol takes Paekku out and abandons him on the street. Seung-cheol finds Paekku back and loses his trust of Kyung-cheol. Seung-cheol goes to a church gathering and confesses that he killed a friend over corn. Sook-young promises Seung-cheol to be his friend and Seung-cheol gets his job back in the karaoke. Kyung-cheol asks Seung-cheol to bring the money Kyung-cheol saved by fraud, but Seung-cheol does not give the money back to Kyung-cheol and spends the money to buy new clothes and get a new haircut. Seung-cheol joins the church choir and sings there with all his heart. While working in the karaoke, he drops by the convenience store and in the ending scene of the film, he sees the dead body of Paekku, died by car accident.

5.1 Capitalist Seoul City

The film, “The Journals of Musan” strongly criticizes the capitalist aspect of South Korean society. This is a story about how pure and innocent North Korean defector, Jeon Seung-cheol becomes realistic and adapt to capitalist South Korean society.

One of the scenes which strongly criticizes South Korean capitalism is, after stealing Kyung-cheol’s money, Seung-cheol buys a new suit and gets a new haircut with the money in order to attend church meetings. This suit and his new hairstyle are symbols of his desire to be one member of South Korean society, escaping from his past of being one of the others in the society. At the beginning of the film, Seung-cheol is depicted as pure and innocent, who is not yet dehumanized. In contrast, he becomes a person who well-adjusts to capitalist South Korean society, who understands the principle of money in South Korean capitalism. In the process of his adjustment, he gives up his goodness by betraying his friend, Kyung-cheol.



Figure 2. Kyung-cheol buys Seung-cheol a Nike winter jacket.

In addition, the character Kyung-cheol is a North Korean defector who believes money gives the power. He is portrayed as a North Korean defector who follows capitalist values. He earns a huge amount of money through fraud so that he can dream of moving to United States and make his American dream come true. He has much more money than Seung-cheol and he takes care of Seung-cheol by lending him expensive things which Seung-cheol cannot afford with the small amount of money he makes through his low-paid jobs. At the same time, Kyung-cheol takes advantage of his position of having more money and often looks down on other North Korean defectors, including Seung-cheol. He often talks about his American dream and uses U.S. American products. Even when he buys a winter jacket for Seung-cheol, the brand of the jacket is Nike, a famous U.S. American brand (see *Figure 2*). Moreover, he also brags about his belongings produced by U.S. American brands. His behavior of constantly following capitalism shows a stark contrast with Seung-cheol's pureness and innocence.



Figure 3. Seoul city with skyscrapers.



Figure 4. Redevelopment area where Seung-cheol lives.

In the film, the Seoul city is divided into two parts. One part is the one where there are numerous skyscrapers and people, shopping malls and department stores with expensive

products (see *Figure 3*). The other part is the one where there are redevelopment areas with deconstructed villages (see *Figure 4*), Seung-cheol and Kyung-cheol's home which is very small and has no proper heating system so that they need to tape the edge of the window.

This contrast of two parts of the city shows that there is a hierarchy between two parts of the city, and the people who belong to each of the two parts, which is a side effect of capitalism.

Moreover, all the North Korean defectors in the film are involved in either low-paid jobs or illegal jobs. Seung-cheol is doing two illegal and low-paid jobs to make a living: fixing illegal posters to the wall on the street and working in the illegal karaoke in order to survive. Kyung-cheol is involved in the broker job, which is also illegal. Other North Korean defectors also work low-paid as shown in the scene when they gather and talk about how much money they make per hour. They say they make 4-5000 won, which is about 4 dollars per hour. This shows that all the governmental support and education can not stop North Korean defectors from being the lower class of the capitalist society.

5.2 Placelessness

In *The Journals of Musan*, North Korean defectors are represented as the people who have no place to go. They do not belong neither to North Korea they are from, nor to South Korea where they currently live.

North Korean defectors risked their lives to come to South Korea, to live in a better world. In reality, their life in South Korea as a North Korean defector is not what they dreamed of. Even though they get education in Hanawon and the South Korean government tries to support them in various ways, there are obstacles which make North Korean defectors struggle living in the South Korean society such as difficulties in getting jobs, socio-cultural differences of two Koreas and being treated as "the Other" in the society. This harsh reality is

well-represented in the scene when detective Park brings Seung-cheol to a workplace and tries to help Seung-cheol do a job interview.

Detective Park: I need to say this again. After entering the office, never say that you are from North Korea.

Seung-cheol: Okay.

DP: And, just say that you will do your best.

S: Yes, I will.

DP: You need to survive, right?

S: Yes.

