

## **North Korean Leaders' Personality Reflection on Provocation Patterns: Narcissism and Fear**

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*Over the last 70 years, South Korea has gone through countless provocations from North Korea. Provocation is something that must be delicately calculated before the actual action, since it can be extended to a serious conflict. Among the possible factors, this paper focuses on the leader's characteristic, because 1) under North Korean dictatorship, the leader's thoughts are critical influence to policies and 2) personal characteristic, especially if it is the dictator's, hardly changes even when the external circumstances change. The purpose of this paper is in analyzing the correlations between North Korean leader's characteristics and provocation pattern. First, three generations of Kim Il-sung, Kim Jong-il, and Kim Jong-un's personal characteristics will be described. Next, particular provocation features in respective leader's period will follow. Lastly, how each leader's characteristic and concerns were reflected on the provocations will be analyzed.*

*Keywords: North Korea, Provocation, Leader's characteristics, Kim Il-sung, Kim Jong-il, Kim Jong-un*

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## **1. Introduction**

North Korea can be put as the three-generation hereditary dictatorship. Under the dictatorship, the leader's thoughts and ideology are substantially reflected in the policies. Especially, when it comes to North Korea, its dictatorship is strong enough to survive over two power successions. In this circumstance, Kim Il-sung, Kim Jong-il, and Kim Jong-un's characteristics can be a critical factor that influences North Korea's threatening pattern. This paper is to penetrate their personalities and their correlation with provocations.

Since the end of the Korean War (1950-1953), the Korean Peninsula is still under the truce. During the last 70 years, South Korea went through more than 30,000 small and big invasions and provocations from North Korea. Historically, North Korea's provocation appeared in various forms, from regional incursions to missile and nuclear threats.

The provocation must be the result of various factors. As Moghaddam (2016) mentioned, the dictators regularly provoke and bring tension to appeal his existence or to improve the national bond (Kim, 2016). In this sense, domestic issues can be the trigger for provocation. On the other hand, foreign relations can be other essential factors as well.

Nevertheless, this paper significantly links leaders' characteristics with respective provocation patterns for two reasons. First, as mentioned above, considering that North Korea is optimized to strict top-down dictatorship and the leader is at the zenith of policy-making structure, understanding the leader's thoughts should be contemplated. Second, even though the external factors might change, the personal characteristic does not change in one day. The possibility of the dictator to regret the past and change himself is awfully low. Therefore, the main purpose of this paper is to 1) understand North Korean leaders' particular characteristics, 2) analyze their respective provocation patterns, and 3) search the correlations between their characteristics with provocations in their own eras.

## **2. Three Kims' Personalities: Different Narcissists**

### **2.1 Kim Il-sung: The merciless narcissist**

Before Kim Il-sung became the leader of North Korea, he spent his childhood and fought against Japanese in China. North Korea remarkably parades this patriotic, heroic, and nationalism aspect and it is a big part of his personality cult. However, this anti-Japanese career was not the foundation for him to take the throne. Later, he joined the Soviet Union Red Army, which turned out to be the decisive opportunity in his life. Kim's political life starts from the missing history between Korea's independence on August 15th 1945 to the official Korea's Liberation Ceremony on October 14th

of the same year. During this period, Kim was recommended to Stalin thanks to his service in the Red Army. Stalin nominated him as the temporary North Korea leader in September 1945, and Kim was introduced to the public for the first time at the Liberation Ceremony on October 14th. Later with Stalin on his back, Kim could finally be appointed as the official North Korean leader (Yoo, 2017).

It is told that Kim’s political philosophy is largely affected from the Communist Party of the Soviet Union: ‘If I don’t kill you then you’ll kill me’, and this is where he was influenced by Stalin’s purge politics (Kim, 2018). For instance, there were quite a number of parties in North Korea between 1945, Korea’s independence, to 1949, the foundation year of the KWP (Korean Workers’ Party). Nonetheless, the others were rapidly cleaned up by Kim, and eventually KWP is the only party that lasts till today. Also, when Kim was designated as the leader by the Soviet Union in 1945, North Korea already had other figures who had high reputations based on domestic supports, such as Park Hun-young. These competitors and potential challengers were continuously eliminated for the sake of Kim’s stable settlement. Kim’s struggle for a secure one-party system and absolute authority went on, even till and after Kim Jong-il officially appeared to the public in 1973 (Jung, 2019).

