

March | 2018

# Kim Jong Un's Worldview and Perspectives on Space

An Analysis of Public Discourse



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Prepared for: US Department of Defense (DOD) Strategic  
Multi-Layer Assessment (SMA) Office J-39



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## Executive Summary

A collection of Kim Jong Un's speeches from 2012 to 2017, translated and published online by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) were examined using semi-automated discourse analysis to gauge Kim Jong Un's concerns in the space domain and how these concerns are articulated with general political and cultural themes. The primary findings from the discourse are presented as the DPRK's (i.e., Kim Jong Un's) perspectives and worldview with respect to the space domain and general themes.<sup>1</sup>

### Kim Jong Un's Perspectives and Worldview Regarding the Space Domain

- The DPRK's space operations are described in Kim's speeches in entirely martial and threatening terms and the need to deter aggression.
- Kim Jong Un discusses the DPRK's space endeavors within the framework of national security rather a commercial perspective.
- **Space events**, such as missile launches and satellite deployments, and **space discourse** are associated with **negative themes** such as **danger, threat, instability, adversaries, and nuclear weapons**.
- The US and the DPRK are frequently mentioned together when Kim Jong Un discusses space, and in association with actual space events. **President Trump is highly associated with space discourse and space events** in Kim Jong Un's discourse. This may indicate that Kim Jong Un values the space domain as a critical venture to counter U.S. ambitions.
- The frequency of **space themes and actual space events escalate through time**, indicating that both Kim Jong Un's rhetoric and action track with one another.
- Kim Jong Un's language regarding **space** is **highly charged and negative**, especially in speeches where he mentions **President Trump**.
- Despite increases in missile testing over the coding period, missiles and military are not often mentioned in Kim's discourse. However, **satellites** are mentioned, and are associated with **success, authority, legitimacy and economic development**. These associations must be understood in the framework of national security, and economic development is only pursued insofar as to serve the interests of bolstering regime survival.

### General Themes

- The most common themes include **Juche** philosophy, and Kim Jong Un's predecessors, **Kim Il Sung** and **Kim Jong Il**, emphasizing the importance of the legacy of the Kim family. Other frequently mentioned themes are related to the DPRK's **strength and ability**.
- The analysis suggests that Kim Jong Un is most concerned with his adversaries, namely, the US, Japan and South Korea.
- The **US** and the **DPRK** share close associations with many themes as a reflection of the adversarial relationship Kim Jong Un sees between the U.S. and the DPRK. These themes are **largely negative** and similar to themes associated with space, including **instability, injustice, danger, threat, extremely negative themes and hyperbole, war, and adversaries**.

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<sup>1</sup> This analysis also provides insight on SMA-Space Question 2 regarding how different entities conceive of space for military and commercial purposes.

- The occurrence of only a few **themes increase over the 5-year coding period for this study**, namely: **space, Trump, the US and danger**.
- **Space themes, President Trump, the U.S. and danger** are the only themes that increase through time, and all these themes have accelerated in the past two years.
- Discussion of **Kim Il Sung, Kim Jong Un and religious themes** decreases through time. Similar **decreases in religious themes** has been related to **increased state leader aggression** in previous studies (Kuznar, Yager, Clair, & Stephenson, 2012) .

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## Background

This study focuses on how language used in discussion about the space domain reveals the interests of state actors. A corpus of Kim Jong Un's speeches were compiled from an official DPRK website. These were analyzed using a codebook designed to generate quantitative measures of the extent to which emotive and cultural themes, political themes, entities and rhetorical devices are employed in leaders' discourse. These measures are used in a quantitative analysis of Kim Jong Un's worldview and goals and how the DPRK generally views space.

## Methodology & Methodological Terms

People knowingly and unknowingly signal their values and intentions in the way they use language (Beeman, 2001; El-Badawy, Comerford, & Welby, 2015; Fairclough, 2001; Rahimi & Sahragard, 2006; van Dijk, 2005). Thematic analysis focuses on themes people employ that reveal what matters to them (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Guest, MacQueen, & Namey, 2012; Ryan & Bernard, 2003), while discourse analysis focuses on the linguistic tools people use to deploy and emphasize these themes (Farnell & Graham, 1998; Schiffrin, 2003; van Dijk, 2005). The approach used in this study combines thematic analysis and discourse analysis to identify which issues matter most to a speaker and to what degree they do so. Because people are often unaware of the extent to which they signal their values and intentions, identification of key themes can provide early indicators and warnings (I&W) of political actions. The authors have employed this approach in studies of both state (Fenstermacher, Kuznar, & Yager, 2012; Kuznar, 2013, 2014, 2016b; Kuznar, Popp, & Peterson, 2016; Kuznar, Suedfeld, Morrison, & Spitaletta, 2014; Kuznar & Yager, 2013, 2016; Kuznar et al., 2012) and non-state (Kuznar, 2016a, 2017b; Kuznar & Hunt, 2015; Kuznar & Moon, 2014; Kuznar & Yager, 2012) actors.