Before entering the office, the detective tells Seung-cheol not to say that Seung-cheol is from North Korea, which indicates that being a North Korean defector can be a disadvantage getting a job in South Korea. As in the conversation above, detective Park use the word, ‘survive’, which implies how difficult a life of a North Korean defector can be in South Korean society. All the helps the detective provides is a part of govenmental support for North Korean defectors after finishing the mandatory education from Hanawon, but the reality shows that North Korean defectors can not even be open about their background in South Korea, which confuses North Korean defectors and makes them feel lost.

Employer: How many years did you stay in China?

Seung-cheol: 7 years.

E: You should speak Chinese very well, then.

S: I can do it well.

E: The job is not difficult to do, and does not require any professional skills. You just need to take business trips to China, three or four times a month, to Qingdao. Do you know about Qingdao?

S: I haven’t been there but I’m aware of the city.

E: Well, it’s a bit low-paid though. About 200,000 won for one trip.

Detective Park: 200,000 won?

E: Yes.

DP: Isn’t 200,000 won too little?

E: You don’t know the market price, detective Park. It’s not that small amount of money.

DP: But still, 200,000 won is too little.

E: Are you okay with that?

S: Yes. It's okay. I can do it.

The employer of the job, a South Korean man, asks if Seung-cheol can speak Chinese and then gives him a job description. The job is low-paid, but Seung-cheol says he is okay with it because Seung-cheol knows that he does not have many other options as a North Korean defector.

Employer: No. It's not going to happen.

Detective Park: What should I do for him, then?

E: He is from North Korea, right?

DP: Yes.

E: You know that Chinese people don't provide visas if identification number starts with 125. How can I hire anyone who cannot go to China?

Seung-cheol is about to be hired, but he gets rejected after the employer finds out that Seung-cheol's identification number starts with 125, the number given to North Korean defectors. The employer explains that Chinese government does not accept those with identification number starting with 125 to enter China, therefore, it is not possible to hire Seung-cheol to the job which requires constant business trips to China. This scene implies the reality that North Korean defectors are stigmatized as helpless others due to the fact that they have identification number starting with 125. North Korean defectors obtain South Korean citizenship and identification number after the defection. However, neither citizenship nor identification number helps North Korean defectors adjust to South Korean society. In fact, identification number functions as a tool to discriminate against North Korean defectors.

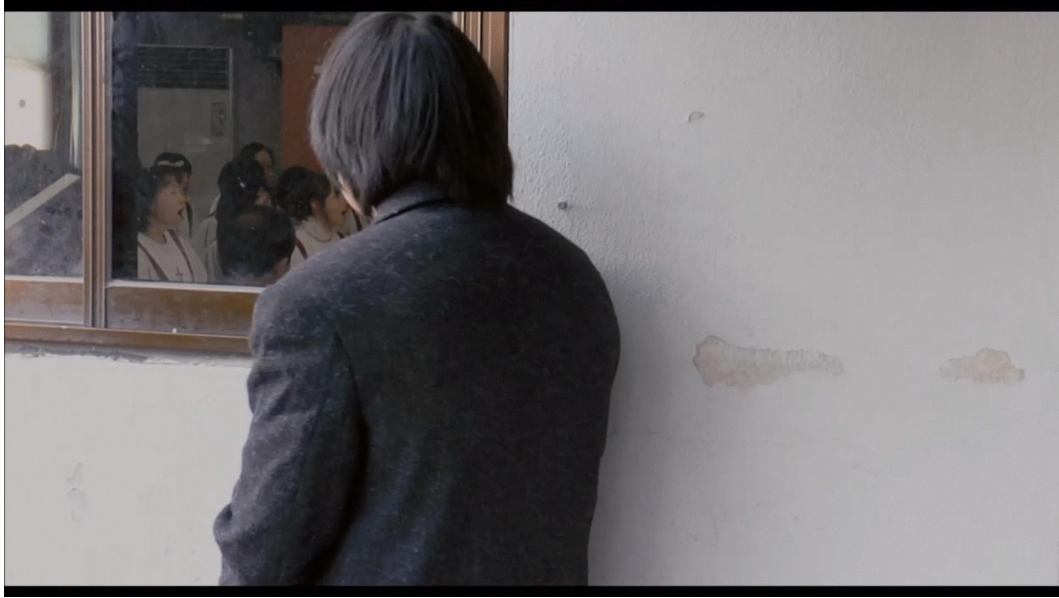


Figure 5. Seung-cheol is looking into the church choir practicing room.

