

AN ANALYSIS OF ALTRUISTIC MOTIVES OF NORTH KOREAN DEFECTORS PARTICIPATING IN VOLUNTEER ACTIVITIES

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to analyze the motives behind the volunteer services based on the North Korean defectors who have been participating in volunteer activities for many years while settling in Korea. Five defectors who participated in volunteering through the community were selected as research participants and data were collected and analyzed through in-depth interviews. According to the analysis results, a sense of solidarity was formed with the suffering Korean people, and there was a tendency to relate themselves to those suffering people. In other words, the motives for participating in domestic volunteering are constitute both instrumental and compulsory motives. However, for North Korean defectors, altruistic motive is found to be a constant factor in volunteering participation. These results of research show that acts associated with experience in North Korea lead to 'interest' and 'sharing'. Due to their painful past experiences in North Korea, this study implicitly suggests that even if defectors live a rich and satisfying life their acts of sharing with those who are suffering will continue until the day of unification and this is what they should and will do in a unified Korean society.

KEYWORDS: North Korean Defector, Korean people, volunteer work, participation motivation, North Korean defectors' community

1. INTRODUCTION

The subjects of this study are North Korean defectors who left North Korea and entered Korea. With the increase in the number of North Korean defectors entering Korea since the late 1990s, the government began to announce support policies for helping North Korean defectors to adapt to the South Korean society. North Korean defectors who were accustomed to the socialistic system of North Korea had a strong 'dependency' to rely entirely on the state. So, the general mood of the society is stuck for 20 years with the perception of 'the North Korean defectors receiving a help unilaterally is natural.' If the society presume the prejudice, then the society becomes unequal. However, the prejudice that "defectors who have been unilaterally supported" is disappearing to such a degree that the prejudice against these defectors is not noteworthy. This is because increasing the defectors, who are the socialistically deprived group in our society even aided by NGOs or NPOs, form volunteer organizations themselves and are volunteering to help poor people. It is also noted that fund for the volunteer activities are provided by dues and other activities. This study started from a problem statement that 'what are the motivating factors in behind the North Korean defectors voluntarily diverging out of the 'dependency' and start volunteer services.

Compared to the participation rate of adult volunteers in Korea of 17.6%, the participation rate of defectors is relatively low, 3% but it is increasing (Hankyoreh, May 5, 2015). However, the researcher would like to put a lot of significance on this number of 3% than 17.6%. The reason is the motivation behind the Korean people to participate in volunteer services has greater influences from external motivation factors rather than internal factors.

In Korea, volunteer work was not activated because the awareness of it was low even in the mid-1980s, and the 1988 Olympic Games in 1988 triggered massive publicity campaigns for the recruitment of volunteers. Since then, the importance of volunteer activities has spread, and the Basic Law on Volunteer Activities was enacted in 2005 and volunteer centers were established throughout the country. Volunteer work literally is the act of choosing 'action' in the category of social responsibility and duty, leaving the individual's interests in the meaning of self and some motives of the individual is acting in this social action.

On the other hand, there is no concept of volunteering because the social structure of North Korea is a compulsory activity that is organized systematically according to the needs of the state¹. It is necessary to analyze what motivates the North Korean defectors who have grown up in this society to make a community and voluntarily participate in it for volunteer activities that emphasize the enhancement of social publicness and citizenship. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to deeply

¹ The structure of North Korean society consists of the organization of the Korean Labor Party, the Kim Il Sung Socialist Labor Youth Alliance, Organization of Chosun Boys' Organization, Organization of Chosun General Occupation Alliance and the Chosun Women's General Alliance.

explore the motivation for volunteering for North Korean defectors participating in North Korean defectors community volunteer activities.