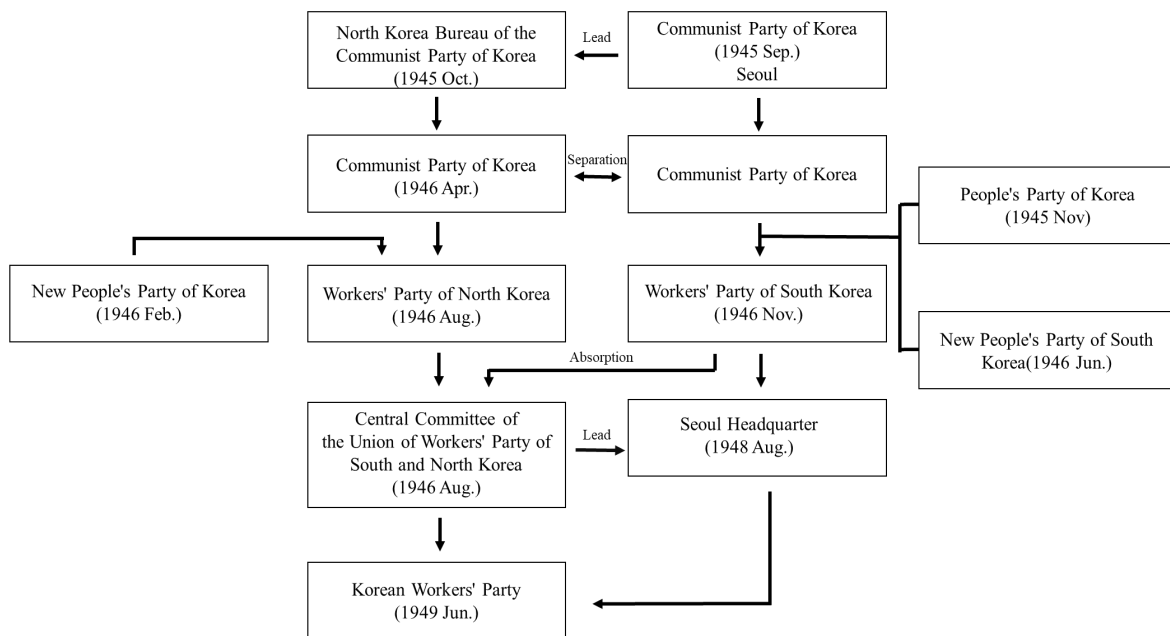


Figure 1. The history of the North Korea Worker’s Party of Korea  
Original figure is from Korea Institute for National Unification, Understanding Korea 2009,

p.45. (adapted from Ko)

Kim was passionate about promulgating his own personality cult and had a strong belief in force; this belief raised his confidence that he could unify Korea with force, which broke the Korean War (Suh, 2000). When we look into his perspective on foreign relations, according to Son (2020), who had multiple personal conversations with Kim, Kim mentioned how struggling it is to survive from the great powers or how uneasy it is to denounce the toadyism. He wrote that Kim is someone who fundamentally rejects other countries' intervention, tries to build his own flow with strong nationalism and self-reliance thoughts (Son, 2020). This is relevant to his *Juche* ideology, aiming for a country of self-reliance, independence, and self-defense. How Kim first reached for the power was more likely luck, however, his route toward the core of the power is built on his aggressive moves. He did not allow any challenge against his authority. He was someone with strong confidence, pride, self-esteem, and nationalism.

## **2.2. Kim Jong-il: The shaded narcissist.**

Kim Jong-il's brutality is very well known. Jerrold Post, a dictator psychology expert, introduces his 'unconstrained aggression' with a story that Kim Jong-il, as a young kid, drowned his 3-year-old brother (Post, 2004). He describes Kim Jong-il as 'malignant narcissism' and 'self-absorption', who makes dogmatic decisions and wishes to appeal himself as a threat to the international order (Edwards, 2006). At the same time, Kim has no empathy in other's pain, seriously paranoid, and respond with a threat to a threat; therefore, Post says it is crucial to make clear communication with North Korea without any threatening circumstance, since Kim extremely fears threats (Jang, 2007). Furthermore, Kim's anti-social trait is criticized as the obstacle for setting a negotiation table. Coolidge and Segal (2009) say, since Kim concerns his and North Korea's pride over its people's survival, he is not controllable with international sanctions. Also, because Kim only demands to deal with the US, not the smaller powers, holding six-party talks is extremely difficult (Coolidge & Segal, 2009). Similarly, Immelman (2012) puts narcissistic and histrionic as Kim's major personality, as well as the dominant and sadistic aspect. Interestingly, he also introduces his 'fraudulent' and 'conflict-averse' characteristic by saying "preferring guile, craft, and cunning rather than force or confrontation in extracting or extorting from others" (Immelman, 2012).