In addition, Seung-cheol's desire to adapt to South Korean society is associated with church. He is obsessed with going to church, he even borrows Kyung-cheol's clothes just to go to church. In the scene when the church choir sings inside the choir practicing room, Seung-cheol is standing outside of the room, admirably looking into the room and especially Sook-young singing there (see *Figure 5*). The church choir practicing room symbolizes the South Korean mainstream culture Seungcheol hopes to be a part of, and Seung-cheol being outside of the room symbolizes his current position as 'the Other' outside of the mainstream culture. Seung-cheol often sings hymns, which can be interpreted as his desire to join the church choir, the mainstream South Korean community. When Seung-cheol steals Kyung-cheol's money, he spends the money buying new clothes and getting a new haircut in order to fulfill his inherent desire to belong to church community, who are seen as middle-class, mainstream social members. All the efforts he makes to be a member of church mean that Seung-cheol deperately needs a place to belong, due to his insecure circumstances and his feeling of 'placelessness'.



Figure 6. Seung-cheol is standing in a construction site.

In terms of his insecurity in South Korean society, there is a scene Seung-cheol stands in a construction site waiting for redevelopment. In the scene, he looks like he is about to fall down from the cliff. He looks insecure, lost, and devastated by the reality.

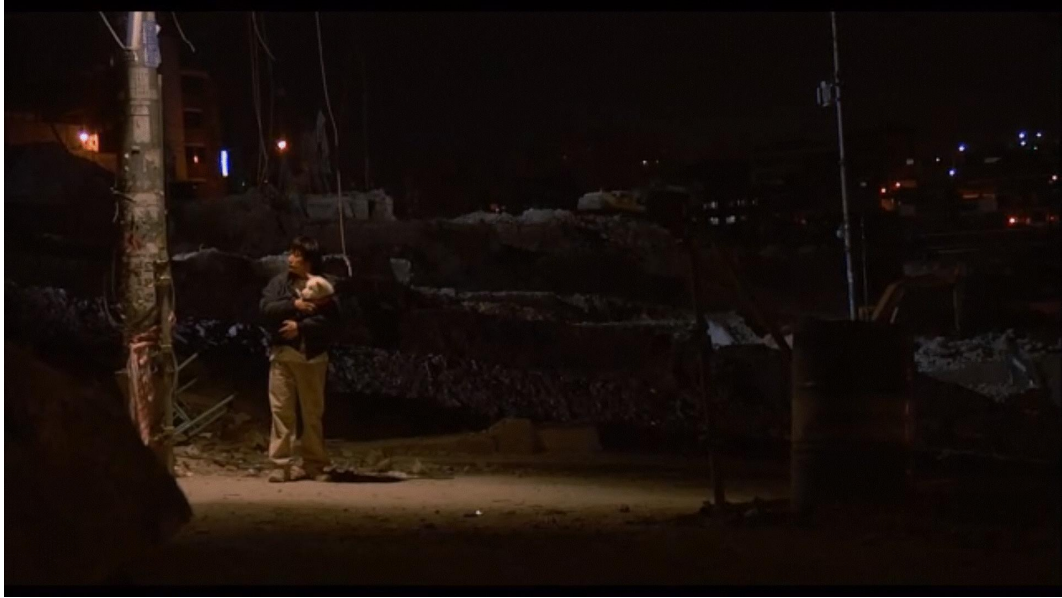


Figure 7. Seung-cheol is holding Paekku.

Moreover, Paekku is a symbolic presence representing Seung-cheol's ambiguous position in South Korean society. Paekku is a dog Seung-cheol finds on the street, on sale at a very low price. Paekku has no place to go, just like Seung-cheol. Seung-cheol sees himself in Paekku and identifies with him, which is the reason Seung-cheol cares for Paekku by giving him something to eat, and eventually brings Paekku home. In this sense, Paekku is a metaphor of Seung-cheol's placeless position in South Korean society. Paekku is also the only friend Seung-cheol can rely on, when South Korean society discriminates against him for being a North Korean defector and when his North Korean friend, Kyung-cheol betrays by abandoning Paekku on the street and looks down on him. Seung-cheol being emotionally attached to this small dog, Paekku indicates that Seung-cheol belongs to nowhere, can rely on nobody and is totally alone in South Korea.

North Korean defector 1: You, how much do you make per hour?

North Korean defector 2: Me? 4,000 won.

NK1: 4,000 won? You wash the dishes and polish shoes all day and make 4,000 an hour? How about you?

North Korean defector 3: 5,000 won for me.

NK1: 5,000 won? Seriously, you. We all came all the way here, risking our lives and do the delivery work like hell and makes 5,000 won an hour? Coming all the way down here from China, risking our lives to make 5,000 won an hour? Just stop. If we move to the United States, the minimum wage per hour there is about 10,000 won, at least 8,000 won.