### Codebook Typology

The codebook is a taxonomy of themes and rhetorical devices that represent topics mentioned, persons, places, things, ideas, and ways of using language that amplify the sentiment associated with the themes. The following terms describe the highest-level categories of the codebook taxonomy.<sup>2</sup>

- **Theme** – something that can be nominalized (named); can be a person, place, thing, idea, or emotion
- **Emotive Theme** – themes that convey emotion (sentiment); their mere mention evokes an emotive response
- **Rhetorical Device** – a way of using language to amplify or dampen sentiment
  - Includes repetition, lists, intensifiers (very, huge), lexicalization (special word choice), pejoratives (contemptuous or demeaning terms), use of kin terms, titles etc.

The primary categories of the themes, emotive themes and rhetorical devices include:

- **Entities** – countries, formal organizations, regions, and sub-state groups
- **Cultural Emotive Values** – themes that evoke emotions in audiences

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<sup>2</sup> As a convention, actual themes and rhetorical devices will be capitalized and italicized throughout the text, in order to differentiate them from more generic uses of the terms. When appropriate, footnotes defining themes will be given.



- **Negative Extreme Emotive** – a cultural theme that tends to evoke an extremely negative response.
- **Negative Normal Emotive** - a cultural theme that tends to evoke a negative response that is not extremely negative.
- **Positive Extreme Emotive** - a cultural theme that tends to evoke an extremely positive response.
- **Positive Negative Emotive** - a cultural theme that tends to evoke a positive response that is not extremely positive.
- **Political Factors**
  - **Positive Cohesive Concerns** – political issues that tend to imply cooperation.
  - **Disruptive Security Concerns** – political issues that tend to imply conflict.
  - **Other Security Concerns.**

**Rhetorical Devices** – ways of using language that amplify or dampen the sentiment associated with a theme (see above).

**Space Themes** – themes associated with outer space, which include but are not limited to:

- **Space themes aggregated** – all space-related themes, including those in sub-categories below
- **Space Technology** – general issues involving technology in space
- **Missiles** – space-bound missile technologies, especially including ballistic missiles
- **Satellites** – issues related to satellites
- **Space Business** – private sector connections to space
- **Space Military** – connection of military to space
  - Space Military Organizations – specific military space organizations
- **Space Science** – general outer space science concepts
- **Space Travel** – prospects and operations involving human space flight

### Semi-automated Coding

In order to facilitate rapid coding of large corpora of text, the autocode feature of MAXQDA qualitative data analysis software was used. This required development of a thesaurus of terms and phrases that would represent a particular theme. For instance, the strings, “seiz,” “aggress,” or “attack” might represent the theme of Aggression. The thesaurus is the accumulated result of ten years of research application to national security issues (Kuznar, 2013, 2017b; Kuznar & Hunt, 2015; Kuznar, Popp, & Peterson, 2017; Kuznar & Yager, 2012; Kuznar et al., 2012; Toman, Kuznar, Baker, & Hartman, 2010). The codebook contains 324 codes for themes and rhetorical devices, including 18 themes related to outer space and space technologies. The codebook is refined with each new project as new codes are added and better ways of representing themes and rhetorical devices are discovered. The coding for this project represents the codebook as it existed January 3, 2018.

### Key Metric: Density

The key metric for measuring themes is **density**: the number of times a theme occurred in a document or speech, divided by the number of words in that document. This provides a normalized measure of how often a theme is used that can be compared across documents and between authors, groups, and through time. Comparison of densities between themes also places a theme in a broader context, and thus guards against bias by judging the relative importance of themes. The underlying assumption is that the more densely a theme is used, the more important it is to the author, and therefore to a potential



audience. Theme densities were calculated for each document, and the variations of these densities through time were used to identify trends and possible indicators and warnings (I&W). Only those trends that were statistically significant at the  $p < .05$  level or less are reported.

