

Study Series 13-01

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**Korea Institute for
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Telephone (82-2) 900-4300; (82-2) 901-2528

Fax (82-2) 901-2572

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Lee, Kyo-Duk - Korea Institute for National Unification

Lim, Soon-Hee - Korea Institute for National Unification

Cho, Jeong-Ah - Korea Institute for National Unification

Song, Joung-Ho - Woosuk University

The analyses, comments and other opinions contained in this monograph are those of the authors' and do not necessarily represent the views of the Korea Institute for National Unification.

its health issues the regime is facing a succession crisis. Thus the regime will have to deal with economic collapse of an unstable new government. In circumstances where the possibility has arisen of discussing unification, careful consideration of North Korea's current situation is needed. Second, while the formula for unification that was needed in increasing exchanges and cooperation between the two Koreas, there has been no real discussion, particularly of structural engagement. At the time that this unification formula was put forward, the gap in national power was not as great as it is now, and the international diplomatic situation regarding North Korea has also changed. The gap between South and North is incomparably greater, and international views of North Korea have also changed. The U.S. administration in the U.S. pursued an engagement policy with North Korea, and at the dawn of the 21st Century there are clear signs of heading toward a fundamental change. Furthermore, South Korea pursued an engagement policy under the administrations of Kim Dae-jung and Roh Moo-hyun. In view of these facts, we clearly need to consider a unification formula delineated in separate phases. Third, the formula for unification via a national community has been considered in terms of dual state actors. Considering the changing unification environment, we need a governance-based approach. Important roles will be undertaken by actors from various different areas, not just the government. Therefore we need to consider how to play and how to best coordinate and guide their efforts toward the goal of unification. Fourth, we must consider changes in South Korean society. As the post-nationalist, globalizing trend advances in South Korea, new views and approaches will be needed. This factor was not incorporated into the thinking behind the national community unification formula. Factors must be considered more directly. In the late 1980s international politics were still largely determined by the bipolar system. The unification environment will have many new features such as the weakening of U.S. hegemony, the rise of multipolar dynamics of Northeast Asia, a growing number of issues transcending national borders, and an environment increasingly characterized by governance and networks due to the ongoing trends of globalization, democratization and networked society. [1] Must take all of these factors into consideration in developing a new unification plan.] Meanwhile, changes in the international environment are influencing the unification environment. First, let us consider the changes in the international environment and diplomatic range have seen revolutionary changes, not only from the dramatic changes in the national political system in the late 20th Century, but also due to the more recent worldwide trend of globalization. Integration and cooperation have grown more active due to increased economic interdependence and cultural exchange at global levels. Integration has accelerated not just in Europe but in other regions as well, and Northeast Asia is no exception. After the Cold War ended and new political and economic paradigms were established. Modern international politics is changing. Issues such as post-nationalist integration and global political networks began to emerge. In Northeast Asia, the Cold War continued, but economic interdependence has deepened, and cooperative efforts among civil society groups and business have increased. The problem is that while the Korean Peninsula continues to struggle under the same old South-North Cold War, South Korea has been evolving in pace with these rapid changes. The disconnect between South Korea's current happy situation on the peninsula is holding South Korea back as it strives for recognition as a global power. South Korea is moving through the processes of industrialization and democratization, and the scope of its foreign policy has expanded to encompass the entire world. South Korea is devoting more of its capacity to diplomacy and investing more of its resources beyond the peninsula. It has broken out of the paradigm of focusing the majority of its interest and resources on the unification issue, as it increasingly needs to widen its foreign policy scope to take in the rest of the world. The primary target of South Korea's national strategy, but there are a growing number of new issues unrelated to the peninsula. [2] the increasing importance of maintaining strategic relations with the four key regional powers and designing a "national security" issues such as the environment, terrorism, human rights, and natural disasters. We also cannot ignore the changes in Northeast Asia. There have been fundamental changes in the political dynamics of Northeast Asia due to the rise of China's relegation to more average status, and Russia's growing power. South Korea must bear in mind all of these changes and maintain a multifaceted foreign policy; its foreign policy concerns are too broad for it to be solely preoccupied with unification. In fact, South Korea's foreign policy paradigm is undergoing fundamental changes, and we need to develop a new paradigm. First, the status of issues related to North Korea and unification. Second, domestic views of North Korea and unification. Third, the impact of globalization on the unification environment. Globalization has impacted South Korea to the extent that it can no longer be considered a unitary nation. South Koreans' sense of identity is moving away from the cultural concept of nationhood, defined by a unitary national identity, to a more political concept of nationhood encompassing all those who possess South Korean citizenship. This is particularly true in Korea. Already foreign immigrants to South Korea have surpassed 1 million, and many South Koreans are living abroad. It is becoming impractical to cling to the unitary national identity of the past. This changing sense of identity is moving away from a unitary national identity. Members of this generation have traveled to different parts of the world from a young age and have formed a global identity. The youngest generation has never set foot on North Korean soil or had any direct encounters with North Korea. They tend to sympathize more with the suffering of the impoverished peoples in Africa than they do with the plight of North Korea. This generation-minded generation that questions what unification will mean for Korean development and jobs, and whose values are fundamentally different from those of the past generations. While acknowledging the appropriateness of unification, the government is inattentive in calculating its actual concrete benefits and costs.] It is time to consider how this generation will take its turn to come to take over the core leadership of South Korea. In light of the problems with the national community

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I. INTRODUCTION

I. Introduction

The speed and strength of Kim Jong Un in establishing his standing as a man of supreme power will depend on how much the North Korean power elite will support him in unity. Kim Jong Un will not be able to solidify his power foundation without gaining enthusiastic help from, or control of the power elite. In other words, unity and movement of the power elite are the key variables in establishing and stabilizing the Kim Jong Un regime.¹⁾

With regards to this point, this study analyzes the characteristics, structure, and network of the power elite under the Kim Jong Un regime, and particularly focuses on examining the possibility of whether factions can be formed.

1) Many studies show that solidarity and division of the elite in political systems determine the systems' stability and other characteristics: e.g. R. D. Putnam, *The Comparative Study of Political Elites* (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1976); G. L. Field and J. Higley, *Elitism* (London: Routledge, 1980); E. Etzioni-Halevy, *The Elite Connection: Problems and Potential in Western Democracy* (Boston: Basil Blackwell, 1993).

II. Application of the Theory of Power Elite to the North Korean Regime

II. Application of the Theory of Power Elite to the North Korean Regime

1. Models for Analyzing Policy Conflict among Elites in Socialist Regimes

Models that explain the establishment and execution of socialist regimes' reform and opening-up policies can be classified broadly into two categories.²⁾ First is the 'personal rule model' or the 'authoritarian model' in which an individual with strong political power seizes control over two key elements of policy-making – structure and process. This model denies the existence and importance of individual or group confrontations to gain dominance in final decision or policy-making.³⁾

Second is the 'conflict model,' which assumes confrontations and conflicts over reform and opening-up policies. This model views policy-making and seizure of political power as the results of confrontations

2) Zwick proposed two models for policy-making: First, 'the authoritarian model' and second, 'the conflict model.' Re-cited from Peter Zwick, *Soviet Foreign Relation: Process and Policy* (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1990), pp. 172-174; Hie Yeon Keum, "Analysis on Elite Conflicts in China and Patron-client Relationships," *Sino-Soviet Affairs*, vol. 56 (1992/3 Winter), p. 124.

3) Hie Yeon Keum, "Analysis on Elite Conflicts in China and Patron-client Relationships," p. 124.

among individuals, political groups, or institutionalized organizations.

Conflict models that explain confrontation among elites can be divided into several models. Firstly, the key point of the policy tendency model is that decided policies are the results of competition among diverse policy groups regarding their policy preferences.⁴⁾ The second model is the bureaucratic politics model which explains that conflict among the elite arises from competition among diverse groups and organizations within a government or a party to maximize their gains and authority.⁵⁾ The third model is the factionalism-power model, which focuses on the fact that it is hard to gain institutionalized bureaucratic interests in socialist states. It has emerged as an alternative to the bureaucratic politics model. This model suggests that the power structure and power struggles among factions can explain elite conflicts.⁶⁾ The fourth model is the patron-client model, which criticizes the three aforementioned models. The patron-client relationships are vertical, appearing among actors with unequal power and positions. Such relationships are also considered as private exchange relationships based on the principal of reciprocity, which are forged on the basis of commonalities, such as regional or school connections, occupational relations, revolutionary comrades, and loyalty of those who support the same person. Therefore, this model explains elite conflicts by making use of the 'reciprocal relationships based on favoritism and loyalty,' which are commonly found in bilateral human relationships

4) *Ibid.*, pp. 133-136.

5) *Ibid.*, pp. 136-138.

6) *Ibid.*, pp. 138-141.

pursuing special gains.⁷⁾

2. Applying the Policy Conflict Analysis Models to North Korea

The models for a policy conflict analysis can be applied to North Korea as follows. First, the personal rule model or the authoritarian model centered around Kim Jong Un will be discussed. With the world closely watching over Kim Jong Un's behavior following the official launch of his regime, he has shown a series of extreme moves.⁸⁾ Many experts say that Kim's extreme moves are signs of transition to reform and opening-up. If this is true, would such decision be the result of Kim's exclusive seizure of the policy-making process and political structure? If this is in fact the result of his exclusive political power, individual or group conflicts or confrontations are meaningless in the future processes of policy-making on reform and opening-up. Under this model, Kim's personal characteristics, policy preferences, and his ideological background are the only clues to the prospective diverse policy alternatives and strategies when reform and opening-up become full-fledged.