2. Theoretical Background

2.1 Understanding of North Korean defectors

The collapse of the Soviet Union in the 1980s and the death of Kim Il-sung in the 1990s caused much confusion in the North Korean society. Following the political repression, economic deprivation caused millions of victims of starvation, leading to 'defecting from North Korea' that moves to China. Some of the defectors who migrated to China succeeded in escaping again after they were arrested several times by Public Security Officer and repatriated to North Korea. Through these people, human rights problems in the North Korean society have become an issue in the international community, and the government actively presented policies for North Korean defectors and started supporting North Korean defectors. As the policy of supporting North Korean defectors poured out, the North Korean defectors who lived in China began to rush to Korea country from the 1990s. Currently, the number of defectors who entered Korea is 30,212 people. (Ministry of Unification website).

The defectors who lived in the socialist system entered Korea and showed a strong dependency on the state. Therefore, the government has changed its support policy direction from 'protection' to 'self-reliance, self-help' so that they can stand on their own and North Korean defectors are making various efforts for self-reliance.

2.2 Motive factors of volunteer work

A motive is defined as an internal function that induces and sustains human behavior as a social animal. In other words, motives are divided into 'internal motive' and 'external motive' depending on where the motive is generated and internal motive is generated from within, and external motive from outside (Choi Hyun-suk, 2014). In Korea, volunteer work is a rewarding activity as a tool for incentives such as entrance examination or employment that gives extra points by filling volunteering points to institutionalize and revitalize volunteering and external motivation is greater than internal motivation.

Human motivation is related to individual feelings, desires, and beliefs etc. The word emotion was derived from the Latin word "movere," which has the same origin as motive, and is closely related to emotion. Based on this emotion, Barker (1993) divided the motives of those involved in volunteering in three broad categories: Instrumental motive which is self-oriented motive, mandatory motive which is moral-oriented motive and altruistic motive which is others-oriented motive (Barker, 1993; Lee Sun-mi, 2003).

Looking at volunteering participation motives appearing in Korea according to these motive types, instrumental motive and mandatory motive phenomena are mainly observed. Altruistic motive for others and instrumental motive expressed as self-realization by psychological compensation were analyzed to affect the activation of volunteer activities (Kim Tae-ryong, Ahn Hee-jung, 2009). Altruistic motive forms a sense of solidarity for the poor and can be said to be sympathy for those in distress, a tendency to identify themselves with those who suffer, and a motive for future hope (Barker, 1993; Lee Sun-mi, 2003).

Compared with motives for volunteering of foreign countries, the volunteer activity in Korea is a mandatory motive phenomenon that chooses the action in the categories of social responsibility and duty (Shin Yoon-chang, Son Kyung-sook, 2008). Therefore, this study is to examine the motives of volunteer participants of North Korean defectors who represent the altruistic motive type than volunteer motive types in Korea

3. Research Method

This is a phenomenological qualitative study that explores their motives for volunteering through in-depth interviews with North Korean defectors who are volunteering in the North Korean defectors community. When designing, qualitative research begins with a subject or realistic area to investigate, starting from a specific issue or problem. In fact, participants in the research live in the same area as the researcher, and they started to share the conversation naturally as they frequently witnessed the activities of the participants. In the process, the researcher raised a question from the doubt of what motivates them to participate in a social phenomenon called social service, while watching research participants actively participating in volunteer activities.

Research participants selected five North Korean defectors who are currently participating in volunteer activities and conducted one or two in-depth interviews from November 2016 to February 2017. <Table 1> shows the demographic characteristics of the research participants.

Table 1: The General Present Condition of Research Participants

Research Participant	Sex	Age	Religion	Entry Year	Present Occupation	Volunteer Services Activity Record
A	Female	40's	Christian	2005	Volunteer Service Operation Manager	The volunteer service started with a Village Community Activity in 2010, and currently active as a leader.

B	Male	50's	Catholic	1997	Self-Business Owner	The volunteer service (including donations), which relates to the personal business, started since 2003.
C	Female	50's	Christian	2006	Self-Business Owner	The volunteer service started in 2010 as part of a religious activity
D	Male	50's	Atheist	2006	House Maintenance	Volunteer service started with a community service.
E	Female	40's	Atheist	2006	A temporarily contracted Employee	Volunteer service started with a community service.