### **Metrics for Sentiment and the Use of Emotional Language**

The use of rhetorical devices and emotionally charged themes are ways to interject emotive appeal into an argument. When done unwittingly, this may be an indicator that the speaker is in a more emotive state, as opposed to a more rational and deliberative state. Therefore, the ability to detect departures from a rational state of mind can provide clues that the speaker's decision calculus is departing from the deliberative, cost/benefit calculus that is at the heart of traditional deterrence theory (USSTRATCOM, 2006).

In order to measure the use of more emotive language, themes were classified as Extreme Negative Emotive, Negative Emotive, Extreme Positive Emotive, and Positive Emotive. In addition, Rhetorical Devices were coded. Each of these categories was tallied for each document and subsequently normalized as densities. In addition to these categories, the Extreme Negative and Negative Emotive themes were summed as were the Extreme Positive and Positive Emotive themes. This provides nine measures of the use of emotive language against which different actors or speakers can be compared.



## Analysis of Kim Jong Un's Space Discourse 2013 - 2017

### The Cultural Context of the DPRK's Politics

The DPRK has functioned as a hermit nation for the past 70 years under the absolute control of the Kim family, who have enforced their unique philosophical and political ideas in all areas of the DPRK's culture and society. Understanding this perspective and how it frames nearly all discourse in the DPRK is essential for interpreting the discourse of Kim Jong Jun.

Two concepts are critical for understanding the political culture and ideology of the DPRK, *Juche* and *Songun*, which had to be carefully coded in the analysis. Both of these core concepts have been consciously and heavily propagandized by the state to a populace with few, if any other sources of information, and therefore lack any alternative ideological models. *Juche* was introduced to the DPRK population in a famous speech entitled, "On Eliminating Dogmatism and Formalism and Establishing *Juche* in Ideological Work" by the DPRK's founder, Kim Il Sung in 1955 (Oh & Hassig, 2000, p. 17). It is a key concept discussed in all major and minor speeches and writings. However, some of Kim Il Sung's major emendations occurred in 1967, and 1972 when *Juche* was codified into the DPRK's constitution. Kim Il Sung's son, Kim Jong Il published major works on *Juche* philosophy throughout the 1970's, and major works in 1982 and more recently in 1996 (David-West, 2011, p. 105; Oh & Hassig, 2000).

The exact definition of *Juche* has been debated by Western scholars. Its most literal translation is "main foundation (Cumings, 1983, p. 289; Oh & Hassig, 2000, p. 17)," although it is often translated as "self-reliance" (Armstrong, 2005, p. 383; Cumings, 1983, p. 288; David-West, 2011, p. 99; Oh & Hassig, 2000, p. 17), and clearly has a broad, abstract meaning (Cumings, 1983, p. 289). The scholarly debate revolves around literal translations ("main foundation") versus emphasis on frequently reinforced themes ("self-reliance"), versus the broader contexts in which the term is used. Kim Jong Il's 1974 "Ten Principles for the Establishment of a Monolithic Ideological System," provides a relatively terse outline of *Juche* as an ideological system. The ten principles are excerpted and paraphrased below.

1. Give your all in order to unify the entire society with the revolutionary ideology of the Great Leader Kim Il Sung.
2. The noblest duty is to respect and revere the Great Leader Kim Il Sung with complete loyalty.
3. Make absolute the authority of the Great Leader comrade Kim Il Sung.
4. Accept the Great Leader Comrade Kim Il Sung's revolutionary thought as your belief and take the Great Leader's instructions as your creed.
5. Observe absolutely the principle of unconditional execution in carrying out the instructions of the Great Leader.
6. Rally the unity of ideological intellect and revolutionary solidarity around the Great Leader Kim Il Sung.
7. Learn from the Great Leader comrade Kim Il Sung and master communist ideology.
8. Repay the Great Leader with loyalty and political awareness.
9. Establish strong organizational discipline so that the entire party, nation, and military operate uniformly under the sole leadership of the Great Leader comrade Kim Il Sung.
10. The great revolutionary accomplishments pioneered by the Great Leader Comrade Kim Il Sung must be succeeded and perfected by hereditary succession until the end.