Many experts share the view that is difficult to argue that Kim Jong Un's power and authority are strongly exclusive compared to those of his

7) *Ibid.*, pp. 141~156.

8) Invitation of foreign media to the launch of long-range rockets and rapid reports of the failed launch (April 13th), First Secretary Kim Jong Un's first public speech marking the 100th birthday of Kim Il Sung (April 15th), disclosure of the negative sides and weak points of the administration (May 9th), Moranbong Band's bold performance (July 6th) and its filmed broadcast (July 11th), announcement of the dismissal of the Chief of the General Staff of the KPA Ri Yong-ho (July 16th), public appearance of Ri Sol-ju and her freewheeling moves (July 25th), etc.

father. Since the appearance of Kim Jong Un, the major method of decision-making in North Korea has not been a vertical process, but an interdependent one between him and the supporting groups. In this sense, the power structure of the Kim Jong Un regime has the characteristics of a 'limited' personal rule system and a governing alliance (a supreme leader system without the supreme leader). While Kim Jong Un is at the very top of the supreme leader system, policy-making is done through the assistance of his support groups, mainly his relatives, Kim Kyong Hui and Jang Sung Taek in each division (the party, administration, and the military).⁹⁾

What is noticeable here is the general type of power structure and the process of power succession that past socialist states have experienced during periods of their power transitions. In the past, the death or absence of a supreme leader in a socialist regime has directly triggered power succession, which then led to the distribution of power. Also, in order to

9) Kim Kap-sik, "Characteristics of Kim Jong Un Regime and Outlook," *Transmission of June 15 Spirit, Peaceful Unification, and Outlook of Inter-Korean Relations* (Special Conference for 12th Anniversary of June 15 North-South Joint Declaration, June 15th, 2012); Park Hyeong-Jung, "Launch and Characteristics of Kim Jong Un Governing Alliance," (KINU Online Series CO 12-18, April 23rd, 2012); Lee Gee Dong, "Dawn of Kim Jong Un Era and Possibility of 'Single Leadership System's fall: Horizontal Rifts in Power Elite," (INSS Seminar, April 23rd, 2012); Lee Gee Dong, "Dismissal of Ri Yong Ho and North Korea's Power Structure," (IFES Unification Strategy Forum 2012-2, August 16th, 2012); Lee Sang Sook, "Power Structure of Kim Jong Un Regime and Possibility of Economic Reform and Opening-up Policy," (MOFAT Key International Issue Analysis 2012-17, July 23rd, 2012); Jang Yong-Hoon, "Analysis of Kim Jong Un Regime's Power Elite," (KNSI vol. 40-1, August 29th, 2012); Han Ki-Bum, "Power Structure of Kim Jong Un Regime and Prospect on Reform and Opening-up," (IFES Unification Strategy Forum 2012-2, August 16th, 2012); Hyeon Sung-il, "Kim Jong Un's Power Structure After Dismissal of Ri Yong Ho," (IFES Unification Strategy Forum 2012-2, August 16th, 2012).

avoid a power vacuum or crisis during succession, they usually forged ‘an oligarchic collective leadership system’ in a transitional manner. This system was mostly maintained for a short period of time before transforming into a ‘limited personal rule system’ to overcome the instability caused by external and internal factors. This then changed into a new personal rule system toward the end of the succession crises. With the transition to a personal rule system, ideological systems and policy directions are sometimes adjusted.

The current power structure in North Korea has characteristics of an oligarchic collective leadership system or a limited personal rule system where the top power elite supports Kim Jong Un. However, North Korea also has the supreme leader system and its own political culture in addition to the general form of socialist power structures. The power, authority, and the crucial role of the power elite cannot compare to those of Kim, which arise from the supreme leader system and North Korea’s unique political culture. Therefore, when the personal rule model or the authoritarian model is applied, limits in both regulative (i.e., the projection of North Korea’s unique political system’s characteristics into the policy-making process) as well as situational aspects (i.e., lack of elite confrontation and conflict to gain dominance in the power structure and policy-making process) need to be examined.

Another approach that is contrary to the above models sees changes in policies and courses as the result of confrontation among individuals, elite groups, or institutionalized organizations. The following is an examination of the applicability of the policy tendency model to the

North Korean case. According to this model's explanatory framework, measures like the 'June 28 Policy' in 2012, which goes beyond the 'July 1 Policy' of 2002, can be seen as the result of competition among more than two groups, namely, the pro-reform group led by Jang Sung Taek, and the anti-reform group led by Ri Yong Ho. In other words, confrontation between the two groups are the outcomes of competition between one group that asserts the need for a more efficient and technical approach to end the economic crisis and improve the quality of life, and the other group that stresses the purity of ideologies such as the Military-First policy.

Nevertheless, if, as in this model, a dichotomous view is taken regarding competition and confrontation in terms of policy directions, all conservative groups can be mistakenly classified as groups against reform. With a broad consensus on the need for reform through the third Korean Workers' Party Conference in 2010, there is a possibility that the differences in views regarding the goals, means, scopes, and paces of reform has created a divide, as has been the past cases of other socialist states. In addition, one group may form an alliance with a third group such as bureaucratic groups in order to check or stop opposition forces. In the case of Deng Xiaoping in China, Kim may wield his political power to manipulate the scope and pace of reform or policies, and the courses between two different groups. The fact that Kim took Jang's side during the confrontation and conflict between the Jang group and the Ri group can be a case in point.

Second, the applicability of the bureaucratic politics model is as

follows. The explanatory framework of this model explains conflicts among the North Korean power elite as competition among functional or sectoral organizations or groups within the party to maximize their interests or authorities. A case in point is the analysis that Ri, who represented the interests of the military, was dismissed during the course of transferring economically vested interests from the overly expanded military to the cabinet after Kim succeeded his father. Moreover, that the control of the military through the appointment of Choi Ryong Hae as the director of the KPA General Political Bureau was viewed separately from the relationship between the Party and the military during Kim Jong Il's reign, indicates the existence of systematic competition among institutions with different bureaucratic ethea, despite attempts to integrate the Party and the military.

As previously pointed out, this model however, only highlights the institutional aspect and may underestimate unofficial individual relations or individual differences in policy and ideology. Even though the supreme leader system and the resulting political culture have the power to explain North Korea's power structure, the power structure can only be explained when Kim Jong Un and other individuals who have certain roles in the system, as well as their individual dynamics and mutual dependence are examined. If not, it might not be possible to accurately know where the power actually lies, since the influence and the role of key decision makers in North Korea may not be directly correlated to their official positions in the party, government, and military. Experienced and influential senior members of the party, government, and military

may already have a not-stable-but-solid power foundation, given the characteristics of the bureaucratic system, which can undermine the absoluteness of Kim's political power and his power basis in the party.

Third is the applicability of the factionalism-power model on North Korea. This model has an advantage in that it explains elite conflicts as the result of power struggles among factions. This is important, because under North Korea's unique political structure, functional or sectoral organizations and groups cannot pursue any institutionalized interests. This model takes the view that North Korea's power elites create networks of personal connections to strengthen their power basis. The case in point here is the analysis of North Korea's power structure with focus on the role and stance of Jang Sung Taek since the rise of Kim Jong Un. Several studies suggest the existence of factions by showing that the figures who have unofficial and private relationships with Jang hold key positions in the party, government, and military, and that the key figures of the power elite, including Choi, have shared their rise and fall with Jang. Unlike the policy tendency model which considers measures such as the 'June 28 Policy' to be the result of competition over the issues such as economic efficiency, the factionalism-power model sees them as the outcome of structuralized competition among political groups. This view stresses that, even in North Korea, individuals or groups generally compete with one another for authority, interests, influence, and safety; prevent other forces from being formed/reinforced; and encourage solidarity and loyalty of members of their own forces. Even in North Korea, which has adopted the Ten Principles for the Establishment of the

One-Ideology System as a law for life, private connections which are against such law can determine people's personal standing and status. In this sense, this model states that unofficial factions can be formed among those who cooperate in sharing a common value system.

Although this model has merits in explaining conflicts among the power elites in terms of unofficial factors, it is criticized on several grounds. First of all, not all political confrontations and conflicts have forms of struggles, and the entire power elite does not simply compete to maximize political power. In addition, its framework has limits in explaining situations like the co-existence of factions through negotiation and compromise, interaction between factional conflicts and other conflicts, and the appearance of factionalism as the major type of conflicts. In particular, there is no way to verify the existence of unofficial private connection networks which are strictly banned/blocked in societies like North Korea. Therefore, there are fundamental hurdles in that an empirical analysis or demonstration is impossible, and can only be based on inferences from hearsay.