We selected the phenomenological research method to analyze the motives of North Korean defectors participating in volunteer activities through community activities. Phenomenological research is a qualitative research method that identifies the intrinsic semantic structure of human experience. In-depth interviews were used to collect data and the researcher field, which is a classical documenting method in qualitative research was also used.

Data analysis focuses on analyzing individual characteristics or problems of a study object synthetically and discovering their hidden characteristics through depth interview. However, the researcher has many troubles how to extract linguistic uncouthness of research participants, their expression, and conflicting tacit meaning as key words. The researcher tries to focus on individual experiences, to form meaning by meaningful word or line, and to reveal hidden meaning in a context.

4. Altruistic motive factors

4.1. Identification with oneself

It is thought that every human action has a cause. What matters is what causes the action and what the decisive source that energizes that action is. In this study, one of the motives for encouraging research participants to participate in volunteering is the sense of solidarity through experience. The participants spent the 'Second March of Hardship' in the 1990s and escaped from extreme space beyond life and death. They had witnessed numerous people starving for poverty and dying, and had experienced the limitations that they could not escape from the threat of life. The participant C said living in North Korea became a nightmare, and his mind is constantly directed to those in a similar situation similar to his past. In other words, it can be seen that he identify people in need with the poor himself who he experienced in North Korea.

They remind me of when I lived in North Korea. I am not rich either, but it's not as bad as in North Korea ...They remind me of when I escaped from the throes of death in North Korea. So I want to help more, give more, and I think that if someone cares and touches, the person can live. That is how I felt when I was in North Korea... (Research Participant C)

My heart hurts because it's like seeing me. In North Korea, nobody gave me a bowl of rice. That's exactly how I feel. At that time, it was so difficult to eat a meal... I cannot control my life. Seeing these people make me feel sad because it's like watching me. I must share and practice until the body allows it. (Research Participant A)

4.2 A sense of solidarity of as parents and siblings

Korea is the world's only divided nation divided into the South and the North, with the 38th parallel drawn by the Korean War in the 1950s. The North Korean society has a ruling system of nurturing method that controls people by political repression in order to maintain dictatorial regime. Since it is tied to system of 'organizational life', economic activities of ordinary people are not free. As a result, North Korean defectors suffered politically in economic difficulties and experienced poverty themselves. North Korean defectors who migrated to Korea through China are surprised by Korea's economic development. However, not everyone lives well. They came to know that many people live poorer than those in North Korea through volunteer activities. The participant C showed a sense of solidarity with the parents and brothers left in the hometown while looking at the elders who eat only one meal a day through the lunch delivery to the elderly living alone.

I feel like watching me during a march of hardship.... There are still brothers in my hometown, thinking of them...If unified, maybe we should do more? Because 'we are Korean people'. (Research Participant E)

They are like parents and siblings left it in my hometown ... that is why my heart hurts more. They say they eat only one meal a day, here is not North Korea so every time the food truck comes out, I go for volunteering without skipping. Because the elders are waiting. (Research Participant C)

4.3 Sympathy by experience

The participant B began religious life as he learned about OO religious organization in the region through the acquaintance leading a religious life the process of distributing products made by the company. Through religious life, he came to know that there are 'more difficult people than me'. He said that he began to help families in need while facing the dark reality he did not know in the

actual back side of Korea, which was spectacular on TV. The participant B talked about the situation when he started volunteering as follows:

There is a saying that a thousand hearings are not worth one seeing. Of course, I heard that there are some people who are poor like North Korean people even though it seems like South Korea is rich ... Watching the movies that depict South Korea in North Korea, a lot of beggars appear in them. To give an image of not living well ... But there are really some places like this ... What I see with my eyes touches my heart differently. It's different from what I hear. My heart was torn with sorrow. I think it became the opportunity for me to start volunteering. (Research Participant B)

Experiences in North Korea guided North Korean defectors to the way of service than any words and actions and teach about respect for humanity. As shown above, volunteer activities emphasize the altruistic purpose of helping others and society than selfish goals (Shin Yoon-chang, Son Kyung-sook, 2008).