Kim's hedonism is also notorious. His pursuit of pleasure and women can be represented with his numerous women history and so called the 'Pleasure Squad'. Probably this roots back to the trauma from his early loss of mother Kim Jung-sook, and stepmother Kim Sung-ae who rapidly replaced Kim Jung-sook's vacancy and psychologically cornered Kim Jong-il. Underneath all, Kim Jong-il might have had the pressure related to his father. His father has steadily handed over the power to Kim Jong-il since 1972 when he turned into 30. Kim had about 20-year period to accumulate his own power until the actual seizure of power. However, his father was 'the god' in

North Korea while Kim Jong-il was ‘the son of the god’. This huge difference might have affected him, especially when he was ruling a dictatorship state where the public’s doubt on his existence can be a fatal risk.

In this sense, while Kim Il-sung aggressively invested in idolizing both himself and his son Kim Jong-il, the son Kim Jong-il has implemented what makes his own existence superior to his father’s; it is said the result was somewhat degrading Kim Il-sung’s personality cult (Jung, 2014). Taken together, Kim Jong-il is very self-centered, prefers indirect measures rather than direct confrontations, has fear of losing his presence, and had possibilities of making impulsive decisions.

### **2.3. Kim Jong-un: The feared narcissist.**

When Kim Jong-un emerged on the surface, Kenzi Fujimoto described him as a competitive, obstinate, and ambitious man (Choe & Fackler, 2009). Later, Moghaddam puts Kim Jong-un’s characteristic as the combination of narcissism and Machiavellism; in an interview he said Kim enjoys having full attention, have no mercy, and tends to simply distinguish the partners as ally and enemy, like black and white; therefore, he eliminated the potential threat powers rapidly, which sufficiently explains the assassination of his half-brother Kim Jong-nam (Kim, 2017).

Immelman (2018) has named Kim’s characteristic into high-dominance extravert, which specifies into gregarious, ambitious, confident, dauntless, accommodating, and cooperative. Coolidge focused on Kim’s sadism, by running a character disorder program, mentioning that Kim’s sadism is way worse than those of Hitler, Hussein, or Kim Jong-il (Kim, 2017). Regarding his mercilessness, it is reported that Kim Jong-un has executed around 140 high ranking executives and generals in his first 4 years. In addition, in case of the Minister of the People’s Armed Forces, Kim Il-sung replaced 4 during his 46 years, Kim Jong-il had 3 for 17 years, but Kim Jong-un already changed 5 only in 4 years (Yoon, 2016). Also, brutally purging his own uncle Jang Song-taek for being referred to as “Guardian of Kim Jong un” or “the power behind the throne” is another notorious story.

Robertson also agreed that Kim is narcissistic who desires to be recognized; however, in terms of threat, Kim escalates the threat level but not as high as what can be a direct trigger to the collapse of his regime (Kim, 2017). In a similar context, Kim is told to be ruthless, however, savvy and aware of the necessity of tangible mechanisms, such as the nuclear weapon and economy, to contain his power (Kuo, 2017).

On the other hand, Bradberry claims Kim Jong-un’s excessive use of power is paradoxically the symbol of his weakness and fear (Kim, 2016). Going deeper, when Kim first showed up to the world, his legitimacy was keep being questioned, related to ‘Baekdu Bloodline’ or his mother’s origin. This flaw must have been a pressure to Kim for rooting down as a leader. Furthermore, Moghaddam (2013) mentioned Kim tends to threaten the external targets to distract

the domestic dissatisfaction, and it will be continued until his power nests safely. In this sense, we can see Kim has certain level of complex and vulnerability which he wants to suppress.

Continuing, Kim is remarkably distinguished from his grandfather or father in terms of using media and his perspective on women. According to an interview held by BBC, it is noticeable that North Korea is trying to communicate with the world through Twitter or Youtube (Williamson, 2013). Moreover, Kim's face to face interaction with the North Korean people are frequently exposed through media. Kim is strategically using a soft and friendly image toward the public. Also, from the gender perspective, compared to its former traditional male-dominating generations, Kim's wife Ri Sol-ju and his sister Kim Yo-jung are repeatedly exposed to media along with him as well as actually playing active roles in official occasions (Coleman, 2018). These changes show Kim Jong-un relatively progressive than his past generations in the global trends.

### 3. Three Kims' Provocations: Different Threat Levels and Frequencies

#### 3.1. Kim Il-sung: Low threat - High frequency.

One conspicuous feature of provocation in Kim Il-sung period is the frequency. Especially in the 1960s, both the invasion and local provocation happened numerously. Among the records, impromptu confrontation between soldiers in DMZ (Demilitarized Zone), such as the popular Panmunjom Axe Murder Incident took a large part. There were a number of small scale armed infiltration to South Korean territory and attacks against South Korean civilians.