North Korean defector characters in the film are devastated from their reality in South Korean society and want to move to somewhere else. When several North Korean defectors gather and talk about how much money they make, they complain about their low-paid jobs that they didn't sign up for this harsh reality when they risked their lives to come to South Korea and talk about moving to the United States. One of them says, "If we move to the United States, the minimum wage per hour there is about ten thousand won (about 10 dollars), at least eight thousand won (about 7 dollars)." This is because they are suffering from the poverty in South Korea and can not expect a better future. This scene also implies that North Korean defectors don't feel like they belong to South Korean society and feel lost.

Shooting technology of the film also shows the insecureness and placelessness Seung-cheol feels. For example, the film employs hand-held camera to closely and realistically show Seung-cheol's life and his feeling insecure, lost and placeless in Seoul.

5.3 Incompetent, Innocent and Illegal

There are certain characteristics which the film focuses on when representing North Korean defectors, and these characteristics are: Incompetent, Innocent and Illegal.

5.3.1 Incompetent and poor

All the North Korean defectors in the film appear to be incompetent, and most of them appear to be poor as well. Seung-cheol is involved in two jobs in the film, both of them are very low-paid and required no professional skills. One of them is fixing illegal adult show

advertisement posters on the walls of the city. This job is physically demanding and dangerous and low-paid. However, Seung-cheol's boss fires him as Seung-cheol has poor skills to do the job. In this sense, he is represented as very incompetent who does not even successfully do low-paid, physically demanding jobs. Another job Seung-cheol has is working part-time at the karaoke where Sook-young works. The karaoke is an illegal workplace with hostesses and alcohol, run by Sook-young's father. This job is low-paid and physically demanding as well, as the work is during the nighttime. Seung-cheol is once fired by Sook-young after making the customer mad and singing with hostesses at the karaoke. This implies that two of the low-paid, physically demanding jobs are also very insecure for North Korean defectors to keep. In addition, these two low-paid jobs make Seung-cheol economically deprived as well. He cannot afford to buy new clothes or get a new haircut, therefore, other people criticize a lot about Seung-cheol's clothes and hairstyle which make him look poor. Other North Korean defectors are also involved in low-paid jobs, due to their lack of professional skills and difficulties in adapting to South Korean society.

5.3.2 Innocent and pure, victim of capitalism

At the beginning of the film, Seung-cheol is depicted as innocent and pure. Although his roommate, Kyung-cheol makes more money than Seung-cheol through fraud and always looks down on Seung-cheol while Seung-cheol tries to be a good person and to live morally. When Kyung-cheol brings Seung-cheol to a department store to buy Seung-cheol a new winter jacket and steals a pair of pants for Seung-cheol, Seung-cheol says that it is not right to steal things and tries to turn them back. Seung-cheol's pureness is well-represented in the scenes with Paekku. He takes a good care of Paekku, the dog. Paekku is abandoned by someone and is on sale on the street. Seung-cheol feels pity for Paekku and eventually brings Paekku home. However, innocence and pureness do not help Seung-cheol to better adjust to

South Korean society, where money is considered as god. Seung-cheol's effort to remain a good person is not a positive thing in capitalist South Korean society and it is even considered as lacking social skills to survive in South Korea, which leads Seung-cheol to be a low-status in the society. Consequently, Seung-cheol starts realizing the importance of money, steals Kyung-cheol's money and finally becomes realistic to survive in capitalist South Korea.

5.3.3 Illegal and dangerous



Figure 8. Seung-cheol gets assaulted in the reconstruction site.

In the film, North Korean defectors are involved in illegal activities. First of all, Seung-cheol's jobs as fixing illegal posters on the wall and working at an illegal karaoke are both illegal and dangerous. There are scenes Seung-cheol is dangerously standing on the street where a lot of cars are passing by, which shows how dangerous Seung-cheol's working environment is. Moreover, South Korean bullies who do the same job as Seung-cheol insist that it is their territory and threaten Seung-cheol. Eventually, they even follow Seung-cheol and assault him in the reconstruction site. Kyung-cheol takes advantage of other North

Korean defectors and their desperate efforts to bring their families in North Korea to South Korea and makes them get involved in his broker business. Kyung-cheol's uncle is a broker living in China and illegally receives money from the North Korean defectors in South Korea and helps North Korean people escape from North Korea with the money and sends them to South Korea. The whole process of this broker business is illegal and very dangerous. In this sense, Kyung-cheol and the North Korean defectors who give their money to Kyung-cheol are involved in illegal activities.

