

## Pyongyang's New Urban Way of Life After the "Arduous March"

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In the mid-1990s, North Korea went through its biggest economic crisis, known by its government as the "Arduous March". After the collapse of the public distribution system, North Korea's was forced adopt alternate strategies in order to survive and black markets appeared nationwide, even in Pyongyang (Yang, 2013). North Korean's government tolerated these alternative activities, since it had few options and lacked capability. Such spaces generated a unique opportunity for North Korean citizens to earn their own money and savings, and soon, they sought investment opportunities (Lee, 2016). These changes have had a profound impact on North Korean society and Pyongyang adapted its political strategy in order to respond to its population's changed conception and demands with regards to living standards.

As a result, since the mid-2010s, Pyongyang's cityscape has been completely reconfigured, similar to other post-socialist cities (Drummond & Young, 2020) with the construction of a series of residential districts in the historical downtown areas (Yim, 2016). Such urban projects were made possible by the emergence of "masters of money" (*tonju*) who accumulated significant amounts of money and were subsequently able to invest in the real estate market in Pyongyang (Baek et al., 2021). Simultaneously, the North Korean government developed leisure spaces which has been a part of Pyongyang's process of modernization and living standards enhancement (Prud'hommme, 2020). Furthermore, these urban changes have introduced new urban practices. The increasing number of shops on the lower floors of new residential buildings and the development of new leisure parks in Pyongyang are examples of the changing practices that have emerged since the "Arduous March."

This paper will consider the consequences of the "Arduous March" on the structure of Pyongyang by analyzing the new urban projects, especially those constructed after Kim Jong Un's rise to power in 2011. Through the author's visits in Pyongyang in 2016 and 2019, and on a variety of methodological tools (cartography, press analysis, satellite imagery), this paper will also present an analysis of the recent urban development and the new urban practices in Pyongyang in order to understand the economic and social changes in the North Korean society.