Table 1

*North Korea's Provocations over the period from 1950s to 2018*

	1950s	1960s	1970s	1980s	1990s	2000s	2010-2015	2016	2017	2018	Total
<b>Invasion</b>	379	1,009	310	167	94	16	24	1	2	0	2,002
<b>Local Provocation</b>	19	327	93	60	156	225	227	7	3	0	1,117
<b>Total</b>	398	1,336	403	227	250	241	251	8	5	0	3,119

*Notes.* The primary source is from Defense White Paper 2018. (adapted from Ko)

Also, a lot of critical incursions continued which was clear that the plan came from the central. For instance, North Korea under Kim Il-sung boldly attempted assassinating South Korea leader for several times. Organized and prepared attacks such as 1.21 raid on Blue House (1968) and Aung san Terror in Myanmar (1983) were significant attacks. Surface warfare happened

frequently, as a result, lots of North Korean vessels ended up sinking. Other than direct collisions, North Korea succeeded in multiple hijackings. In 1958 and 1969, North Korea hijacked South Korean planes and kidnapped passengers and craft crews. This kind of attempt was not limited only to South Korea; it has taken Japanese plane in the 70s and captured US navy intelligence ship Pueblo in 1968. North Korea in this period also carried out terrors. South Korean train station (1967) and airport (1986) were bombed and civilian aircraft KAL was exploded in 1987. The KAL explosion was just a year before Seoul Olympic and all the passengers and crews were dead, which brought a great tension in the peninsula.

Kim Il-sung made direct attacks on the US Forces in Korea. Not only the impetuous incidents as the Axe Murder, but also small and big planned moves were carried out: invading the US army barrack with explosives (1967), several ambushes on the US soldiers (1967), shooting down the unarmed US plane for violating territorial airspace (1969), and so on. Entering April of 1984, North Korea had its first SRBM (Short-range Ballistic Missile) launch. Afterwards, the threatening assumes a new phase. The provocation level highly rose to missile and terror with slightly less frequency. Particularly, the number of incursions or intrusions has remarkably dropped. The overall provocations in Kim Il-sung's era is very intrepid, confident, and frequent. His bold attacks were risky enough to be extended to mass-scale confrontations. On the other hand, he paralleled covert operations by running special forces and spies. This was to tremble the South Korean society with fear.

### **3.2. Kim Jong-il: High threat - Low frequency.**

Although Kim Jong-il was already domestically powerful in the 1980s, it is told that he was one step away from foreign policies (Heo, 1998). He officially became the supreme leader in 1997, however, technically he took over the power as Kim Il-sung died in 1994. In this sense, this chapter covers North Korea's provocation in Kim Jong-il's era from 1994. In this period, the guerrilla-style provocations or direct collisions were way less than the prior times. Spontaneous soldier to soldier confrontations also greatly decreased. Nevertheless, there were exchange of fires almost every year as well as the territorial incursions. Still, the tension existed in the peninsula and some incidents were critically serious.

The First (1999) and Second Battle of Yeonpyeong (2002) gravely made the inter-Korean relations vulnerable. The following Battle of Daecheong (2009) and sink of the navy corvette Cheonan (2010) were significant matters. Furthermore, as North Korea was making progress in missile development, the provocations were more tensed with the high level of threatening. Beginning with the IRBM (Intermediate-range Ballistic Missile) Taepodong (1998), the first (2006) and second (2009) nuclear test along with multiple SRBMs were launched. These provocations were mostly the leverage to deliver North Korea's message to South Korea and the US, rather than direct threats as Kim Il-sung intended. North Korea yet attempted to plant fear and confusion within the South Korean society, for instance, the DDoS (Distributed Denial of Service) attack in