Fourth, the applicability of the patron-client model on North Korea can be examined as follows.¹⁰⁾ In this framework, patron-client relationships are not unique to certain political cultures, but are common in bilateral human relationships as 'reciprocal exchange relationships for protection and loyalty.' Given this thought, this model believes that such

10) Not many scholars adopted or applied the patron-client relations to North Korean studies. Park Hyeong-Jung, *North Korea's Politics and Power* (Seoul: Baeksan, 2002) is an advanced study.

relationships can be found in North Korea. For example, these relationships can explain those forged between middle-level officials who engage in rent seeking with their authority over regulation and approval, and ordinary North Koreans who expect favors in the course of regular crackdowns on spontaneously expanded marketplaces. Given the poor institutionalization of the elite recruitment process, it is indispensable and essential that in the power elite, clients try to have private friendships or relationships with senior members or key members who are considered to be ‘patrons.’ In this sense, politics in North Korea can be understood as struggles of not only the top power elite, but also low-ranking officials to secure the networks of connections. Therefore, even in North Korea, the system similar to ‘nomenklatura’ in the Soviet Union¹¹⁾ facilitates the party’s seizure and concentration of the authority over personnel affairs. Personal recommendation are most effective in personnel affairs and the party plays a role as a medium where patrons and clients exchange their power and resources. This point seems to be in line with the recent normalization of the KWP and the rule through the party. As recruitment of the power elite is mainly done not through elections or public examinations, but through nomination, and there are no rules about the terms and retirement of the power elite, the normalization

11) Park Hyeong-Jung’s classification of the power elite or Lee Gee Dong’s recent elite classification by ‘contributor circles’ can be considered to assume the same elite recruitment structure as in ‘nomenklatura.’ Park Hyeong-Jung, *North Korea’s Politics and Power*, Lee Gee Dong, “Dawn of Kim Jong Un Era and Possibility of ‘Single Leadership System’s fall: Horizontal Rifts in Power Elite,” Lee Gee Dong, “Dismissal of Ri Yong Ho and North Korea’s Power Structure,”

of the party acts as a factor facilitating the patron-client relationships based on the patronage system and factionalism.

However, the problem of this model, as in the factionalism-power model, is how to distinguish the practical performance of functions by organization in North Korean politics from the networks of connections based on unofficial and private unions — namely, the patron-client relationships. Even if the scope is limited to the key power elite of official organizations, it is impossible to trace all the connection networks, including horizontal collegueship and vertical and supra-legal superior-subordinate relationship, based on individual authority, influence, or support. Patron-client relationships are inevitable in that the power elite is recruited through nomination and have lifetime membership. However, it is impossible to provide any empirical data or evidence of individual patron-client relationships which heighten the possibility of inefficiency and inactivity of politics through corruption.

In sum, the applicability of analysis models for policy conflicts has been examined, and it is difficult to choose the best model. Therefore, as was the case in these models' application on China,¹²⁾ which showed that all models had their own explanation and analysis of the same phenomenon from different perspectives, it is necessary to integrate different theories and opinions suitable to analyze certain political situations or phenomena rather than being limited to one model or view.

12) Hie Yeon Keum, "Analysis on Elite Conflicts in China and Patron-client Relationships," p. 141.

Through this approach, it becomes possible to analyze the macroscopic aspects, such as movement of political power and changes in policies, as well as the microscopic aspect, such as competition among individuals or groups for policies, power, and ideology.

III. Power Elite Network in terms of Sociodemographic Variables

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1. Sociodemographic Distribution of KWP Central Committee Members and Candidate Members

North Korea's power elite network is analyzed in terms of sociodemographic variables, focusing on the KWP Central Committee members and candidate members who were elected at the Korean Workers' Party Conference held on September 28th, 2010 (the third KWPC). The committee is composed of the power elite who led the North Korean regime in various sectors. 124 members and 105 candidate members were chosen at the third KWPC.¹³⁾

1) Gender

The majority of the members or 119 (96%) out of 124 are male. There are only 5 female members (4%) – Kim Jong Suk (83), Kim Lak Hui (80), Kim Kyong Hui (67), Han Kwang Bok (67), and Kim Jong Im

13) The references of personal information of the central committee members and candidate members were *Information on Major North Korean Figures* published by the Ministry of Unification and other related literature. In particular, *2010 Information on Major North Korean Figures by Agency* (Seoul: KINU, 2010) issued by KINU was actively used as basic data.

(age unknown). Also, among 105 candidate members, 102 (97%) are male, taking the majority, while there are only 3 female candidate members (3%) — Hwang Sun Hui (94), Kim Yong Suk (71), and Ro Song Sil (53).

2) Age

The age distribution¹⁴⁾ of 124 members are as follows: 26 members (21%) in their 70s, which is the highest group, 25 (20%) in their 60s and 80s each, 3 (2%) in their 50s, 2 (2%) in their 90s, and 1 in his/her 30s and 40s each. 63% (78) of the members are over 60. The age of 41 (33%) members is unidentified. In the case of 105 candidate members, 10 (10%) are in their 60s and 70s each, which are the highest shares, and 4 members (4%) are in their 50s, while 2 (2%) are in their 80s and 1 (1%) is in his/her 30s and 90s, each. The ages of 77 (73%) candidate members are unknown.

The eldest members are Kim Chol Man (95), Ri Ul Sol (92), and Hwang Sun Hui (94), who are in their 90s. All of them are first-generation anti-Japanese North Korean partisans. Among the members, only Pak Kwang Chol (47) is in his 40s, which is a relatively young age, with no candidate member in this age range. Also, the only member in his 30s is Kim Jong Un, First Secretary of the KWP,¹⁵⁾ while among the candidate members, No Kwang Chol (33) is the only one under 40. The youngest member is First Secretary Kim.

14) The age of the members and the candidate members in 2012 is applied in this study.

3) Locations of origin

The birthplace of the members are distributed as follows: 14 (11%) from the Pyongan province and 14 (11%) from the Hamgyong province, which is the largest group; 6 (5%) from Pyongyang; 4 (3%) from the Jagang province and the Yanggang province each; 3 (2%) from the Gangwon province; 2 (2%) from the Hwanghae province and China each; and 1 (1%) from Nampo, the Soviet Union, and South Korea. The birthplace 72 members (58%) are unidentified. In the case of candidate members, only 6 members' birthplace are known — 3 (3%) from the Pyongan province, 1 (1%) from the Hamgyong province, 1 (1%) from Pyongyang, and 1 (1%) from China, while those of the other 99 candidate members (94%) are unknown.

4) Alma Mater

Among the members, 27 (22%) graduated from Kim Il Sung University; 23 (19%) from Mangyong-dae Revolutionary Academy; 12 (10%) from Kim Il Sung National War College; 7 (6%) from Kim Il Sung Higher Party School; 3 (2%) from International Relations University; 6 (5%) from Kim Chaek University of Technology; 2 (2%) from Kim Il Sung Political and Military Academy; 3 (2%) from Pyongyang University of Foreign Studies; 10 (8%) from other national universities; 20 (16%)

15) Recently, Yoo Seong Ok, the president of the Institute for National Security Strategy said that Kim Jong Un was born in 1984. Also, publications of the Ministry of Unification specify that Kim's birthday is January 8th with "his birth year unknown and he is assumed to be born in 1982, 1983, or 1984." The Ministry of Unification, *Information on Major North Korean Figures*, p. 207.

from schools in Moscow; and 5 (4%) from other foreign schools. In terms of foreign education (in Moscow and other foreign places), the figure for those having studied abroad is actually 24, because Jo Myong Rok studied in both the Soviet Union's air force academy and Manchuria flight school. The rest 54 members' (44%) alma mater is unknown. Among the candidate members, graduates of Kim Il Sung University took the highest share (8 candidate members or 8%), while Mangyongdae Revolutionary Academy, Kim Chaek University of Technology, Pyongyang University of Foreign Studies, and International Relations University had 2 (2%) graduates each, with 1 (1%) from Kim Il Sung Higher Party School and Kim Il Sung Political and Military Academy, and 5 (5%) from other national schools. Among 23 candidate members whose alma mater were known, no one studied in foreign schools. The alma mater of the rest of 82 candidate members (78%) was unidentified.

2. Network of Central Committee Members and Candidate Members

1) Generation-based Connection

According to North Korea's official documents, the first generation of revolution is the 'anti-Japanese revolutionary champions' and the second generation is called 'soldiers of the Korean People's Army and North Korean people who accomplished heroic achievements in the national liberation war' — namely, Korean war 'veterans' and 'heroic people' who made achievements in post-war restoration — while the third and fourth

generations are called ‘new generations.’¹⁶⁾

The first generation of revolution, including former anti-Japanese partisans, are old aged, mostly in their late 80s or early-to-mid 90s. Among the members and candidate members, five are first-generation anti-Japanese partisans who engaged in anti-Japanese movements with Kim Il Sung. The members are Kim Chol Man (95), Ri Ul Sol (92), Ri Yong Mu (88), and Jo Myong Rok (died on November 6th, 2010 at the age of 83), and Hwang Sun Hui (94), the sole candidate member.

The members in the second generation include Kim Jong Il (dead), Kim Kuk Tae (89), Kim Byong Ryul (87), Jon Byong Ho (87), Kim Ki Nam (84), Choi Yong Rim (83), Choi Tae Bok (83),¹⁷⁾ O Kuk Ryol (82), Hyon Chol Hae (79), Hong Sok Hyong (77), Kim Yong Chun (77), Tae Jong Su (77), Kim Pyong Hae (72), Ri Yong Ho (71), Kim Yong Chol (67), O Il Jong (69), O Kum Chol (66), Jang Sung Taek (67), Choi Ryong Hae (63), and Ri Byong Chol (age unknown). The candidate members in the second generation include O Chol San (72), Tae Hyong Chol (60), and Jong Myong Hak (age unknown).

