

<b>Institution:</b> King's College London		
<b>Unit of Assessment:</b> 19 Politics and International Studies		
<b>Title of case study:</b> Shaping Understanding of China and North Korea for Policy Development		
<b>Period when the underpinning research was undertaken:</b> 2006 - 2018		
<b>Details of staff conducting the underpinning research from the submitting unit:</b>		
<b>Name(s):</b>	<b>Role(s) (e.g. job title):</b>	<b>Period(s) employed by submitting HEI:</b>
Professor Kerry Brown	Professor of Chinese Politics and Director, Lau China Institute	From 2015
Dr Ramon Pacheco Pardo	Reader in International Relations	From 2009
<b>Period when the claimed impact occurred:</b> 2016 - 2020		
<b>Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014?</b> N		

### 1. Summary of the impact

Research from King's College London has contributed to a better global understanding of the rising power of both China and North Korea. This is important as these rising international powers are less liberal than the West and hold more authoritarian values. To avoid potential clashes, the need for evidence-based approaches to engage and accommodate these new powers is widely acknowledged. Research from King's College London has contributed to a better global understanding of the rising power of both China and North Korea. Findings have demonstrated that through improved knowledge about domestic dynamics and foreign policy, better international relations can be forged to create a middle place between engagement and isolation. King's research has created dialogue across multiple groups inside and outside government, stimulated debate and supported policy shifts in the UK, the EU and South Korea to help regulate global peace and security dynamics.

### 2. Underpinning research

China and North Korea are often misunderstood and misrepresented. Although they differ in economic size (China is the world's second largest economy; North Korea is one of the poorest) and in how they relate to the outside world, they have similar exceptionalist value systems. Characterised by authoritarianism and lacking in transparency, both nations pose complex challenges for the West and other democratic countries. This complexity can be particularly testing for those approaching negotiations or making policy decisions relating to either China or North Korea. As such, King's research has provided clear and well analysed information which has explored the changing geopolitical challenges of a world where Asia is becoming a major global power centre. For both countries, King's researchers Prof. Kerry Brown and Dr Ramon Pacheco Pardo have used the content analysis of hundreds of official government documents and media, and interviews with hundreds of government officials, diplomats and other influential participants from China, North Korea, the US, South Korea, Japan and Europe to develop an accurate framework within which to interpret behaviour. This research has unveiled ideology, helped identify the challenges associated with the unique need for recognition and reciprocity, and developed an understanding of how these countries engage with the West.

#### Unveiling Ideology

King's research has demonstrated that, in order to understand the foreign policy of both China and North Korea and respond to it effectively, there needs to be a clear understanding of the ways that each expresses their own particular ideologies and how this affects their policy decision making.

For example, King's research has highlighted how 'Socialism with Chinese Characteristics' has enabled China to balance capitalist economic practices with adherence to a one party Marxist-Leninist political model [1]. It has demonstrated that this hybridity has created challenges for engagement by Western governments, in particular the US under President Trump, and countries across the European Union (EU) because of their commitment to liberal political values as part of

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their identity [1,3]. Crucially, understanding the role of this specific ideology explains how China can at the same time adhere to the current rules-based order which has been in place since the end of the Second World War, and be forging ahead with their own unique structures. For example, China buys into institutions such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Trade Organisation (WTO), but also contests these global agreements by setting up parallel entities like the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, and the Belt and Road Initiative [3].

King's research has also shown how North Korean foreign policy is informed by the key nationalistic values of *Juche* (independence from foreign powers), *Songun* (prioritising the military in politics and the allocation of resources), and *Byungjin* (parallel development of economic development and nuclear weapons) [4,5]. In particular, these values have manifested in an independent nuclear weapons programme [4], which challenges the global nuclear non-proliferation regime built around the Nuclear Weapons Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT).