6 DISCUSSION

As mentioned in the methodology section, the characteristic of a CDA study to depend on the writer's interpretations, I feel it is necessary to reveal my background as the writer of this thesis. My background of being born and raised in South Korea and being educated about relations between North and South Korea, division and unification of two Koreas and North Korean defectors makes me qualified to conduct the present study about North Korean defectors in South Korean society. However, it is possible that the interpretation can be biased in a certain way.

In the results, the film, *The Journals of Musan* was analyzed with the method of textual analysis from the perspective of CDA. Analyzing the film, three aspects were observable. First, capitalist South Korean society was criticized through various scenes and aspects of the film. For example, Seung-cheol steals Kyung-cheol's savings to move to the United States and spend the money in buying new clothes and getting a new haircut in order to make a good impression to the people of the church he goes to. As a result, he gets accepted to the church choir he has always admired to join. Also, the most capitalist character among North Korean defectors, Kyung-cheol, is represented from a critical perspective for being a snob who always chases money. He takes part in illegal broker business, commits fraud to his North Korean defector friends and takes a huge sum of money for himself. He wants to use the money to move to the United States and make his American dream come true. His obsession of U.S. American brand products shows his desire to the land of capitalism. Seoul city is depicted as cold, cruel, violent and hierarchically divided city where money matters the most. Second, the film pointed out placelessness of North Korean defectors in South Korean society. Even though North Korean defectors risked their life to come to South Korea and finally settled in South Korea, the harsh reality does not change for

them. For instance, North Korean defectors need to hide their background as a North Korean defector to get a job. However, it is not easy to hide it as their identification number starts with 125, an indicator of being a North Korean defector. Even in the church, Seung-cheol is completely alone. Paekku, the abandoned dog symbolizes Seung-cheol's life in South Korea. Both of them have no place to go and are lost. Other North Korean defectors also feel placeless, suffer from their ambiguous positions surviving in South Korean society and consider another place to live instead of North or South Korea, which is the reason they have 'American dream' to chase money. Lastly, North Korean defectors characters were depicted as having certain characteristics in the film. These characteristics were, incompetent, innocent and pure. First of all, North Korean defectors appeared to be incompetent and poor. What they do for a living in South Korean society are very low-paid, physically demanding jobs which do not require professional skills. This implies that North Korean defectors are viewed as incompetent and poor. Also, Seung-cheol, in particular, is portrayed as innocent and pure. Unlike Kyung-cheol, who does illegal activities without having a guilty conscience, Seung-cheol tries to live as a good, honest person with morality. He is depicted as a pure-hearted person particularly in the scenes he feels pity for Paekku, takes good care of him, and eventually brings him home. However, the reality of South Korean society turns Seung-cheol into a person who understands how much money values in capitalist South Korean society and who knows that it is naïve to remain innocent and pure. Moreover, all of the North Korean defectors in the film are involved in illegal, dangerous activities. Seung-cheol's two jobs of fixing illegal posters on the wall and working at an illegal karaoke, Kyung-cheol's broker business and the fraud he commits are all against the law and very dangerous.

With the results from the analysis, the research question of this thesis can be answered in the discussion. The research question of this thesis is: How are North Korean

defectors represented in contemporary multicultural South Korean cinema? This research question will be answered in three sections in the discussion: Struggles of newly arrived immigrants, Ethnically 'us' but still 'the Other' and Lack of diversity in representation.

6.1 Struggles of newly arrived immigrants

Taking a look at the results of the analysis, it was evident that North Korean defectors were depicted as victims who suffer from issues such as discrimination, marginalization and social exclusion, which leads to isolation of newly arrived immigrants in South Korean society.

There is a scene when detective Park sets up a job interview for Seung-cheol and the employer of the job rejects Seung-cheol for being a North Korean defector whose identification number starts with 125. This implies that the arguments that South Korean people's belief in ethnic homogeneity is the biggest obstacle in South Korean multiculturalism (Lee & Misco, 2014; Draught, 2016; Prey, 2011) is not entirely true, as North Korean defectors, who are ethnically Koreans, are treated differently for their identification number. In this sense, North Korean defectors are not 'the same' as South Korean people and there exists a clear discrimination against North Korean defectors. In other words, ethnic Korean people from different socio-cultural backgrounds are also suffering from issues in South Korean society, thus, there is a need to include ethnic Koreans, including North Korean defectors in the multicultural discourses being articulated in South Korean society. North Korean defectors do not belong to the mainstream South Korean culture, thus, they are outsiders of the society. In addition, the fact that all North Korean defector characters' jobs are low-paid, dangerous and illegal indicates that North Korean defectors in South Korea form the lower class of the society. As the film clearly shows that there is a contrast between the place where mainstream South Korean capitalist culture is and the place where the lower class of the society lives, reconstruction sites and the town in

redevelopment areas where Seung-cheol and Kyung-cheol live. This contrast shows marginalization of North Korean defectors in South Korean society, which also implies that North Korean defectors are not welcomed in South Korean society even though they share the same bloodline as South Koreans.