In the committee, Kim Jong Un (30) is the only third generation of the anti-Japanese partisans. However, there is a possibility that some in the third generation joined the committee through the third KWPC, since

16) “Introduction- Excellently creating the form of the new generation who lives and fights like the first and second revolutionary generations is an honorable mission of writers,” *Choson Literature* 7 (Pyongyang: Literature and Culture Publishing Company), p. 5.

17) Although Choi Tae Bok is not related to Mangyong-dae Revolutionary Academy, some describe him as a child of the first revolutionary generation, Hyeon Sung-il, *North Korea’s National Strategy and Power Elite: Policy on Officials* (Seoul: Seonin, 2007), p. 89.

many of the second generation's children in their 40s or 50s who held key positions in the party, government, and military, are likely to have been elected as members or candidate members.

Though not verified, other frequently mentioned third-generation figures along with Kim Jong Un include Kim Jong Chol (elder brother of Kim Jong Un), Kim Yo Jong (26, Kim Jong Un's younger sister), O Se Hyon (son of National Defence Commission Vice Chairman O Kuk Ryul), Kim Chol (son of General Political Bureau Vice Director Kim Won Hong), Kang Tae Song (son of Vice Premier Kang Sok Ju), Kim Chol Ung (son of former Deputy Director of Kim Jong Il's Personal Secretariat Kim Chung Il), Kim Chang Hyok (son of State Security Department Political Bureau Director Kim Chang Sop), Kim Song Hyon (grandson of Chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme People's Assembly Kim Yong Nam), Choi Jun (son of General Political Bureau Director Choi Ryong Hae), and Jang Yong Chol (nephew of Party Administrative Department Chief Jang Sung Taek).

The fourth generation, also called 'the generation of the Arduous March,' graduated from universities in the 1990s and the 2000s. The majority is composed of grandchildren of the anti-Japanese partisans and sons of former or incumbent members of the Political Bureau.¹⁸⁾ However, no fourth-generation figure is identified among the members and the candidate members of the central committee elected at the third

18) Jung Chang-Hyun, "Composition and Role of North Korea's Power Elite" North Korea Research Center, the Sejong Institute; *North Korea's Party, Government Agencies, and Military* (Seoul: Haneul, 2011), pp. 572-574.

KWPC. Since 35 (28%) out of 124 members and 75 (71%) among 105 candidate members are only known by their names without any information about their year of birth, alma mater, and family members or relatives, it is considered that with disclosed information, many of the members and especially, the candidate members will be found to be in the fourth generation, including the descendants of anti-Japanese partisans.

2) Regional Connections

The fact that 14 members (11%) and 3 candidate members (3%) from the Pyongan province took up the largest share in terms of birthplace shows that figures from this region have the largest regional connections. Among those from the Pyongan province, Kang Sok Ju and U Tong Chuk are both from the Pyongwon county, while Kim Pyong Hae and Jon Pyong Ho, both from the Jagang province, are from the Jonchon county. Among the new elite who joined the power circle after the 1970s, the proportion of those from the Hamgyong province has decreased significantly, due to the guard of Kim Il Sung and Kim Jong Il.¹⁹⁾ However, 14 members (11%) and 1 candidate member (1.1%) who were elected at the third KWPC and are from the Hamgyong province took up the second largest share, following those from the Pyongan province. Among those whose origins are known, figures with the least connections are Choi Tae Bok from Nampo, Hong Suk Hyong from South Korea (Seoul), and Kim Jong Il from the Soviet Union. Those from China and

19) Hyeon Sung-il, *North Korea's National Strategy and Power Elite: Policy on Officials*, p. 182.

Byon Yong Rip and Choi Ryong Hae from Hwanghaenam province do not have significant regional connections.

3) School Connections

School connections of the central committee members and the candidate members are mostly centered around Kim Il Sung University and Mangyong-dae Revolutionary Academy. Among 70 members and 18 candidate members whose alma mater were known, 31 members including Kim Jong Il and 4 candidate members graduated from two schools, while 14 members²⁰⁾ are from more than three schools. Among those 14 members, 12 are alumni of Mangyong-dae Revolutionary Academy and have studied in the Soviet Union or eastern European countries. As mentioned above, 25 members and

20) Kim Kuk Tae·Jang Sung Taek (Mangyong-dae Revolutionary Academy·Kim Il Sung University·Kim Il Sung Higher Party School·Moscow University), Kim Ki Nam (Mangyong-dae Revolutionary Academy·Kim Il Sung University·Moscow University of International Relations), Kim Byong Ryul (Mangyong-dae Revolutionary Academy·Kim Il Sung University·Czech Technical University in Prague), Kim Yong Il (Pyongyang University of Foreign Studies·International Relations University·Haeju Revolutionary Academy), Kim Yong Chun (Mangyong-dae Revolutionary Academy·Kim Il Sung Military University·The Frunze Military Academy), Ri Yong Mu (Kim Il Sung High Party School·Kim Il Sung Military University·Second Central Political School), O Kuk Ryol (Mangyong-dae Revolutionary Academy·Kim Il Sung University·The Frunze Military Academy), O Kum Chol (Mangyong-dae Revolutionary School·Kim Chaek Air Force Academy·The Soviet Union's air force academy), Jon Byong Ho·Choi Yong Rim (Mangyong-dae Revolutionary Academy·Kim Il Sung University·Moscow University), Jo Myong Rok (Mangyong-dae Revolutionary Academy (currently Kim Il Sung Higher Party School)·Manchuria flight school·The Soviet Union's air force academy), Choi Tae Bok (Mangyong-dae Revolutionary Academy·Kim Il Sung University·East German Leipzig University), Hyon Chol Hae (Mangyong-dae Revolutionary Academy·Kim Il Sung University·Romania's university of technology).

candidate members were identified to have graduated from Mangyong-dae Revolutionary Academy. Among the 23 members, 17 have studied abroad, which indicates that ‘Great Leader Kim Il Sung’ granted considerable favor to graduates from the school, which was reportedly established for the children of revolutionists.

The figures with the largest school connections are Kim Kuk Tae and Jang Sung Taek, who forged connections in four schools. They are the alumni of Mangyong-dae Revolutionary Academy, Kim Il Sung University, Kim Il Sung Higher Party School, and Moscow University, and had school connections with 53 people; 43 members and 10 candidate members. In particular, 13²¹⁾ share more than two alma mater with Jang (from Mangyong-dae Revolutionary Academy, Kim Il Sung University, Kim Il Sung Higher Party School, and Moscow University), who is considered to be a top influential figure along with Kim Kyong Hui, aunt and supporter of Kim Jong Un. Most of them held or hold key positions at the party, government, and military. Seven²²⁾ were graduates from both of Kim Kyong Hui’s alma mater (Kim Il Sung University and Moscow University) and all assume key roles in the party,

21) Kim Kuk Tae (Mangyong-dae Revolutionary Academy·Kim Il Sung University·Kim Il Sung Higher Party School·Moscow University), Kim Kyong Hui·Kim Yong Nam·Yang Hyong Sop·Chae Hui Jong (Kim Il Sung University·Moscow University), Kim Ki Nam·Kim Byong Ryul·Choi Ryong Hae·Choi Tae Bok·Hyon Chol Hae (Mangyong-dae Revolutionary Academy·Kim Il Sung University), Jon Byong Ho·Choi Yong Rim (Mangyong-dae Revolutionary Academy·Kim Il Sung University·Moscow University), Hong Sok Hyong (Mangyong-dae Revolutionary Academy·Moscow University).

22) Kim Kuk Tae, Kim Yong Nam, Jon Byong Ho, Yang Hyong Sop, Jang Sung Taek, Chae Hui Jong, and Choi Yong Rim.

government, and military. There are also some figures without any school connection with other members or candidate members: Kwak Pom Gi (Huichon University of Technology), Kim Yong Jin (Kim Hyong Jik University of Education), Ri Tae Nam (Pyongyang Machinery University), Pak Myong Chol (Pyongyang University of Physical Education), Kim Kyok Sik (Kangkon Military Academy), Kim Byong Hun (Pyongyang University of Education), Pak Bong Ju (Dokchon University of Technology), and Hong Kwang Sun (Pyongyang University of Dramatic and Cinematic Arts).

Ten were alumni of both of Kim Jong Il's two alma mater (Mangyong-dae Revolutionary Academy and Kim Il Sung University): Kim Kuk Tae, Kim Ki Nam, Kim Byong Ryul, O Kuk Ryol, Jang Sung Taek, Jon Pyong Ho, Choi Ryong Hae, Choi Yong Rim, Choi Tae Bok, and Hyon Chol Hae. Most of them were elected at the third KWPC to major party posts such as standing members, members, and candidate members of the party central committee's political bureau, and secretaries and directors of the party secretariat. Members who graduated from Kim Jong Un's alma mater (Kim Il Sung Military University) were Kim Myong Kuk, Kim Yong Chol, Kim Yong Chun, Kim Jong Kak, O Il Jong, Ri Yong Ho, Ri Yong Mu, and Ju Sang Song.

