SHOUT FROM THE MOST SILENT NATION, NORTH KOREA: (CAN MATHEMATICS EDUCAITNO BE POLITICALLY NEUTRAL?)

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Short description of the workshop: aims and underlying ideas

*This workshop addresses mathematics education in one of the most closed countries in the world — **North Korea**, as an **extreme example of political influences** on mathematics education. North Korean secondary school mathematics education is examined through the review of North Korea's social and **educational structures** as well as its **political and ideological position**. In-depth interviews were conducted with defectors, who are now in South Korea, former secondary school mathematics teachers and students, to understand their real life experiences in school mathematics in North Korea. **Workers' Party's influence** on mathematics education and the impact the March of Suffering are examined. There are two main focuses of this workshop. One is to introduce an extreme case study of mathematics education in North Korea influenced by political and ideological standpoint. This will broaden the participants' understanding of mathematics education as not only a self-regulating subject, but also as an interwoven matter shaping and shaped by the vessel and the people in it. This will also propose a chance to reassess the participant's own mathematics education system with possibly enhanced span.*

Planned structure:

Planned timeline	Topic	Working format / presenter
45 minutes	On the case study of North Korea's secondary mathematics education system and brief overview on relationship between politics and mathematics education in U.S.	Presentation by JungHang Lee
25 minutes	Should mathematics be a politically neutral subject? Is there any political influence on mathematics education in your country?	Group discussion by participants
17 minutes	Sharing	Participants
3 minutes	Summary	JungHang Lee

North Korea has been making CNN headlines on their nuclear missile tests and human rights issues. However, North Korea still remains as the most closed and shadowed country. This workshop addresses mathematics education in one of the most closed countries in the world — North Korea, as an extreme example of political influences on mathematics education.

North Korean secondary school mathematics education is examined through the review of North Korea's social and **educational structures** as well as its **political and ideological position**. Since it is almost impossible to obtain any type of information about North Korea, I conducted in-depth interviews with defectors, who are now in South Korea, former secondary school mathematics teachers and students, to understand their real life experiences in secondary school mathematics in North Korea. Interviewees responded to questions concerning typical ways their teaching and learning were carried out in mathematics classes; the **Workers' Party's influence** in every aspect of education, from **teacher education** to **curriculum** and **textbooks** issued; and the impact the March of Suffering (nine consecutive years of negative economic growth, which killed ten percent of North Korean population) had on the teaching and learning of mathematics as well as its lingering effects in secondary mathematics education.

There are two main focuses of this workshop. One is to introduce an extreme case study of mathematics education in North Korea influenced by political and ideological standpoint. This will broaden the participants' understanding of mathematics education as not only a self-regulating subject, but also as an interwoven matter shaping and shaped by the vessel and the people in it. This will also propose a chance to reassess the participant's own mathematics education system with possibly enhanced span. For example, U.S. school mathematics education is greatly influenced by the No Child Left Behind Act, which was signed by former President George W. Bush on January 8, 2002. It sounded very attractive to the general public, yet caused many problems over the years. On December 10, 2015 President Barack Obama signed legislation replacing No Child Left Behind Act with the Every Student Succeeds Act. Mathematics education in U.S. will again be modified and promoted by its society's political stance.

It would also be particularly interesting if we can share their experience with some of German mathematics educators who taught mathematics in the East Germany (GDR) before the unification of Germany.