By showing that both Chinese and North Korean foreign policy are influenced by domestic power dynamics, King's research has identified that in China, the dense network of personal relations supporting Xi Jinping underpins both his power [2] and foreign policy decisions [1]. In North Korea, government structures mean that first Kim Jong-il and now Kim Jong-un monopolise power and foreign policy decisions – including development of the nuclear weapons programme [4].

### Exploring Recognition and Reciprocity

As a result of these unique ideologies, both countries have distinctive identities and relationships with others. King's research [3] has shown that China has been seeking its rightful place and an appropriate status in the global Euro-order. This is seen as disruptive, not because the Chinese want to supplant the current order, but because they seek to create their own space alongside it. China is the ultimate exceptionalist; it wants to be understood and accepted on its own terms, according to its own cultural outlook and history. Similarly, King's research [4,5,6] has revealed that North Korea wants to be recognised as a legitimate and independent international actor, as well as a significant nuclear power. The North Koreans do not want to overhaul the current nuclear non-proliferation regime, but they want the regime to accept North Korea as a nuclear power.

### Engaging with the West

Despite their differing foreign policies, King's research has shown that both China and North Korea seek political, security and economic engagement with the West, as long as there is reciprocity. For example, much engagement aiming towards political change in China took place between the 1980s and the 2000s without success. Today, China maintains its unique political system but wants to be seen as an economic and political equal to the West. King's research has shown that this Chinese focus on self-interest means that for those dealing with them, the only technique likely to work is a similar posture. For Western policymakers that means having a far better level of knowledge of the mindset of their Chinese counterparts, their deeper cultural background, and the frameworks by which they understand and relate to the wider world [3]. North Korea sees its nuclear weapons programme as a way to be recognised internationally. However, King's research found that North Korea would be willing to trade-off parts of the programme in exchange for engagement from the US and other Western powers, and its recognition as an equal by these same powers, in spite of its authoritarian nature [4,5]. In addition, this research has helped to identify that North Korea's p

referred policy is engagement, as long as, in its view, the US and South Korea are willing to reciprocate by accepting its nuclear status as a means of regime survival and by normalising diplomatic relations between North Korea and the US [4,5,6].

### 3. References to the research

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- [1] Brown, K. (2016). *CEO China: The Rise of Xi Jinping*. I.B. Tauris
  - [2] Brown, K. (2017). The Powers of Xi Jinping. *Asian Affairs*, 48:1, 17-26, DOI:10.1080/03068374.2016.1267435
  - [3] Brown, K. (2017). *China's world: What does China want?* I.B. Tauris. DOI:10.5040/9781350985704
  - [4] Pacheco Pardo, R. (2019). *North Korea-US Relations from Kim Jong Il to Kim Jong Un*, 2nd ed. Routledge. first edition published in 2014.

- [5] Pacheco Pardo, R. (2014). The Bush Administration and North Korea: Explaining Policy Change through Soft Balancing. *Korean Journal of Defense Analysis*, 26(3), 333-349.
- [6] Pacheco Pardo, R (2018) 'North Korea In Focus: Towards a More Effective EU Policy' Wilfried Martens Centre for European Studies Research Paper.

#### 4. Details of the impact

UK discussions and engagement with China and North Korea consist of immensely complex issues and involve multiple stakeholders across the world. There has been no coherent policy response to the challenges they pose and consequently nations around the world struggle with how to approach collaboration with them. King's research is held in high esteem in both public and government spheres around the world, providing knowledge that shapes conversations, develops understanding and builds the decision-making confidence and capacity of policymakers.

Providing go-to experts in the field, King's research has underpinned a wide variety of debates including interviews and op-eds for newspapers, magazines, press agencies, TV and radio in the UK, the EU, South Korea and other countries. Research on the drivers behind the foreign policy of both China and North Korea [1,2,3,4] has guided media narratives and allowed journalists to better understand and inform public audiences. [text removed for publication].