4) Blood Ties

Among the central committee members and candidate members elected at the third KWPC, 7 (3%) had blood ties with the Kim Il Sung family: Kim Jong Il (the eldest son of Kim Il Sung), Kim Jong Un

(grandson of Kim Il Sung and the third son of Kim Il Sung), Kim Kyong Hui (the eldest daughter of Kim Il Sung and aunt of Kim Jong Un), Jang Sung Taek (son-in-law of Kim Il Sung and uncle-in-law of Kim Jong Un), Kim Jong Suk (cousin of Kim Il Sung), Yang Hyong Sop (husband of Kim Sin Suk, cousin of Kim Il Sung), Ri Yong Mu (husband of Kim Jong Sun, cousin of Kim Il Sung).²³⁾ Those seven figures are all members. Candidate members who had blood ties with the Kim family were unidentified.

Other than the Kim family, other blood ties of the members and the candidate members are as follows. First is the father-son/daughter relationship. Ri Yong Chol (member) who was the first secretary of the Youth League's central committee is the son of Ri Hwa Son, former vice director of the KWP Organization Guidance Department. Choi Ryong Hae (member), director of the KPA General Political Bureau, is the son of Choi Hyon, former director of the Ministry of the People's Armed Forces. Kim Kuk Tae (member), director of the party inspection committee, is the son of Kim Chaek, former prime minister, and Kim Kuk Tae's daughter, Kim Mun Kyong, is the vice director of the KWP International Department. She once worked as the vice director of the International Department in the early 1990s and then as the secretariat through her personal ties with Kim Kyong Hui, the sister of Kim Jong Il. O Il Jong

23) The number of the royal family members is small, but they take the most important posts, regardless of their ability. Park Hyeong-Jung, "Power Structure and Governing Direction of Kim Jong Un Regime," *Power·Ruling Structure and Policies of Kim Jong Un Regime* (Seoul: Kyunghyang Shinmun, January 3rd, 2012).

(member), director of the central committee's Military Department, is the son of O Jin U, former director of the Ministry of the People's Armed Forces. Kim Tae Hui, top party secretary of Kim Il Sung University, is the son of Kim Chol Man (member), former chairman of the Second Economic Commission. Hong Sok Hyong, former director of the Planning and Finance Department of the central committee, is the son of Hong Ki Mun, former vice chairman of the Supreme People's Assembly and vice director of the Institute of Social Science as well as grandson of Hong Myong Hui, former vice premier. Huh Chol, party secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, is the son of Huh Dam, former party secretary in charge of inter-Korean affairs, and Kim Jong Suk (member), chairwoman of the Committee for Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries. So Bong Myong, candidate member of the central committee, is the son of So Chol, former director of the Military General Political Bureau. Another candidate member, Tae Hyong Chol, is the son of Tae Byong Ryol, first-generation anti-Japanese partisan. Ri Kwang Kun, chairman of the Joint Investment Committee, is the son of Ri Yong Ku, former doctor of Kim Jong Il. O Kum Chol (member and former air force commander) and O Chol San (candidate member and political member of the naval command) are sons of O Baek Ryong, former director of the General Escort Bureau and former KWP military director.

Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs (as of September 2010), Ri Yong Ho (candidate member), is the son of Ri Myong Jae, former director of Kim Jong Il's Secretariat (1982 - 1992) and former vice director of the KWP Organization Guidance Department. Paek Ryong Chon (candidate

member) is the son of Paek Nam Sun, former minister of Foreign Affairs and current governor of the central bank. Choi Son Hui, vice director of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, is known as the daughter of Choi Yong Rim, premier.

Additionally, two nephews of influential figures are known to occupy important posts: Ri Yong Nam, minister of Trade, and Jang Yong Chol, ambassador to Malaysia. Ri is a member of the central committee and also, nephew of Ri Myong Su, director of the People's Safety Department. Jang is known as the nephew of Jang Sung Taek. Kim Yong Nam, Hyon Chol Hae, Jang Sung Taek, and Kang Sok Ju had their siblings at important posts. First, Chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme People's Assembly Kim Yong Nam is an elder brother of Gen. Kim Du Nam, former vice director of the Ministry of the People's Armed Forces. Hyon Chol Hae, the first vice director of the Ministry of the People's Armed Forces and director of the General Federation of Rear Services, is the younger brother of Hyon Chol Kyu, former party top secretary of the Hamgyongnam province. Jang Sung U, former member of the central committee and vice marshal, is identified as the elder brother of Jang Sung Taek. Vice Premier Kang Sok Ju is the younger brother of Kang Sok Sung, former director of the KWP History Research Institute.

There are also the relations of in-laws. Tae Jong Su, party top secretary of the Hamgyongnam province, and Kim Kye Kwan, first vice minister of Foreign Affairs are sons-in-law of Jong Il Ryong, former vice prime minister, and therefore, are brothers-in-law. Kim Yong Il, secretary

of the central committee's Secretariat and director of the International Department, is known as the son-in-law of Jon Mun Sop, former chairman of state inspection. Also, Ri Song Ho, minister of Commerce, is the son-in-law of Kim Yong Chun, former director of the Ministry of the People's Armed Forces and current party director. So Ho Won, vice chairman of the Committee for Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries, is the son-in-law of National Defence Commission Vice Chairman O Kuk Ryol.

5) Work Connections

According to one North Korean defector who held a high-ranking position in the North, at schools, work connections are influential as people can prove their loyalty through work.²⁴⁾ In terms of work connections, the case of Mun Kyong Dok and Jang Sung Taek, and the case of Choi Ryong Hae and Jang Sung Taek are well known. In the late 1980s when Jang, guided youth groups, as the party director of youth policies and Three Revolution Teams, Mun Kyong Dok, an official of the League of Socialist Working Youth, and Choi Ryong Hae began to rise as Jang's aides.²⁵⁾ Choi also forged relations with Jang while working as the chairman of the League when Jang was the party director of youth policies. Furthermore, they shared their highs and lows together through work connections. In 2004 when Jang was purged for 'factional acts,' Mun was also pushed out of public positions. However, when Jang was

24) OOO(North Korean defector), interviewed on March 16th, 2012.

25) Hirai Hisashi, translated by Baek Kye-moon·Lee Yong-bin, *North Korea's Power Structure and Kim Jong Un Regime* (Seoul: Haneul, 2012), pp. 76~77.

reinstated in early 2006 as the first vice-director of the party's workers groups, the capital city construction department, and then promoted to the party administrative department chief in late 2007, Mun was also appointed to the vice director of the party administrative department in 2009. Choi also was pushed out along with Mun and other aides of Jang at that time, but he became the party top secretary of the Hwanghaebuk province in April 2006. In addition, Choi, Mun, Ri Yong Su, and Ji Jae Ryong, who once assumed the roles of chairmen or vice chairmen of the central committee of the League, are called 'Jang's quartet of the League.' A similar case is 'the missile trio.'²⁶⁾ Pak Do Chun (the party munitions secretary), Ju Kyu Chang (party machinery and industry director), and Paek Se Pong (second economy chairman) have work connections related to weapon development and production, and therefore, they are called 'the missile trio' or 'the nuclear trio.' Also, work connections between Party Light Industry Director Pak Pong Ju and his aide, Director General Kim Yong Ho, are famous. They have built networks while Kim held the positions of the vice director general (2001 to February 2005), and the director general (March 2005 to June 2007), and Pak was in office as prime minister (September 2003 to April 2007). Additionally, work connections between Pak and Kim Kyong Hui, who worked together for a long time at the party Light Industry Department and the Economic Policy Inspection Department, is also notable.

26) *Joongang Daily*, April 17th, 2012.

6) Aide Connections

Usually, networks among group members are examined based on generational, regional, school, blood, and work connections. However, in analyzing the networks of the North Korean KWP central party's members and candidate members, relations based on the standing of 'aides,' namely 'aide connections,' have significant meaning. In North Korea's power structure, aide connections homogenize aides regardless of their feelings about each other, and in some cases, these connections can act as powerful drivers for strong coherence.

Figures who became Kim Jong Il's aides through work connections after graduating from university (1964) are Kim Kuk Tae, Kim Ki Nam, and O Kuk Ryol. In addition, among those who rose to the power circle and were acknowledged by Kim during the process of establishing his single leadership system, Kang Sok Ju, Kim Yong Chun, Ri Myong Su, Ri Chol, Ri Yong Chol, Pak Jae Kyong, Jang Sung Taek, Jon Pyong Ho, Ju Kyu Chang, Choi Ryong Hae, and Hong In Bom currently hold key posts in the party, government, and military. After Kim Jong Il was boosted to supreme commander of the army and National Defence Committee chairman in the early 1990s, key military figures including Jo Myong Rok, Kim Myong Kuk, Hyon Chol Hae, Pak Jae Kyong, Ri Myong Su, and Kim Yong Chun have forged a new aide group, and in the 2000s, Kim Kyok Sik, Kim Won Hong, Kim Jong Kak, Choi Bu Il, and Ju Sang Song joined the group.