Among the approaches to multiculturalism, it appears that South Korean society has adopted an assimilationist approach to multiculturalism which includes North Korean defectors in the film. Watson (2012)'s explanation about an assimilationist approach of South Korean multiculturalism is, it considers mainstream South Korean culture to be superior compared to other migrant groups' cultures. According to him, South Korean multiculturalism expects other migrant groups' cultures to be assimilated to mainstream South Korean culture. This approach does not respect nor embrace diversity of cultures. North Korean defectors in the film are also expected to be assimilated to mainstream South Korean society. For example, detective Park helps Seung-cheol to settle and adjust well in South Korea, but he often criticizes about Seung-cheol's attitude, behavior or even appearance. The detective even says to Seung-cheol, "Don't say that you are from North Korea." before the job interview, which clearly shows that even a governmental support service worker forces North Korean defectors to be assimilated to South Korean reality that North Korean defectors are not welcomed. Thus, North Korean defectors need to act like someone South Koreans would approve. Furthermore, Sook-young and the people at the church finally accepts Seung-cheol to the church choir after putting new clothes on and getting a new haircut, in other words, when looking more like a "South Korean". Accordingly, the film implies that North Korean defectors are only accepted or approved by South Korean society when they adapt well to South Korean society and act like South Korean people.

6.2 Ethnically ‘us’ but still ‘the Other’

As Bae (2016) pointed out about South Korean multicultural discourses and the limitations of them, ethnic Koreans including North Korean defectors are likely to be excluded in the multicultural discourses as South Korean multiculturalism mostly focus on ethnic and socio-economic differences. The film reveals that North Korean defectors are ethnically us but socio-culturally others by representing North Korean defectors’ placelessness in South Korean society.

North Korean defectors are given identification card and citizenship in South Korean society, but discrimination against the people whose identification number starts with 125 shows that North Korean defectors are othered by the society and they do not belong to the mainstream South Korean culture. This is the reason North Korean defectors tend to hide their background as a North Korean defector.

At the beginning of the film, there is a scene when Seung-cheol is looking into the church choir practicing in the practicing room from outside secretly. This scene shows both the desire of North Korean defectors to hope to belong to South Korean society, and the reality North Korean defectors are othered by the society.

Paekku in the film is the presence which symbolizes Seung-cheol’s placelessness. Paekku is an abandoned dog and has no place to go. Seung-cheol also has no place to go and belongs neither any one of two Koreas. In this sense, it is evident that Seung-cheol feels othered living in Seoul city.

Other North Korean defectors also feel placeless after being discriminated and marginalized in the society. They dream of moving to somewhere else. Their destination is the United States, which is the symbol of capitalism in the film. Due to their low-paid jobs in South Korea, they suffer from poverty and give up on future hopes in South Korea, as a result,

they decide to go somewhere else, where they can at least make more money than they do in both Koreas.

South Korean government is trying to support North Korean defectors by offering them education, insurance, protection and assistance (Ministry of Unification) but North Korean defectors still feel like others in the society. As Tara (2011) pointed out, the biggest obstacle to North Korean defectors' successful adaptation to South Korean society is differences between two Koreas. Two Koreas have been divided into two separate systems and developed in a very different way in every aspect of the society, therefore, there must be socio-cultural differences. South Korean multiculturalism which focuses on ethnic differences, needs to re-define the term and broaden the range of 'multicultural population' to other minority groups in South Korea, including North Korean defectors.

6.3 Lack of Diversity in Representation

The analysis of this thesis indicates that North Korean defectors were negatively represented and stereotyped in the film, *The Journals of Musan*. Stuart Hall (1997) discussed 'the Other' in his book chapter, "The Spectacle of the Other" that the division between what is normal and abnormal, acceptable and unacceptable, appropriate and inappropriate, what belongs and what does not, creates the notions of 'Us' and 'Them/the Other'. This division leads to othering and negatively influences representation of a certain group. Applying this to the analysis results, it is not difficult to distinguish what is normal, acceptable, appropriate, what belongs and who are considered as 'us' and what is abnormal, unacceptable, inappropriate, what does not belong, and who are 'others' in the film. South Korean people and their globalized culture, capitalism, money are the former, and North Korean defectors and their minority culture due to poverty and communist indoctrination, poverty, incompetency, innocence, and the lower class are the latter. From this division, the film negatively