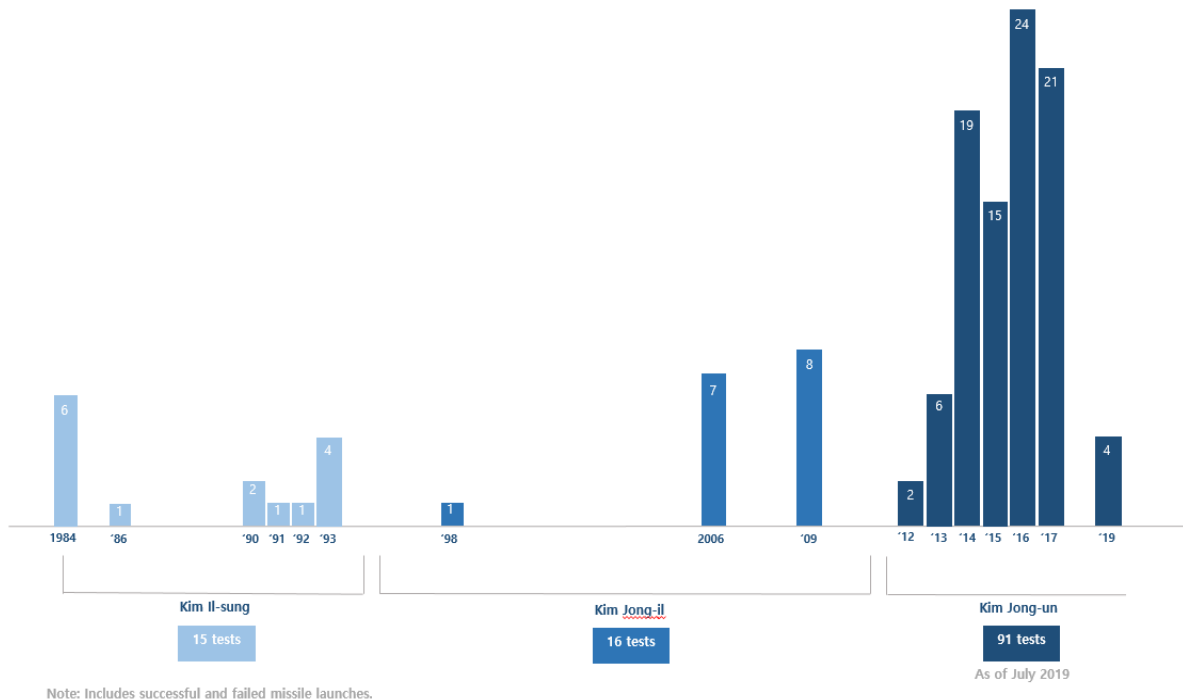
2009. In addition, killing a South Korean tourist at Mountain Geumgang in 2008 was such an enormous shock, that its ripple effect was big enough to drastically frozen the inter-Korean relations. The provocations under Kim Jong-il were more constrained in the aspect of small scale confrontations or incursions. However, with the development of technology and missile, the threat level has risen steeply even though the frequency dropped. Although the intention and result of such fires were less direct compared to his father's, the tension remained along with the regular regional battles.

### **3.3. Kim Jong-un: High threat - High frequency.**

Kim Jong-un's regime officially started since December 2011, but it is known that when he was nominated as the successor in 2009, Kim Jong-un was already deeply engaged in bombing Yeonpyeong island and sinking navy corvette Cheonan in 2010. During the power succession, the successors sometimes go for hard lines in order to establish his propaganda, build a career, or solidify its people (Han, 2012). Probably provocations in 2010 fall into this category. From Kim Jong-un's era, though there still existed exchange of fire in DMZ, those frequencies were very small compared to the past generations. One of the most serious provocations in DMZ was the landmine explosion in August of 2015, with a great tension. However, considering that Kim Jong-un's regime has a short history, it is holding 'high level-high frequency' threat compared to Kim Jong-il's relatively 'high level-less frequent' one. Most of Kim Jong-un's provocations are about missile or nuclear tests. Starting with Unha-3 (ICBM: Inter-Continental Ballistic Missile) in April 2012, North Korea has constantly developed and launched missiles. Furthermore, 4 nuclear tests in 6 years, 3<sup>rd</sup> (2012), 4<sup>th</sup> (2016), 5<sup>th</sup> (2016), and 6<sup>th</sup> (2017), has repeatedly put not only the neighbors but the whole international society in tension.

Figure 2 shows the objective frequency of missile launch in respective North Korean leaders. Kim Il-sung had total of 15 tests within 10 years, Kim Jong-il had 16 in 17 years, however, Kim Jong-un had 91 in only 8 years, which is intensively high. Kim Jong-un's provocation was taking a high risk. For instance, in 2013 he declared to nullify the armistice agreement. This type of threatening from North Korea was in fact not the first time, however, Kim Jong-un was actually making serious actions, such as cutting the hotline with the South, and by so maximized the crisis. Jung and Kim (2016) mentioned that Kim Jong-un used to provoke regardless of the relationship with South Korea; giving the example of violating NLL during the separated family reunion.





*Figure 2.* North Korea’s missile launches.