4.4 Hope for tomorrow

The participant B said he has been volunteering for 14 years since 2003 but at first, he did not start knowing the concept of volunteering. Coming to Korea in 1997, he worked at 'OO Food', a company founded by the investment collected by several North Korean defectors. While operating a Dail Community Company as the first self-reliance and self-support model for North Korean defectors, they started their own business independently in 2009. Volunteering they started while doing business in the company has been conducted for 14 years until today when they are engaged in self-employment. The participant B said he gave his own products, but rather, the profit was positive.

I have been in self-employment for about seven years now. Before that, I was working in a jointly operated company and started to donate a little money from this time traveling all over the country. It is not a lot of money, but once or twice a year I sometimes gave OO cold noodles and OO steamed bread to elderly people in vulnerable classes. In mathematics, the number decreases as you divide, but serving becomes a plus as you divide. You will see what I mean if you do volunteer work... (Research Participant B)

Unification will be achieved someday. I wish my country would be unified, but these people will increase. So I learn the know-how so that when the country is unified, I can work for the people in North Korea. (Research Participant E)

As shown in the in-depth interviews with the research participants, the altruistic motive form of Barker (1993; 28) was shown. While sympathizing with others, they showed a tendency to identify themselves with those suffering due to solidarity of yesterday's themselves. It also implied that expecting the day to be unified, they would continue until that time.

5. Conclusion

In order to examine the motives of North Korean defectors who entered Korea to participate in volunteer activities for many years, this study conducted in-depth interviews with five North Korean defectors and made an analysis. We analyzed empirical facts about internal motive and external motive for participation in volunteering and analyzed them according to altruistic motive of Barker's (1993) volunteer motive types.

According to the result of the analysis, we could see a sense of solidarity for the poor or the tendency to identify themselves with the suffering people as the altruistic motive. The participants are those who escaped from the extreme space that crosses the life and death during the 'second march of hardship'. So they showed a tendency to identify with themselves and solidarity as Korean people due to difficulties they experienced in North Korea and the suffering they had experienced. It could be seen that they try to have interest and practice sharing because understand the pain of people in need than anyone else. The participants do not have brilliant jobs, nor do they live economically prosperous. However, due to the pain that they had suffered, they showed their sense of responsibility and participation as a member of the local community, rather than their own interests or temporary feelings.

As shown in the previous research, it can be seen that it is different from volunteering recognition and compensation (Namkung Geumsun et al., 2016; Woo Jung-ja, 2012; Choi Yu-mi, 2010; Hwang, Sun-young, 2006), external motives for affection, achievement, and friendship (Kim, Se-joon, 2015; Gil Gwi-sook, 2010). That is, we can see that the intrinsic motives of 'interest' and 'sharing' appearing as a result of voluntary motivation reinforcement due to the pain and suffering experienced in North Korea and the internal impulse to return the compensation already received in Korean society to society is acted strongly. In other words, while the motives for volunteering in Korea are mainly the instrumental motive and the mandatory motive, the altruistic motive for the North Korean defectors appears to be a factor of continuous volunteering participation. In addition, the motives for North Korean defectors to volunteer are not a temporary impulse but a continuous involvement for many years, which is different from the previous researches. It is the importance of motivation that maintains sustainability because volunteering persists until motivation continues. We think that one of the motives for North Korean defectors to continue volunteering for such a long period is probably their experiences in North Korea.

This study implicitly suggests that North Korean defectors seem to continue volunteering until the day of unification or even after unification and what they should and will do in a unified Korean society.

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