represents North Korean defectors in a certain way, showing a few specific qualities about them. The film viewed North Korean defectors as incompetent, innocent and illegal. First of all, North Korean defectors are represented as incompetent and poor. They are involved in low-paid, insecure jobs. Seung-cheol has two jobs and gets fired from both the workplaces due to his poor working skills. He also earns a small amount of money from these low-paid jobs so that he cannot afford to buy new clothes nor to get a new haircut to make a good impression at church. Other North Korean defectors also do low-paid, physically demanding jobs, therefore, they are also seen as incompetent and poor. Second, the film represents of North Korean defectors as they are innocent and pure. This is represented in the character, Seung-cheol. Regardless of Kyung-cheol tried to turn him to a person who chases money and thinks realistically to survive in the capitalist city, Seung-cheol tries to remain a good person with morality. His pureness is well-represented in the scenes when he takes care of Paekku, an abandoned dog on the street. However, this innocence and pureness are linked to his poor ability to adjust to South Korean society. He does not well-aware of social reality of South Korea as a North Korean defector, which is seen that he lacks competence to survive in South Korea. Lastly, North Korean defectors are represented as doing illegal and dangerous activities. Seung-cheol's two jobs are both illegal, Kyung-cheol's broker business and his fraud are also illegal. Other North Korean defectors' effort to bring their families from North Korea to South Korea by sending money to the broker is illegal as well. These illegal activities are also dangerous. The dangerousness appears in the scenes when Seung-cheol becomes assaulted by South Korean bullies and when Kyung-cheol is threatened by other North Korean defectors after his fraud is revealed. This representation can negatively influence people's perception about North Korean defectors and can lead to more discrimination and othering.

Furthermore, representation of North Korean defectors are limited in the film. All the North Korean defector characters in the film are male, migrant workers, low-paid, poor, unsatisfied with their situation, not successfully adapted to South Korean society, involved in illegal activities and victims of the capitalist society. In this regard, representations of North Korean defectors need to be more diverse.

6.4. Further Discussion

The analysis results and discussion of this thesis have shown how North Korean defectors are represented in contemporary South Korean cinema, therefore, answered the research question. In addition, there were several topics which needed further discussion. It appeared in the results that there exist social issues such as discrimination, marginalization and social exclusion of North Korean defectors even though they share the same bloodline as South Korean people. This implies that South Korean multiculturalism which mostly focuses on ethnic differences and on 'main' multicultural population such as migrant workers and foreign brides is problematic as it excludes ethnic Koreans including North Korean defectors in the multicultural discourses. It is also problematic that scholars see the biggest problem in South Korean multiculturalism is South Korean people's belief in mono-ethnicity in the sense that they fail to take ethnic Koreans into consideration in terms of multicultural population. On this matter, Shen (2016) pointed out that there are under-researched immigrant groups in terms of studies about South Korean multiculturalism. He mentioned 6 under-researched immigrant groups: foreign professors and native language teachers, international students, non-North Korean international refugees, US military personnel, foreign professional sports players and permanent residency through real estate investment in Korea (Shen, 2016). These groups are rarely considered as multicultural population although they also have difficulties

adapting to South Korean society. In this regard, various migrant groups in South Korea need to be studied and get more attention in the multicultural discourses in South Korean society.

Another topic to discuss is that North Korean defectors are ethnically us but socio-culturally others. South Korean government has been trying to support North Korean defectors in various ways, however, North Korean defectors, even after they receive all the mandatory education from Hanawon, still feel that they are othered by the society. It is essential to accept the fact that two Koreas have developed very differently, thus, there must be socio-cultural differences between two Koreas. Starting from accepting the existence of socio-cultural differences, it is necessary to understand that North Korean defectors would feel 'othered' in South Korean society due to those differences. In other words, it is important to include North Korean defectors in multicultural population as they are socio-culturally different, but not to make them feel like 'others' who do not belong to the society.

Third, it is necessary to discuss South Korean multiculturalism being assimilation. As South Korean multiculturalism tends to be assimilationist, it expects immigrants to be assimilated into South Korean society, without any respect of the cultures they are from. They are forced to learn about South Korean language, culture and social norms to adapt to the society. This is one of the reasons immigrants in South Korea suffer from various issues such as marginalization, discrimination and social exclusion. In order to reduce multicultural issues and to better understand each other, it is essential to make mutual efforts. It is also crucial that South Korean people put an effort to learn about multicultural population and their cultures.