The original figure is from Council of Foreign Relations

<https://www.cfr.org/background/what-know-about-sanctions-north-korea>. (adapted from Ko)

Despite Kim’s unexpected provocation, saying his provocation is irrational is quite a dangerous conclusion. The year 2018 can be an example. When South and North Korea seemed to face the reconciliation, along with the North Korea-US relations, Kim was staying low without a single missile-level provocation. This proves how he can be patient and rational for the goal he is aiming to achieve. In other words, his previous provocations must have had reasons. Nonetheless, after the talks with South Korea and the US did not end up successively, he has again started frequent missile tests. This time, the short-range missiles.

#### 4. Three Kims’ Personalities and Provocation Patterns

##### 4.1. Kim Il-sung: The fearless guerrilla.

Systemically, the main agendas in Kim Il-sung’s period were based on a top-down structure. His own thoughts were mostly reflected, but at the same time, he is described as having a

compromising personality. According to Heo's analysis, Kim strictly puts emphasis on his ideology and thoughts, however in terms of foreign policies, he is more like a 'pragmatist' who responds to the realistic flow within his frames (Heo, 1998). On the other hand, there also is an opinion that Kim could not solely make decisions when it came to an issue with the US, due to the North Korea's military hardliners (Mansourov, 1994). Taking consideration that his period was when North Korea was settling down, there is a high possibility that grave provocations were the results of torment and consents rather than an urge. Kim Il-sung's provocations were very bold and based on confidence. In this context, the Korean War broke with a confident pre-emptive invasion. After the Korean War, North Korea's economy was far more developed than South's, which gave Kim a bigger pride. This can explain the numerous incursions and provocations without hesitation in his early times. During his time, there were a lot of the soldier to soldier confrontations. The North Korean soldiers' impavid attacks might have reflected the confidence from the elites.

Similarly, Jung and Kim (2016) analyzed that during the 50s and 60s, North Korea was superior to South Korea in terms of regime stability and economic development; therefore, the provocations were regional and limited to the Korean Peninsula. However, when South Korea rapidly reversed the superiority, the provocation boundary in the 70s to 90s was widened to the international scale, in order to degrade South Korea's reputation (Jung & Kim, 2016). Also, the thousands of incursions remind Kim Il-sung's past guerrilla warfare against the Japanese. The territorial intrusions deep into South Korea prove his intrepid attitudes. He also aimed to shake and plant fear in South Korea by doing so. In this sense, as South Korea's growth overwhelmed North Korea, his high pride must have been damaged. This is witnessed from the broader boundary of terrorism which was intended to lose South Korea's face. In addition, Kenneth Dekleva pointed out that saving face is critical to North Korean leader (Kuo, 2017). Since unconditional obedience is the basis for stable North Korea, the leaders treat loss of face seriously fatal. This factor is generally applied to the following generations.

#### **4.2. Kim Jong-il: The risk-avorter.**

Kim Jong-il is described as a strong dogmatic narcissist with paranoia. After his father passed away, Kim Jong-il personally directed the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. He ruthlessly punished the ones who had different views against him (Heo, 1998). The foreign decisions were mostly made between Kim Jong-il and minority elites with his strong will and thoughts applied. He desired to get away from his father's shade, and they were definitely two different men. First, while Kim Il-sung's provocations were more frequent, confident, and direct confrontations, Kim Jong-il's provocations were more likely a message. As the threat level increased with the development of the missile, the provoking incidents happened less often. If his father's era was offensive, his era can be interpreted as defensive.

Second, when Kim Il-sung concentrated on local provocations between two Koreas, Kim Jong-il's provocation area, region, and the target were focused on North Korea-US relations. There must be several reasons. South Korea's catching up with North Korea in the economy, military power, and international reputation can be one. Therefore, instead of bringing incessant incidents like in Kim Il-sung's period, Kim Jong-il seems to focus on big occasions and demonstrate its power to attract attention and avoid diplomatic isolation.

Heo (1998) said Kim Jong-il is more progressive, practical, and open than Kim Il-sung. This can be related to the number of negotiation tables between Kim Jong-il and Washington. There sure were more variables to contemplate, such as US's North Korea policies, US presidents' tendency, inter-Korean relationship, and so on. Despite other possible influences, a remarkable ratio of negotiation and provocation can represent his characteristics.