It is apparent that Kim Il Sung is elevated to a cult figure in this treatise and these principles stand as a prescription for proper behavior toward him (and by extension his successors), which includes directing toward him and the DPRK state the following: all-out effort, honor, establishing his absolute authority, faith-based belief, unconditional obedience, strengthening his ideology, learning, loyalty and establishing strong rules. Scholars have noted how Juche evolved from a set of ideological guidelines in the 1950s to essentially a religion focused on the Kim family (Armstrong, 2005; Cumings, 1983; David-West, 2011; Oh & Hassig, 2000). Some elements of Juche are borrowed from Stalinism, which Kim Il Sung learned from his Soviet benefactors in the 1940s and early 1950s.

Songun, or Military-First, is a key concept in DPRK political philosophy that compliments Juche philosophy. Songun was fully developed in the 1990s and prioritizes the DPRK's military in terms of the allocation of resources, and the notion that the military will lead the nation's development, militarily, economically and ideologically (Armstrong, 2005; David-West, 2011). The military is intended to be the primary vehicle through which Juche ideals will be achieved.

## Corpus

This Kim Jong Un corpus is sourced from the official website of the DPRK ([link](#)) and has published a library of work in English from the Korean Friendship Association. The discourse found in this body entails official essays and writings from Kim Jong Un covering his reign from 2012 to 2017. These writings are addressed to the public (both domestic and international) on the visions, happenings and metaphysical foundations of and for the DPRK. Topics include explorations of the central Juche philosophy, socio-political and economic and diplomatic agendas, as well as cultural writings on the DPRK.

The corpus contains 41 documents, ranging from 382 to 32,332 words with an average length of 3608 words. The documents span the period from April 6, 2012 to September 22, 2017. 14,768 segments of text were coded into 152 themes and rhetorical devices.

## Space: What is the Kim regime saying?

Previous research (Kuznar, 2013, 2017a, 2017c) provides a baseline analysis of Kim Jong Un's speeches and space-related events (missile tests and satellite launches) against which Kim Jong Un's language use related to space can be compared. In addition, trends in Kim Jong Un's general use of language can also be compared to this baseline. The correlations between Kim Jong Un's language use and space events will be described first.

## Space Events

Space events initiated by the DPRK include missile tests and satellite launches (Table 1). Space events have been generally infrequent and usually occur about once a year, but peak during the third quarter of 2017 (Figure 1).



Table 1. DPRK Space Related Events 2012 - 2017

Date	Event	Note
2/29/12	Agreement	NK agrees to moratorium on long-range missile and nuclear tests
12/12/12	Satellite	First successful launch of a satellite to reach orbit
5/18/13	Missile test	Launces of short-range guided missiles in to Sea of Japan
6/30/14	Missile test	Nodong 1 Scud missile
5/9/15	Missile test	Submarine missile launch
2/7/16	Satellite	Successful launch
4/9/16	Missile Test	ICBM engine test
8/24/16	Missile test	Claim to launch a missile that can reach US
2/11/17	Missile test	Pukgukson-2 launch over the Sea of Japan
3/6/17	Missile test	Four Tongchang medium range missiles over the Sea of Japan
4/4/17	Missile test	Medium range missile
4/15/17	Missile test	Missile launched, immediately explodes
4/28/17	Missile test	Missile launched, falters and breaks up
5/13/17	Missile test	Missile launched, IRBM
5/21/17	Missile test	Missile launched, MRBM
5/29/17	Missile test	SRBM
6/8/17	Missile test	Anti-ship missile
6/23/17	Missile test	ICBM engine test
7/4/17	Missile test	First ICBM
7/28/17	Missile test	ICBM
8/26/17	Missile test	SRBM
9/3/17	Nuclear test	H bomb
9/15/17	Missile test	ICBM