Lastly, media representation of the Other is the topic which needs further discussion. Korte (2007) argued that the Other can easily be discriminated and marginalized as social identity emphasizes similarities within in-group and differences of out-group. This appears to

be true when taking a look at Hong Kong and Japanese examples of the representation of the Other. Ng, Choi and Chan (2018)'s study on media representation of asylum seekers and refugees in Hong Kong showed that asylum seekers and refugees in Hong Kong are framed as "fake refugees" and "criminals," which is negative and limited representation of the Other. Also, in the study of Kumpis (2015) revealed that Zainichi Koreans in Japan are depicted as "disadvantaged, repressed and discriminated," which is also negative and limited representation. In the present study, media representation of North Korean defectors in contemporary South Korean cinema also showed that North Korean defectors as the Other are marginalized and discriminated by the society and are portrayed as victims of assimilation and capitalism. This is the reason diverse representation of the Other is required within media. Realizing that there are different types of the Other, just like us, will help understand the Other without prejudice.

6.5. Evaluation, Contribution and Future Research

To evaluate this thesis, literature review worked as research rationale and research context and supported the analysis results and discussion. Also, a thorough in-depth analysis of cinematic texts showed how North Korean defectors are represented in the film in detail so that the analysis covered various elements of representations in the film such as visual images, conversations, character's social status, attitude, behavior etc. In addition, the use of CDA enabled me to analyze discourses in the film critically. As a result, I was able to investigate representational issues of North Korean defectors and issues North Korean defectors have to face in real life in South Korean society.

This thesis has contributed to future studies regarding multiculturalism and media representation of minority groups to a certain extent. First, this thesis pointed out that the focus of South Korean multiculturalism should not be ethnic differences, as ethnic Koreans

can be excluded in the multicultural discourses so that scholars who would conduct researches about South Korean multiculturalism can start with a new perspective. Second, the thesis included North Korean defectors to South Korean multicultural discourses.

Considering North Korean defectors as multicultural population and conducting researches from this point will help those who are involved in multiculturalism policies and those who are interested in study South Korean multiculturalism. Lastly, this thesis criticized not only the multicultural issues in reality, but also the way media represented a minority group of the society from the perspective of multiculturalism. Numerous studies on South Korean multiculturalism and media representation of minority groups mainly criticizes South Korean society, but it is also necessary to take a critical look into the way media represents minority groups.

For the future researches on South Korean multiculturalism and media representation of minority groups, I suggest the following. It is essential to conduct more researches about South Korean multiculturalism considering the fact that ethnic differences should not be focus of the topic. Also, researches which consider North Korean defectors as multicultural population are necessary. Moreover, as this thesis conducted an in-depth analysis on one film, it does not cover other films about North Korean defectors. Therefore, studies which employ a quantitative method to cover numerous of films about North Korean defectors will be able to provide different insights about the topic.

7 CONCLUSION

This thesis explored how North Korean defectors are represented in contemporary South Korean cinema, focusing on analyzing one film, *The Journals of Musan*, with a qualitative textual analysis method from the perspective of CDA. The aims of this thesis were the following:

1. To figure out how North Korean defectors who are ethnic Koreans are othered in the multicultural South Korean society
2. To analyze North Korean defectors' representation issues embedded in the media
3. To encourage other researchers to conduct studies about this topic in the perspective of multiculturalism

The aims were successfully accomplished by analyzing the film with a thorough in-depth textual analysis from the perspective of CDA. The analysis results indicated that the film represented North Korean defectors in three ways. The film strongly criticized capitalist Seoul city and South Korean society where North Korean defectors suffer. Also, the film showed the placelessness of North Korean defectors and how North Korean defectors have no place to go and feel lost in South Korean society. Moreover, the film depicted North Korean defectors in a certain way that North Korean defectors are incompetent, innocent and illegal, which can directly be linked to lack of diverse representation of North Korean defectors. In the discussion, topics such as North Korean defectors as multicultural population, the problem with South Korean multiculturalism focusing on ethnic differences and negative stereotypes and limited representations with relation to the analysis results of the thesis.

North Korean defectors are stepping on the thin line between 'us' and 'the Other' in South Korean society. Their ambiguous position in the society makes them suffer from

various issues. It is necessary to include them within multicultural discourses as they are culturally different, but it is also important not to 'other' them in South Korean society. Besides North Korean defectors, other minority groups are excluded from the multicultural discourses in South Korean society. It is necessary to shed a light on their situations as well and to conduct more active researches about them. We live with people from diverse backgrounds in this current globalized world. It is crucial that both majorities and minorities put mutual efforts together to understand one another to reduce multicultural, intercultural conflicts anywhere in the world.

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