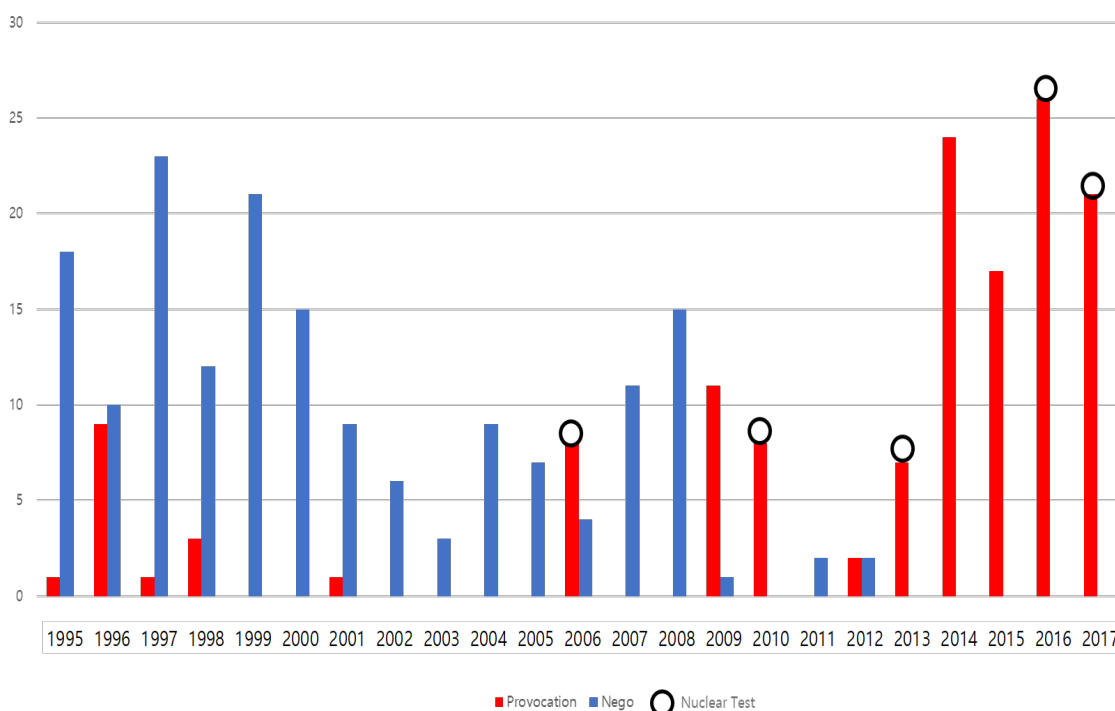


Figure 3. North Korea's provocation and negotiation with the US.

Lastly, as mentioned before, saving face works significantly to the North Korean leaders. Dekleva presents the story of 1994, when Kim Il-sung passed away during the North Korea-US nuclear negotiation; that Kim Jong-il excessively thanked President Bill Clinton's consolation and US Secretary of State's visit to Kim Il-sung's Mausoleum (Kuo, 2017). As Kim is heavily narcissistic, by high chance there must be provocations which Kim Jong-il has sensitively responded against losing his face.

### **4.3. Kim Jong-un: The desperate risk-taker.**

Just like his previous generations, Kim Jong-un is a narcissist. However, it is important to remember that he has a fear of insecurity. Unlike his father Kim Jong-il who succeeded power over for decades, Kim Jong-un took over the throne in a short term on unstable domestic supports. People doubted his bloodline, and above all he was young. This unstableness and impetuosity were expressed as the reign of terror. Domestically, he purges more than a hundred senior personnel and dramatically eliminated his potential challenging families, uncle Jang Song-taek and half-brother Kim Jong-nam. At the same time, Kim Jong-un seeks to get attention by bragging his existence. He knows how to make full use of media and is aware of its power. In this sense, he might have intentionally shown off North Korea's nuclear power. With nuclear provocations, he hunted for attention but gained isolation instead, then he raises the threat and vicious cycles continued.