Kim Jong Il's Secretariat, which was founded with his nomination as the successor, was considered 'the closest aide group.' One notable figure

related to the Secretariat is Ri Chol (former ambassador to Switzerland). Ri was in charge of diplomacy for over 30 years in Geneva, Switzerland. In the year when he was appointed as diplomatic minister to Geneva (June 1980), he became the top secretary of the secretariat of the KWP Organization Guidance Department, taking the role of “Kim’s most trusted keeper of the overseas safe (manager of Kim’s overseas secret funds).”²⁷⁾ A major reason why he could take this role was because he is an alumnus of International Relations University along with Kim Yong Sun (former secretary in charge of inter-Korean affairs and director of the Unification Bureau, died on October 26th, 2003); he was the protocol director in charge of protocols under Huh Dam, the former minister of foreign affairs; he also maintained close ties with Jang Sung Taek who was the overseas party guidance director of the KWP Organizational Guidance Department in the mid 1970s.²⁸⁾ More specifically, based on his school and work connections, Ri Chol was able to create aide connections with Kim Jong Il and as a result, he held triple and overlapping connections.

As Jang Sung Taek took four key posts of the party administrative department chief, candidate member of the Political Bureau, member of the party central military committee, and vice chairman of the National Defence Committee through the third KWPC in September 2010, the so called ‘Jang Sung Taek Group’ was reported to forge the largest faction in

27) Hyeon Sung-il, *North Korea’s National Strategy and Power Elite: Policy on Officials* p. 230.

28) *Ibid.*, p. 230.

North Korea's power elite. The identified members²⁹⁾ are Ri Myong Su, Ji Jae Ryong, Mun Kyong Dok, Kang Sok Ju, O Kuk Ryol, Choi Ryong Hae, Kim Yang Kon, Kim Yong Il, Tae Jong Su, Kim Byong Hae, Pak Do Chun, U Dong Chuk, Kim Kyong Ok, O Il Jong, Ri Yong Su, and Pak Myong Chol. Let alone the meaning and the existence of the 'group,' the fact that they were identified as members indicates that they have aide connections with Jang Sung Taek. Indeed, most of them are currently in office at major posts in the party, government, and military led by Jang. In fact, there are some who consider that all of the first vice directors of major departments are Jang's aides.³⁰⁾

29) One related literature pointed out "people in Jang Sung Taek's circle as newly emerging figures," namely Choi Ryong Hae, Kim Yong Il, Kim Yang Kon, Kim Pyong Hae, Mun Kyong Dok, and Ji Jae Ryong. Jang Yong-Hoon, "Who's steering North Korea?," *Minjokhwahae*, vol. 55 (Korean Council for Reconciliation and Cooperation, 2012 03-04), p. 19.

30) Jeong Seungwook *Post Kim Jong Il* (Seoul: Jisangsa, 2011), p. 82.

IV. Elite Networks in terms of Interaction

IV. Elite Networks in terms of Interaction

This chapter will identify the differences in the power elite's power hierarchy and relations between Kim Jong Il's and Kim Jong Un's reigns by analyzing the networks among those who were with Kim Jong Il and Kim Jong Un on their on-the-spot guidance visits using the social network analysis method.

The period from the establishment of Kim Jong Un's succession framework to the present can be classified into four sub-periods depending on major events. The first period is from September 2003, when the 11th Supreme People's Assembly was held, to August 2008, when Kim Jong Il's health deteriorated. This period is before Kim Jong Un's succession framework started appearing in a full-fledged manner. A relatively long time is set for the first period when compared to the period in which Kim first appeared. The second period is from September 2008 to September 2010, and when Kim Jong Il was suffering from his illness. This is a transitional period before Kim Jong Un made his official appearance before the public. The third period is from October 2010, when Kim Jong Un first appeared in his father's on-the-spot guidance visit after the announcement of succession, to late 2011, when Kim Jong Il deceased. The fourth period is from Kim Jong Il's death to July 2012, and when Kim Jong Un's system started taking shape.

1. Structure of Networks and Coherence

In the network analysis methodology, one way to identify the characteristics of North Korea's elite networks is by examining changes in each period by estimating the density and degree of network centralization. The density and degree of network centralization are indicators related to the group's coherence. Given that the degree of elite coherence is one of the crucial determinants of the regime's continuity amid internal political shifts and external crises, changes in the degree of coherence in the North Korean elite can be inferred by looking into this determinant.

The network density refers to the ratio of actually existing relations to the total number of possible relations among individual nodes. A high network density means that members of the network have close ties; they have frequent information exchange, information is widely distributed, and a structural hole is unlikely to appear. The network concentration shows how concentrated links among network members are to the center, namely the central concentration of the entire network. Given that a group with high coherence display reciprocal links, a high proximity and the exclusivity of sub-group members, a high linkage frequency among members, and a relatively high linkage frequency among the same sub-group members compared to other sub-groups' members, the coherence of the elite network can be examined by assessing the form and density of the networks.³¹⁾

31) S. Wasserman and K. Faust, *Social Network Analysis: Methods and Applications* (NY: Cambridge University Press, 1994), pp. 251-252.

The results of the analysis on the density and concentration of the networks of elite attendants participating in on-the-spot guidance visits are shown in Table IV-1. In the table, the density and concentration can be broadly divided into those in the first and second periods and the third and fourth periods. To summarize, the density was lower in the former and higher in the latter, while the network concentration was higher in the former than the latter. Comparing Kim Jong Il's reign and the current Kim Jong Un's reign, the on-the-spot guidance visit network of Kim Jong Un has a higher density and a lower network concentration than that of Kim Jong Il.³²⁾

Table IV-1 Network Density and Concentration by Period

Item \ Period	Kim Jong Il's Reign			Kim Jong Un's Reign
	Period 1 (2003.9~2008.8)	Period 2 (2008.9~2010.9)	Period 3 (2010.10~2011.12)	Period 4 (2012.1~2012.7)
Density	0.3271	0.3121	0.4151	0.4732
Concentration	0.6886	0.7068	0.5990	0.5433

32) Since changes in the network concentration shown in Table IV-1 were possibly affected by the longer period of data collection for the first and second periods than for the third and fourth periods, the annual network density and concentration of 2007 which falls into the first period were calculated. The density was 0.3266, and the concentration was 0.7040, confirming that the density was still low and the concentration was at a low level. Therefore, the low density and concentration in the first and second periods did not result from differences in data collection periods but supposedly from the characteristics of the network in those periods.

A high density of the on-the-spot guidance visit network means that the elite attendants have a high frequency of interactions, making the links tighter. According to the above results, there is no significant change in the density between the first and second periods, while in the third period the density increased by over 30% and further rose in the fourth period when Kim Jong Un succeeded his father. A huge increase in the density in the third and fourth periods is because Kim Jong Un paid the visits with a number of people including major elite figures from numerous areas rather than with several elite figures, for a full-fledged hand-over of the regime and seizure of power.

A high network concentration indicates that the network links are concentrated on the supreme leader, the center of the network. It was highest in the second period and significantly decreased in the third period, showing a further drop during Kim Jong Un's reign. This shows that the elite strongly united around Kim Jong Il amid the difficult period, around the time Kim Jong Il resumed his activity after his illness, until Kim Jong Un publically participated in his father's on-the-spot guidance visits. However, during the time when the successor was publicly unveiled and full-fledged power transition took place, other than Kim Jong Un, figures such as Jang Sung Taek, Choi Ryong Hae, Kim Kyong Hui, Pak Do Chun, and Kim Yong Chun emerged as alternate centers of the network, and their relations with the rest of the elite were firmly forged, lowering the network concentration in this period.

When changes in the density and the network concentration are taken together, it can be concluded that the coherence of the elite became

stronger in Kim Jong Un's reign, and not only the supreme leader, but also groups of certain elite figures such as Jang Sung Taek and Choi Ryong Hae acted as centers. The fact that in Kim Jong Il's reign, the network concentration was only on Kim Jong Il proves that the single leadership system was well maintained, while the fact that in Kim Jong Un's reign, the observation that power in the network was distributed to several people, and that interaction among the elite supporting Kim Jong Un became tighter, indicates the possibility that the structure of the power circle in Kim Jong Un's reign may shift from the existing supreme leader-oriented single leadership system to a new power structure, where the supreme leader and a few power elite figures share power. However, it is still necessary to watch further changes closely to see whether this tendency will persist, or the network characteristics of Kim Jong Il's reign will be restored with the stabilization of Kim Jong Un's rule.

2. Changes in the Eigenvector Centrality of Major Figures by Period

In addition, the eigenvector centrality can explain the characteristics of the elite in each period. The eigenvector centrality gauges the influence of a node in a certain network, and indicates how much power is seized. The figure is determined based on the sum of an influence arising from the subject's degree of centrality and the influence of other actors connected to the subject. In an elite network, a high eigenvector centrality of one figure means that the person has strong power. In principle, the indicators cannot be compared arithmetically. In other

words, the fact that the eigenvector centrality of x is twice that of y does not mean that in the network, x holds twice as much power than y . Nevertheless, the extent of power in networks and the degree of the relative differences can be analyzed, by comparing the values.

When the on-the-spot guidance visit network is analyzed by period, the eigenvector centrality of the supreme leader in the entire network was 0.270 in the first period, 0.336 in the second period, 0.242 in the third period, and 0.253 in the fourth period, showing that Kim Jong Un's power in the fourth period was relatively less significant than that of his father in the previous periods. In the first period, compared to Kim Jong Il's eigenvector centrality, the figures for Kim Il Chol and Choi Tae Bok, the second and third more powerful figures, amounted to 95.9% and 94.1%, respectively. In the second period, the figures of Kim Ki Nam and Kim Kyong Hui were relatively low at 95.5% and 87.5%, respectively. In the third period, the eigenvector centralities of Jang Sung Taek and Pak Do Chun showed a relative increase at 98.8% and 96.7%, respectively, while in the fourth period those of Jang and Choi Ryong Hae were relatively high at 99.2% and 96.8%. It can be understood that the second period had the lowest eigenvector centrality.³³⁾ Along with the result of the network concentration analysis, this result means that compared to Kim Jong Il's reign, his second period in particular, Kim Jong Un tends to share power with the key elite.