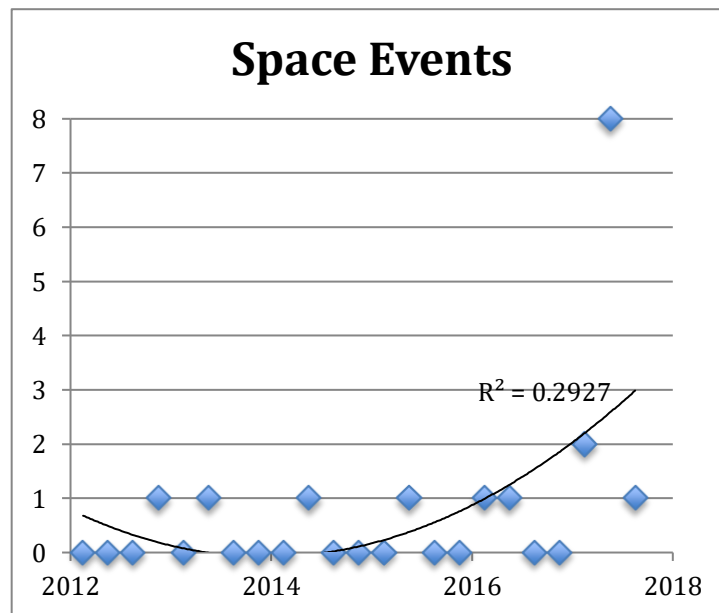


Figure 1. Frequency of DPRK Space Events by Quarter 2012 - 2017

Analyses of themes represented in the Korean Friendship Association texts indicate that a number of cultural and political themes as well as entities and rhetorical devices are associated with space events. These appear about four months before the event. Each is discussed in detail below.

### **Emotive and political themes associated with space events**

The themes correlated with space events by quarter largely have negative connotations, such as danger, threat, instability, adversaries (the US, South Korea and Japan), and economic sanctions. Independence and sovereignty are the things threatened and in danger from DPRK's adversaries. For example:

"The United States and its following forces fabricated a brigandish resolution on sanctions at the UN Security Council by taking issue with our satellite launch for peaceful purposes successfully carried out in December last year and committed the ruthless and evil hostile act of even outlawing the legitimate right of a sovereign state to launch a satellite. To cope with the prevailing situation, we unavoidably conducted the third underground nuclear test for self-defense as part of practical countermeasures for defending the country's sovereignty and security." 3/31/2013

Kim Jong Un's rhetoric concerning space is also associated with peace friendship and justice.

"The recent satellite launch on which we staked the national prestige is a solemn declaration of our Republic's independent and legitimate right to use outer space for peaceful purposes and a historic feat that exalted the comprehensive national strength of Songun Korea." 12/29/2012

Ominously, space events are also highly associated with nuclear weapons where there is also a strong positive correlation with time, reflecting the escalating incidence of space events from the DPRK.

"Thanks to the General's outstanding leadership of the Songun revolution, the KPA could be developed into an invincible revolutionary army, ours could become a country which can make and launch artificial satellites and a nuclear state, fully demonstrating its dignity as the powerful Paektusan (Pakistani) nation, and we could reliably defend the dignity of the country and the sovereignty of the nation, frustrating the imperialist moves of aggression and challenges at every step." 8/24/2013



Table 2. Themes Associated with DPRK Space Events

Theme	<i>r</i>	<i>p</i>
Danger	0.740	0.000
Instability	0.738	0.000
Threat	0.604	0.000
Sovereignty	0.569	0.000
Date	0.531	0.000
Adversaries	0.494	0.001
Nuclear Weapons	0.485	0.001
Economic Sanctions	0.480	0.001
Friendship	0.457	0.003
Justice	0.439	0.004
Independence	0.437	0.004
Peace	0.409	0.008

**Entities associated with space events**

Several entities are highly associated with space events, such as the DPRK (self-reference), the U.N. and the DPRK's adversary (i.e., the US) which is personalized in the form of President Donald Trump.

"Now that Trump has denied the existence of and insulted me and my country in front of the eyes of the world and made the most ferocious declaration of a war in history that he would destroy the DPRK, we will consider with seriousness exercising of a corresponding, highest level of hard-line countermeasure in history. Action is the best option in treating the dotard who, hard of hearing, is uttering only what he wants to say." 9/22/17

Table 3. Individuals and Politics Associated with DPRK Space Events

Theme	<i>r</i>	<i>p</i>
Trump	0.797	0.000
UN	0.786	0.000
DPRK	0.652	0.000
US	0.646	0.000

**Rhetorical devices associated with space events**

Several rhetorical devices are highly correlated with space events, such as pejoratives (as in the now infamous "dotard" label), hyperbolic language and extremely negative themes. The use of highly personalized language also highlights the personal nature of space events in respect to Kim Jong Un.

Table 4. Rhetorical Devices Associated with DPRK Space Events

Theme	<i>r</i>	<i>p</i>
Pejorative	0.563	0.000
Hyperbole	0.409	0.008
Extremely Negative Themes	0.374	0.016
Intimacy	0.340	0.029



Hyperbole manifests in claims of magnitude and the use of absolute language (in italics).