Beyond the media, King's research has directly informed, shaped and influenced governments and international policy on China and North Korea. Selected as a UK China Leading Light by the British Council [B], Prof. Brown's research on Chinese leadership, the Communist Party ideology and structures, Chinese policy and policy drivers have been heralded by the Director of the British Council in Beijing as "*second to none when it comes to thought leaders in the UK*" [C]. Using his research to inform a new UK/China leadership engagement programme the British Council director states that "*Kerry's prolific record in publishing about modern China, its politics and international relations, provides a ready channel for briefing those new to China in any business, and all are required reading on our list of pre-reading for all British Council colleagues posted to China, and keen for a deeper engagement with the country, its politics and its people*" [C].

As a result of this widespread media and government engagement, King's research has impacted on UK government's, EU and international policy in a number of ways:

##### **Informing UK and international government officials and policy**

Both the House of Lords and the House of Commons have debated the framing of the UK's relationship with China and North Korea, for example, how to balance China's increasing economic importance with its radical values divergence from Britain. King's research [1,2] has highlighted and explained issues of concern in these areas and contributed to new analysis of existing issues. In particular, the UK government, having identified the need to have better knowledge levels about China to tackle complex challenges in the future, engaged King's researchers to educate and inform their officials across government departments. As such, King's has provided research-based information to senior Cabinet Office officials, and staff at the Ministry of Defence and Department for International Development. This included providing training for the Royal College of Defence Studies (RCDS), the senior college of the UK Defence Academy, which prepares selected military officers, and government officials from the UK and elsewhere, for senior leadership and management roles. According to a member of Directing Staff at the UK Defence Academy, "*through its partnership with KCL, RCDS have been able to draw upon Prof. Brown's wide ranging expertise on China to help course members understand China's approach to its key domestic, regional and international issues... [his] analysis and insights have also been invaluable in helping RCDS course members in their preparations for visiting China as part of the RCDS overseas study tour of NE Asia and this supports the MOD's International Defence Engagement Strategy*" [D].

In addition, King's researchers have developed a close working relationship with the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO). For example, through a series of meetings, workshops and written communications, King's research [4,5] on the benefits of engagement with North Korea was delivered to its Asia Pacific Directorate in London, which comprises about 25 officials in charge of developing and implementing policy towards the Asia Pacific region, including North Korea. This facilitated a change in knowledge and understanding in the Directorate which strongly impacted the work of the FCO Research Analyst team for Korea. [text removed for publication].

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Similarly, King's research on China [1,2,3] has been delivered to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office Association (FCOA) through the delivery of several workshops and by providing specific advice. The FCOA remark that Prof. Brown's *"input and views carry significant weight as the United Kingdom reassesses its foreign policy priorities and explores new regional policies in light of the profound diplomatic fallout from the corona pandemic... he has become part of a small and discreet group of former British diplomats available to advise senior FCO directors on the pursuit of adaptive strategies in an upturned world"* [F].

King's researchers have also informed international government and policy. For example, the former Dean of the Australia and New Zealand School of Government testifies; *"few academics could match the global impact of Prof. Brown's work...he has had a powerful effect over several years in educating Australia's top public service leaders... [and] he has made many other contributions to the Australian scene and continues to do so"* [G]. King's influence on EU policy and the South Korean government are described below.

### Influencing European Union policy

As the EU equivalent to the UK Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the EU European External Action Service (EEAS) is charged with informing, shaping and implementing the foreign policy of the EU. King's research is called upon regularly by this body and has served to influence a noticeable shift in EU policy towards nations such as China and North Korea.