33) Note: the ratio of eigenvector centrality does not mean the ratio of power shares.

In each period, the rise and fall or disappearance of elite members in the network is the result of a shift in generations, natural aging, stronger power or purge driven by a power shift or power struggles, and movements to or from propaganda departments or offices with active participation in on-the-spot guidance visits such as the Military General Political Bureau. In the second period, when Kim Jong Il's illness became publicly known, those who newly appeared or rapidly rose include Kim Kyong Hui, Jang Sung Taek, Ri Yong Ho, Kim Jong Kak, Hyon Chol Hae, Ri Myong Su, Kim Yang Kon, Kim Won Hong, Kim Myong Kuk, Ju Kyu Chang, Ri Jae Il, and Kim Yong Il, while Choi Ryong Hae, Kim Pyong Hae, Pak Do Chun, and Yun Jong Rin saw their eigenvector centrality rankings surging, though not to high rankings. Among them, only Ri Myong Su, Hyon Chol Hae, Kim Myong Kuk, and Kim Yong Il showed a drop in their eigenvector centrality in the third period and the rest ranked slightly higher or remained the same.

In the third period, the Kim family members, Jang Sung Taek and Kim Kyong Hui firmly established their power, and Choi Ryong Hae, Pak Do Chun, Ju Kyu Chang, and Kim Kyong Ok rose significantly, while Kim Chang Sop and Mun Kyong Dok made new appearances and entered the top 20 ranks of eigenvector centrality. New military figures including Ri Yong Ho, Yun Jong Rin, and Kim Yong Chol replaced the previous one including Kim Il Chol, while young military members such as O Il Jong and Choi Bu Il made their appearances. In the third period, most of the key elite at the early stage of the Kim Jong Un regime had already forged significant forces in the network.

In the fourth period, while the elite who made major appearances in the previous period maintained their forces, Choi Ryong Hae, Kim Won Hong, and Hyon Chol Hae rose particularly significantly; Kim Kyong Hui lost some of her eigenvector centrality; and Kim Yong Chun who fell a bit in the previous period found his ranking rising. Also, along with Ri Byong Sam and Ri Byong Chol, Son Chol Ju, Pak Jong Chon, Jo Kyong Chol, and O Il Jong rose as well.

Table IV-2 Average Age of Figures with Top Eigenvector Centrality Ranks by Period

Period	Average age	Description
1	77.1	Total 31, as of 2006
2	74.1	Total 30, as of 2009
3	73.0	Total 32, excluding Kim Kyong Ok and Yun Jong Rin whose ages are unknown, as of 2011
4	72.1	Total 30, excluding Ri Byong Sam, Ri Byung Chol, Son Chul Jo, Pak Jong Chun, Han Gwang Sang, whose ages are unknown as of 2012

To summarize the characteristics of the key elite with high eigenvector centralities, in the first period, the power elite of Kim Jong Il's reign was maintained, while the second period was a transitional one when the power of the closest aides including North Korea's 'royal family' became prominent with the new and old-generation elite co-existing. In the third period, with the royal family including Kim Kyong Hui and Jang Sung Taek at the center, new military figures including Ri Yong Ho gained influence. In the fourth period, also with the royal family

at the center, the formerly civilian party political military members, and the public security force overtook the field military circle in the new military power.

One major characteristic of periodic changes in the elite with high eigenvector centrality is a decline in the members' age. The average age of top 30 elite members except Kim Jong Il and Kim Jong Un in terms of eigenvector centrality is shown in Table IV-2. As shown in the table, the average age declined from 77.1 in the first period and 74.1 in the second period to 73.0 and 72.1 in the third and fourth periods, respectively.³⁴⁾ Given that most of those whose ages are unidentified are considered to be in their 50s to early 60s; top 30 elite members who have attended on-the-spot guidance visits in the fourth period are thought to have an average age of below 70, an over five-year decrease from Kim Jong Il's reign. It suggests that while Kim Jong Un attempts to seize power, a shift of generations is underway especially within the military.

Another characteristic is that the average eigenvector centralities of the party, military, and government elite groups have changed slightly over time. The average values of top ten elite members are shown in Table IV-3.

34) It is calculated for figures of top 30 eigenvector centrality rankings, but the numbers of figures vary from period to period as there were ties in some cases.

Table IV-3 Average Eigenvector Centrality of Top Ten Figures by Affiliation

Affiliation Period	Party	Military		Government Agencies	
	Eigenvector Centrality	Eigenvector Centrality	Ratio to Party (%)	Eigenvector Centrality	Ratio to Party (%)
1	0.2272	0.2130	93.75	0.1755	77.25
2	0.2389	0.2183	91.38	0.1330	55.67
3	0.2264	0.2012	88.87	0.1413	62.41
4	0.2321	0.2209	95.17	0.1610	69.37

Generally, in all periods, the eigenvector centrality of the party members was higher than that of the military or the government agency members, and that of the government agency members was the lowest. When changes in the ratio of eigenvector centrality by period and affiliation are examined, the centrality of the party members was relatively high in the second and third periods, while its difference from that of the military or the government agency members was relatively small in the first and fourth periods. This suggests that the role of party members was more significant in the second period right after Kim Jong Il's illness was publicly known and in the third period, which was the transitional period to build the Kim Jong Un system. In the second period, the eigenvector centrality of the government agency members was the lowest compared to that of the party members, while in the third period, that of the military members was the lowest compared to that of the party members. In the fourth period, the ratio of the centrality of the military members to that of the party members was the highest among all periods. In this period, the number of military members who attended

on-the-spot guidance visits was the largest, indicating that in the early stage of the Kim Jong Un system, it was important to seize control of the military through active military on-the-spot guidance visits.

V. Shift in Generations and Mainstream of the New Power Elite

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A shift in generations first started within the KWP Organizational Guidance Department in 2009 and was completed in roughly October 2011. Given that up to 70 to 80% of members of departments were replaced through the central party inspection, it is not an overstatement to say that an all-out shift of generations was carried out.³⁵⁾ On May 18th, 2010, the party central committee ordered party organizations at every level to recommend and appoint many young and competent officials. As a result, many officials in their 20s and 30s were recommended for party organization posts at the city, province, and county levels, and they emerged as chiefs of local organizations. In particular, officials with military backgrounds assumed party official roles. For example, in the case of Namhung Enterprise which was visited by Kim Jong Il twice in 2009, a young officer in his 30s with a military background was appointed to the post of organization secretary, and moreover, its chief engineering was in his early 40s.³⁶⁾ Also, many young officers were

35) *Good Friends*, vol. 422 (September 28th, 2011), vol. 434 (December 22nd, 2011).

36) *Open Radio for North Korea*, July 12th, 2010.

assigned to city and county security departments and police stations. In the Pyongan province, it was testified that “in one unit of the security department, there are two to three officers in their late 20s to early 30s, while in the police stations, five to six out of ten officers are in their 30s.” Also, in the case of the security department, prosecutors’ office, and the police stations in the Yangkang province, “most officers are in their early or mid 30s” and “more and more offices have young vice directors in city and county security departments who are in their early or mid 30s.”³⁷⁾

This tendency is also shown in the military. Given that seizing control of the military elite, which is the key force needed to maintain the regime, is a decisive factor in establishing the Kim Jong Un regime, it is natural to recruit many young military figures who can protect the regime and show loyalty, and assign them to the center of power. After promoting 100 military general-level officers in April 2010, including four generals, Kim Jong Il named six people including Kim Jong Un and Kim Kyong Hui as General of the People’s Army, and promoted one lieutenant general, six major generals, and 27 brigadier generals one day before the KWPC. Moreover, in April 2011, Kim promoted two lieutenant generals, five major generals, and 38 brigadier generals two days before Kim Il Sung’s birthday. At that time, O Il Jong and Hwang Byong So were promoted to lieutenant generals only six months after their promotion to major generals. In just one year, 185 people were given an additional star on their badge. This move seems to re-organize

37) *Daily NK*, June 20th, 2011.

the military into Kim Jong Un's favor by promoting young military groups. Also, Kim Jong Un promoted 23 general-level officers through the order of the chief commander on February 14th, 2012. He gave Kim Jong Kak the title of 'vice marshal,' and appointed General Intelligence Bureau Director Kim Yong Chol and Party Secretary Pak Do Chun as generals, Party Machinery and Industry Director Ju Kyu Chang, Second Economy Chairman Paek Se Pong, and Major General Kim Song Chol as lieutenant generals, and 18 people including East Sea Fleet Commander Kim Myong Sik as major generals.

People who were newly appointed and rose through the shift of generations can be broadly divided into two groups: the children of former or incumbent high-ranking officials and the security officials, so called the 'Amisan Line.'³⁸⁾

Among party secretaries and directors newly appointed to the third KWPC where Kim Jong Un was first unveiled as successor, many are sons or sons-in-law of former high-ranking officials. To name a few are, Military General Political Bureau Director Choi Ryong Hae, International Affair Secretary Kim Yong Il, General Affair Secretary Tae Jong Su, and Party Director O Il Jong. The number of those who were identified to hold key posts as children of closest aides of Kim Il Sung or Kim Jong Il is 42.³⁹⁾ Their names have already been listed in Chapter III.