“Last year an epochal turn was brought about in consolidating the defence capability of Juche Korea, and our country achieved the status of a nuclear power, a *military giant*, in the East which *no enemy*, however formidable, *would dare* to provoke [emphasis added].” 1/2/17

This paragraph contains two pejoratives aimed at President Trump [in italics].

“But, far from making remarks of any persuasive power that can be viewed to be helpful to defusing tension, he made unprecedented rude nonsense one has never heard from any of his predecessors. A frightened *dog* barks louder.... I am now thinking hard about what response he could have expected when he allowed such eccentric words to trip off his tongue. Whatever Trump might have expected, he will face results beyond his expectation. I will surely and definitely tame the mentally deranged U. S. *dotard* with fire.” 9/22/2017

### Space Themes

As with other national leaders, space is a not frequently mentioned theme in public discourse. The aggregate of all space topics ranks at the 50<sup>th</sup> percentile of themes. Most references to space involve satellite technology, in contrast missile and military aspects of space are seldom mentioned. Satellite Technology is associated with themes of success, Kim Jong Un's assertion of absolute authority within North Korean society and the DPRK's legitimacy and economic development. This is seemingly indicative of Kim Jong Un's wishes to command the nation's satellite technology in an effort to assert the DPRK's legitimacy and to promote its economic development.

Table 5. Themes Associated with Satellite Technology

Theme	<i>r</i>	<i>p</i>
Success	0.676	0.000
Legitimacy	0.640	0.000
Absolute Authority	0.404	0.009
Economic Development	0.352	0.024

The DPRK's success in space technology is celebrated in this excerpt from the corpus.

“True to the noble intention of president Kim Il Sung who had paved the way for conquering outer space with a far-reaching plan, the General put forward strategic policies for the development of launch vehicle and artificial earth satellite and provided a firm springboard for radically advancing the country's space science and technology.” 12/29/2012

The DPRK's success is seen as the result of its inherent self-reliance, which is a key concept in the DPRK's Juche political philosophy.

“By relying on our own resources and technology, we should domestically produce the raw materials, fuel, and supplies urgently needed for the construction of an economically powerful state and channel great efforts into realizing the chuch'e-orientation of key industrial sectors, especially the metal and chemical industries. We should strengthen the capability for developing new technology in all sectors of the people's economy and improve factories and enterprises



with modern technology by organically combining science and technology with economy. By putting efforts also into the development of space science and technology, we should develop and launch more practical satellites of various kinds, including communications satellites.”  
3/31/2013

Space exploration is seen as a legitimate right inherent to the DPRK's sovereignty.

“The United States and its following forces fabricated a brigandish resolution on sanctions at the UN Security Council by taking issue with our satellite launch for peaceful purposes successfully carried out in December last year and committed the ruthless and evil hostile act of even outlawing the legitimate right of a sovereign state to launch a satellite.” 3/31/2013

### Cultural and Political Themes: *What motivates and concerns the Kim Regime?*

In general, Kim Jong Un focuses on themes associated with Juche national ideology, including the centrality of constant revolution and the Kim family, metaphysical, religious and ideological themes. Another prominent theme is the notion of the DPRK repeatedly overcoming overwhelming. Other often mentioned themes affirm positive qualities, such as strength, ability, prosperity and victory. All of these themes occur statistically significantly more often than the overall average density for all themes.

Table 6. Cultural, Motive Themes in Kim Jong Un's Speeches 2012 - 2017

Rank	Rank Percentile	Theme	Density
3	98.0%	Rebellion	0.003931
4	97.4%	Revolution	0.003905
5	96.7%	Ability	0.003458
6	96.1%	Strength	0.003340
7	95.4%	Success	0.003181
8	94.7%	Metaphysics	0.003141
9	94.1%	The Masses	0.003007
10	93.4%	Ideology	0.002781
11	92.8%	Military	0.002610
12	92.1%	Kim Jong Il	0.002365
14	90.8%	Kim Il Sung	0.002146
15	90.1%	Overcoming	0.001853
16	89.5%	Religion	0.001813
17	88.8%	Economy and Development	0.001721
18	88.2%	Victory	0.001718
19	87.5%	Juche	0.001647
20	86.8%	Progress	0.001627
21	86.2%	Prosperity	0.001550

The Kim family is often referred to in Kim Jong Un's discourse.