In particular, King's research [1,2,3] has helped the EU move away from broad aspirational goals in dealing with China to leaning towards much more targeted and measurable ones. According to the coordinator of Europe China Research and Advice Network project in the EEAS China Division, King's research-based policy advice has *"significantly increased China literacy among EU officials and contributed to more informed policy choices"* [H]. She noted that *"[because of] Prof. Brown's personal contribution and increased knowledge about China, the policy engagement has become more nuanced as it became obvious that the simple transposition of our values and norms is not possible. [...] As a result of [his] engagement with the EEAS, his work directly informed the 2016 communication on China which expressed EU policy towards China at that time"* [H]. King's research showing the benefits of engagement with North Korea [4,5,6] has also influenced the EEAS. As a Head of Division for Korea at the EEAS testifies, Dr Pacheco Pardo's research has *"helped us refine our thinking on EU-Korean relations [...] it has allowed us better to understand the domestic situation in North Korea and what motivates the country's engagement with the US and other Western powers"* [I]. As a result, the EEAS now advises EU member states to keep its policy towards DPRK under review, including by considering resuming engagement at the right time, via the EU's interrupted political dialogue and in multilateral settings.

To deal with North Korea's nuclear challenge the European Parliament (EP) employs the policy of 'critical engagement'. This policy aims to use elements of both pressure and diplomacy to shape the behaviour of North Korea. However, many have questioned the usefulness and relevance of diplomacy in this policy. In 2016 and again in 2019, Dr Pacheco Pardo provided research-based evidence [6] to the EP Committee on Foreign Affairs, including its sub-committees on Security and Defence and Human Rights. This evidence detailed the importance of diplomacy and in particular engagement as a way to promote EU policy interests towards North Korea and to shape North Korea's behaviour. As a result, as one Member of European Parliament (MEP) noted *"the EU, as a whole, remains committed to engagement with North Korea. Yet, accountability remains at the core of this engagement policy, and this is something that Prof. Pacheco Pardo has also stressed in his contributions at the EP, reinforcing the MEPs' focus... [and allowing us] to better articulate MEP's views on North Korea, based on solid understanding and rigorous research"* [J].

### Shaping North Korea and South Korea reconciliation

[text removed for publication]. King's research [4, 6] has helped to shape the policy of the South Korean government to become in support of engagement with North Korea.

For example, after a 2017 change in the South Korean Office of the President (Cheongwade or Blue House) and Ministry of Foreign Affairs, there was a major shift from critical to pro-engagement policy towards North Korea. In particular in two speeches in Norway and Sweden in June 2019 the president compared the Korean Peninsula with the Nordic Peninsula, and many questioned the motives behind this. The Office of the President took to their official social media accounts on



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Facebook and Naver Blog to directly quote an article by Dr Pacheco Pardo analysing these speeches to explain them in greater detail. The direct quoting of Dr Pacheco Pardo's work, originally published as an NK News article, indicates that the Office of the President has made direct use of King's research to explain the benefits of engagement with North Korea to achieve inter-Korean reconciliation [L].

In addition, the US is a long-standing and strong ally of South Korea, with their alliance formalised in 1953. However, relations with South and North Korea shifted after President Donald Trump took office in 2017. At this time, South Korean policy-makers felt the need to better understand US policy under the new president and how it influenced inter-Korean relations and engagement with North Korea. [text removed for publication].

**5. Sources to corroborate the impact**

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- [A] [text removed for publication]
- [B] British Council (2020) *Meet the Champion and the Leading Lights* [webpage]
- [C] Letter of testimony from Director British Council Beijing, Minister (Culture and Education), British Embassy, Beijing
- [D] Letter of testimony from Directing Staff Faculty, Royal College of Defence Studies, Defence Academy of the United Kingdom
- [E] [text removed for publication]
- [F] Letter of testimony from Director of The FCO Association
- [G] Letter of testimony from Former Dean, Australia and New Zealand School of Government
- [H] Letter of testimony from coordinator of Europe China Research and Advice Network project, China Division, European External Action Service, Brussels
- [I] Letter of testimony from Head of Japan, Korea, Australia, New Zealand and Pacific (ASIAPAC.5), European External Action Service
- [J] Letter of testimony from Political Advisor to Member of the European Parliament, Vice-Chair of the Subcommittee on Human Rights and Member of the Committee on Foreign Affairs
- [K] [text removed for publication]
- [L] Facebook and Naver Blog post from the official account of the Office of the President of the Republic of Korea (Cheongwadae or Blue House)