The other group, the so called 'Amisan Line,' is composed of key

38) *Good Friends*, vol. 422 (September 28th, 2011); *NKSYS*, February 1st, and October 2nd, 2011

39) *Joonang Daily*, January 11th, 2012.

security organizations' officials in their 40s to 50s. 'Amisan' is a 156m-high mountain surrounded by the Sosong District, the Yongsong District, and the Daesong District of Pyongyang. In this area, Kim Jong Il's Residence No. 55 is located, with the First and Second Guard Commands and the Second Bureau to the south; the State Security Department to the southwest; the People's Security Department to the northwest; and the Military General Security Bureau to the east. In other words, core security agencies such as the Guard Command, the State Security Department, and the Military General Security Bureau, which control North Korean people for the stability of the regime are concentrated in this area. Officials here who are under the control of Kim Jong Un are called those in the 'Amisan Line.'

While preparing for his succession, Kim Jong Un aimed to make security agencies his power basis, and reportedly took the role of the director of the State Security Department starting March 2009.⁴⁰⁾ Kim Jong Il also instructed that although he "pursued the Military-First Politics mainly through the military," his son should "do intelligence politics based on the State Security Department."⁴¹⁾ Around that time, there was a clear sign of the reinforcement of security agencies. In April 2009, U Dong Chuk, then first vice director of the State Security

40) *RFA Korea*, December 31st, 2009. There are views that Kim Jong Un was allegedly appointed to the director of the State Security Department, since U Dong Chuk, the first vice director of the Department said "Our director is Gen. Kim Jong Un" and "Gen. Kim Jong Un is our director forever" and ordered the entire members of the department to call Kim "our director." Jang Yong-Hoon, "Who's steering North Korea?"

41) *Yonhap News*, April 20th, 2010.

Department became a member of the National Defence Security with the promotion to lieutenant general after 17 years of service. Then, in just one year, he was promoted to general in April 2010. Kim Jong Il viewed performances of the Art Propaganda Team of the State Security Department three times in April 2009, February and April 2010. Also, on November 9th, 2009, he watched the performance of the Art Propaganda Team of the People's Safety Agency. On November 22nd, 2009, just before the currency reform took place, he paid a visit to the Agency for the first time, and viewed the Agency band's performance in February 2010. In April 2010, the People's Safety Agency was promoted to the People's Security Department, becoming a direct affiliate of the National Defence Committee.⁴²⁾ In addition, Kim Jong Un seized all authority after integrating the Intelligence Bureau of the Ministry of the People's Armed Forces, the Party Operation Department, and Office No. 35 into the General Intelligence Bureau in February 2009.⁴³⁾ In this process, related security agency officers emerged as Kim Jong Un's key force.⁴⁴⁾ Along with U Dong Chuk who reportedly suffered from a stroke, Kim Chang Sop, the director of the Political Bureau is another key figure.

Among the officers who take part in Kim Jong Un's on-the-spot

42) *Yonhap News*, April 6th, 2010.

43) *Dong-A Ilbo*, April 22nd, 2010.

44) When Kim Jong Il attempted to establish his power basis as successor, he recruited many graduates from Kim Il Sung University who built ties with him during school years. They were called 'Ryongnamsan Line' and was composed of former party cell secretaries, Democratic Youth Alliance chairmen, and members in school divisions and departments who forged relations with Kim when he was the university's chairman of the Alliance. *NKSYS*, February 1st, 2011.

guidance visits and inspections, the most notable figure is major General Ri Du Song. Though he accompanied Kim Jong Un only twice on his military activities in October 2011, he became a new frequent attendant on Kim Jong Un's on-the-spot guidance visits. He is thought to be in charge of Kim's propaganda and promotion, and was promoted from brigadier general to major general in September 2010, when Kim was named general. This fact suggests that he was recruited to support Kim and appeared to emerge as an aide when Kim, as a successor attempted to seize the military through the Military General Political Bureau. Along with Ri, Lieutenant General Jo Kyong Chol, Yun Dong Hyon, Son Chol Ju, and Pak Jong Chon newly appeared. Jo was reported as the commander of the Defence Security Command and Son is the organizational vice director of the General Political Bureau, and was thought to be the successor of Kim Won Hong who became the director of the State Security Department. Pak Jae Kyong, former vice director of the People's Armed Forces, was appointed vice propaganda director, which is one of two top promising posts along with the organizational vice director.

The rise of those young military officers is supposedly due to Kim Jong Un's preference for relatively young attendants on his on-the-spot guidance visits. In addition, it seems that Choi Bu Il, the former vice military chief, replaced Kim Myong Kuk as operational director of the General Staff Department and Kim Nak Kyom took the post of Choi Sang Ryo as commander of strategic rockets much supported by Kim Jong Un.⁴⁵⁾

45) *Joongang Daily*, July 3rd, 2012.

VI. Conclusion

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The characteristics of the power elite network and structure in the Kim Jong Un regime are as follows. First of all, according to the sociodemographic distribution of the KWP central committee members and candidate members elected at the KWPC held on September 28th, 2010, the majority were male. In terms of age, those in their 70s had the highest share. In terms of birthplace and alma mater, the Pyongan province and Kim Il Sung University were the majority. Major characteristics in terms of the sociodemographic distribution can be summarized as the aging of the power elite and the male-centered power structure.

Furthermore, in terms of generational, regional, school, blood, work, and aide connections, the characteristics include the fall of the first revolutionary generation including the first-generation anti-Japanese partisans, the rise of the third and fourth generations, and a relative dominance of figures from certain regions.

Regarding the networks created through interactions in the power elite, the network density and concentration have changed over time. In Kim Jong Un's reign, the coherence of the elite increased, and not only the supreme leader but also groups of certain elite members such as Jang

Sung Taek and Choi Ryong Hae are positioned at the center.

In addition, one major characteristic of the periodic changes among the elite with high eigenvector centralities is that the average age of the elite has declined. The top 30 elite members who attended on-the-spot guidance visits in the fourth period showed that the average age was below 70, a five-year drop from that in the Kim Jong Il's reign. This suggests that as Kim Jong Un seized control of the regime, a shift of generations has been underway mainly in the military.

However, there have been few newly emerging power elite members since the official launch of the Kim Jong Un regime. While some including Jang Sung Taek, Choi Ryong Hae, Kim Won Hong, Ri Myong Su, Hyon Yong Chol, and Jo Yon Jun became more influential, several figures including Ri Yong Ho and U Dong Chuk disappeared from the circle. As such, there has been a rise and fall for individual figures, but there has been no notable changes in the power elite structure in the current regime. This is not only because of the inherent limits of the Kim Jong Un regime, which cannot change the power elite structure forged by his father and therefore, its adherence to the past, but also because of the short period of power succession which stops Kim Jong Un from exercising his own will in personnel affairs.

Nevertheless, it is evident that a shift in generations is steadily underway for the sake of the stability and future of the Kim Jong Un regime. Those who have been newly appointed and rose through this shift can be classified into two groups: children of the former or current high-ranking officials and those in charge of security.

This conclusion drawn from Chapters III and IV, and Chapter V presents meaningful implications for the analysis of conflicts among North Korea's power elite. For example, the policy tendency model sees measures like the 'June 28 Policy' as the results of competition between more than two groups, which refer to the pro-reform group led by Jang Sung Taek, and the conservatives led by Ri Yong Ho. In other words, confrontation between the two groups are the outcome of competition between one group, which asserts the need for a more efficient and technical approach to end the economic crisis and improve the quality of life, and the other group which stresses the purity of ideologies such as the Military-First politics. The best example is how Ri, who represented the interests of the military, was dismissed in the course where huge economic vested interests were transferred from the overly expanded military to the cabinet after Kim succeeded his father. On the contrary, the factionalism-power model stresses that even in North Korea, individuals or groups generally compete with each other for authority, interests, influence, and safety; prevent other forces from being formed/reinforced; and encourage solidarity and loyalty of members of their own forces. Even in North Korea which has adopted the Ten Principles for the Establishment of the One-Ideology System as a perpetual law, private connections which are against such law can determine people's personal standing and status. In this sense, this model believes that unofficial factions which cooperate by sharing a basic value system exist. Studies suggesting the existence of certain factions among people who are united based on unofficial and private relations with Choi Ryong Hae and Jang

Sung Taek after the appearance of Kim Jong Un have adopted this model. Though this study does not guarantee the validity of such suggestions, it indicates the existence of relations within the power elite, which can create private networks, based on work experience or aide connections explained in Chapter III, and the frequency and the nature of interactions shown in Chapter IV.



Study on the Power Elite of the Kim Jong Un Regime

The speed and strength of Kim Jong Un in establishing his standing as a man of supreme power will depend on how much the North Korean power elite will support him in unity. Kim Jong Un will not be able to solidify his power foundation without gaining enthusiastic help from, or control of the power elite. In other words, unity and movement of the power elite are the key variables in establishing and stabilizing the Kim Jong Un regime. With regards to this point, this study analyzes the characteristics, structure, and network of the power elite under the Kim Jong Un regime, and particularly focuses on examining the possibility of whether factions can be formed.