"I extend the noblest respect and New Year greetings to the great Comrades Kim Il Sung and Kim Jong Il, the symbol of socialist Korea and the sun of Juche." 1/2/2016

Juche philosophy is the key framework that structures Kim Jong Un's discourse.

"The Great Victory of the Juche Idea and Songun Politics: Comrades, During the period under review the Workers' Party of Korea, holding fast to the banner of the great Juche idea and the Songun-based revolutionary line, mobilized Party members and all other people to carry out the cause of the Juche revolution." 5/9/2016

The centrality of state-authority is a key theme, and the DPRK's successes are framed as the result of obedience to that authority, which emanates from the leader.

"[State-orientation] "Our target is a Juche-oriented socialist power, and the might of socialism is none other than the might of collectivism. All sectors and all units should attach primary importance to the interests of the state, the Party and the revolution, introduce the successes and experiences gained by the leading units and make leaps and bounds in the flames of collectivist competition." 1/2/2016

The ability of the DPRK's people to overcome odds is another frequent element of Kim Jong Un's discourse.

"Our party's determination is firm to have our people, who have unchangingly walked a single path by following the party while overcoming innumerable difficulties and trials, enjoy the happiest and most affluent life in the world with the military-first benefits." 3/31/2013

The DPRK's ability to overcome is one of its key strengths.

"The inexhaustible strength of Juche Korea will increase to the maximum and the victorious advance of socialism will speed up." 6/7/2017

Kim Jong Un's discourse often touts the ability of the state and its people.

"We will continue to build up our self-defence capability, the pivot of which is the nuclear forces, and the capability for preemptive strike as long as the United States and its vassal forces keep on nuclear threat and blackmail and as long as they do not stop their war games they stage at our doorstep disguising them as annual events." 1/2/2017

### **Entities: *Who* concerns the Kim Regime?**

Like all countries, the primary entity to which Kim Jong Un refers is his own nation state. Close behind are Jong Un's adversaries, namely the US, Korea's historical enemy Japan, and South Korea.





Table 7. Politics Mentioned in Kim Jong Un Speeches 2012 - 2017

Rank	Rank Percentile	Theme	Density
48	68.4%	DPRK	0.000717
53	65.1%	US	0.000618
63	58.6%	Japan	0.000444
87	42.8%	South Korea	0.000189
90	40.8%	UN	0.000166
112	26.3%	Asia	0.000039
124	18.4%	China	0.000017

Most of the themes associated with the DPRK are also associated with the US. In Kim Jong Un's rhetoric, the US and the DPRK are associated through their adversarial relationship. Discussion of Kim Jong Un's view of the DPRK and the US will first consider associations they have in common, then themes uniquely associated with each country.

The US and the DPRK are both associated with themes that have an overtly negative and threatening connotation; in the case of the US, these themes are considered negative attributes, and in the case of the DPRK they are recognized as threats and ways that the DPRK is victimized by its enemies. These negative themes include instability, injustice, danger, threat, extremely negative themes, war, and adversaries, and he frequently emphasizes these negative associations through the use of hyperbole.

"The United States' hostile policy toward the DPRK has become more vicious recently, and this is related to the fact that it has switched the strategic center for world domination over to the Asia-Pacific region and set its sights on us as the first target of attack." 3/31/2013

"After taking office Trump has rendered the world restless through threats and blackmail against all countries in the world." 6/7/2017

Peace, the DPRK's independence and sovereignty, and dignity are what Kim Jong Un thinks the US threatens. Ominously, space events and nuclear weapons are associated with both countries, with both countries mentioned increasingly through time. President Donald Trump is also highly associated with both countries, because of his association with the competition for nuclear capability.

"To cope with the prevailing situation, we unavoidably conducted the third underground nuclear test for self-defense as part of practical countermeasures for defending the country's sovereignty and security. The United States and other hostile forces then ran about more madly and cooked up another resolution on sanctions of higher intensity, while also mobilizing vast armed forces of aggression to carry out the Key Resolve and Foal Eagle joint military exercises aimed at instigating a nuclear war." 3/31/2013



Table 8. Themes Associated with the DPRK and the US in Kim Jong Un's Speeches 2012 - 2017

Theme	<i>r</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>r</i>	<i>p</i>
Instability	0.935	0.000	0.779	0.000
Danger	0.934	0.000	0.782	0.000
Trump	0.890	0.000	0.805	0.000
Nuclear Weapons	0.876	0.000	0.517	0.001
Friendship	0.849	0.000	0.364	0.019
Economic Sanctions	0.844	0.000	0.457	0.003
Ability	0.805	0.000	0.475	0.002
Threat	0.798	0.000	0.833	0.000
Peace	0.786	0.000	0.469	0.002
Independence	0.757	0.000	0.399	0.010
Sovereignty	0.730	0.000	0.800	0.000
Injustice	0.654	0.000	0.455	0.003
Space Events	0.652	0.000	0.646	0.000
Extremely Negative Themes	0.582	0.000	0.687	0.000
War	0.467	0.002	0.686	0.000
Adversaries	0.466	0.002	0.773	0.000
Hyperbole	0.457	0.003	0.408	0.008
Dignity	0.445	0.004	0.606	0.000
Date	0.315	0.045	0.365	0.019

The DPRK is uniquely associated with a key Juche concept (self-reliance), a prominent adversary (the US), and intensifiers used to emphasize its positive qualities.

Table 9. Themes Uniquely Associated with the DPRK in Kim Jon Un's Speeches 2012 - 2017

Theme	<i>r</i>	<i>p</i>
Self-reliance	0.644	0.000
Cooperation	0.612	0.000
US	0.601	0.000
Intensifiers	0.410	0.008
Overcoming	-0.331	0.035
Success	-0.377	0.015
Metaphysics	-0.381	0.014

“The dignified and glorious present of our people and the bright prosperous future of our country are ensured by the immortal nation-building exploits the Generalissimos performed while founding a genuine state of the people for the first time in the 5,000-year-long history of our nation and developing it into a powerful socialist country that is independent, self-sufficient and self-reliant in national defence and by the great achievements the President made while leading the Fatherland Liberation War to brilliant victory on the strength of his outstanding strategy and tactics and wise leadership.” 1/1/2013



The US is uniquely associated with negative connotations such as lying, other pejoratives and is disassociated from the DPRK's heroic leaders, Kim Il Sung and Kim Jong Un.

**Table 10. Themes Uniquely Auspicated with US in Kim Jong Un's Speeches 2012 - 2017**

Theme	<i>r</i>	<i>p</i>
Pejoratives	0.714	0.000
DPRK	0.601	0.000
China	0.359	0.021
Lying	0.356	0.022
Kim Jong Il	-0.313	0.046
Kim Il Sung	-0.334	0.033

"The US imperialists, who had been boasting of the myth of their "strength," launched a series of desperate attacks by hurling colossal amounts of war materiel and even the troops of their vassal countries" 7/26/2015

### Trends through Time

The strongest positive trend through time is the increase in mention of space events. The second strongest positive trend through time in Kim Jong Un's discourse is mention of US President Donald Trump. President Trump appears to be a special fascination for Kim Jong Un, since the President is mentioned very frequently as soon as he is elected, whereas there is not a correspondingly frequent mention of President Obama during his term of office. This trend reinforces a worldview that is increasingly ominous and threatening. Other themes that increase through time include the U.N., the US, danger, instability and negative themes. Reference to the DPRK's former leaders, Kim Il Sung and Ki Jong Il, as well as religious themes actually decrease through time. The decreased mention of his father and grandfather is likely a function of the decreased discussion of religious themes, since his predecessors are often synonymous with and mentioned alongside Juche philosophy, which is inherently religious and accompanied by religious discourse (Armstrong, 2005). Therefore, the most meaningful pattern is the decrease in religious discourse. The decrease in religious discourse before nuclear and missile testing was identified in an earlier study of indicators and warnings in Indian and Pakistani leadership speeches (Kuznar et al., 2012).

Table 11. Trends through Time in Kim Jong Un's Speeches 2012 - 2017

Theme	<i>r</i>	<i>p</i>
Space Events	0.531	0.000
Trump	0.411	0.008
UN	0.401	0.009
Danger	0.394	0.011
Independence	0.368	0.018
US	0.365	0.019
Instability	0.362	0.020
Friendship	0.345	0.027
Negative Themes	0.308	0.050
Kim Il Sung	-0.363	0.020
Religious Themes	-0.387	0.012
Prosperity	-0.428	0.005
Military	-0.496	0.001
Kim Jong Il	-0.532	0.000

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