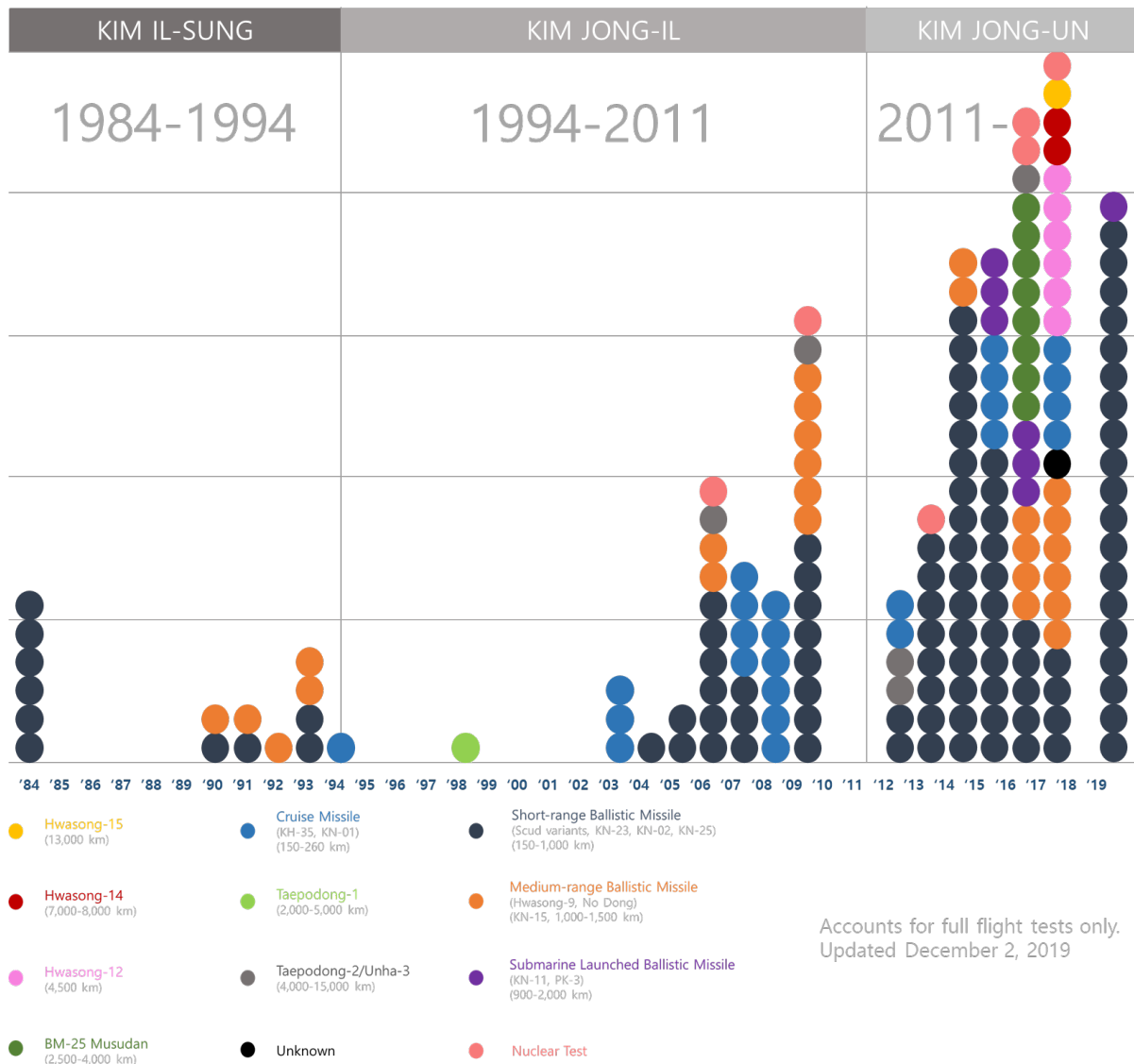


Figure 4. North Korea's missile tests –Types

The original figure is from CSIS

[https://missilethreat.csis.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/NorthKorea\\_Missile\\_testing\\_update\\_12.03-01\\_web-1.jpg](https://missilethreat.csis.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/NorthKorea_Missile_testing_update_12.03-01_web-1.jpg) (adapted from Ko)

As presented in Figure 4 the intensive missile demonstration can imply Kim's anxiousness. Unlike Kim Il-sung but alike Kim Jong-il, Kim Jong-un's provocations have intentions to deliver messages, rather than direct confrontations. As discussed earlier, his decision on making extreme choices such as cutting the hotline with South Korea, might have been the hasty decision based on

his narcissistic but fretting situation. Nevertheless, the year 2018, the vacuum of provocations, is valuable evidence that Kim can restrain his impatience rationally to achieve his goal. Especially North Korea's high-threats with ICBMs and nuclear tests before the reconciliation mood in 2018 and restart of SRBM launches in 2019 supports this flow.

Lastly, Dekleva said "Cornered or psychologically humiliated, Kim Jong-un could militarily lash out at Japan, South Korea, or Guam, especially if he feared a first strike."; therefore, more than sanction or military action, "words and actions that personally attack Kim may carry higher risks of triggering an adverse reaction on his part, because his personal leadership and psyche are more directly called into question" (Kuo, 2017). He is warning the strong insult of Kim Jong-un in public or SNS can be severely risky.

## **5. Conclusion**

Analyzing the provocation must reflect the era. The triggering factors are beyond number. However, if there is one factor that does not fluctuate easily, it is the leader's personal characteristic. North Korea is a strict top-down society. This society was inherited for 3 generations for the last 70 years. It means the leader of North Korea is having absolute power and accordingly he has the biggest influence on what is decided. Provocation is one of the most significant decisions, which implies that the leader's intentions and thoughts must have been applied.

First, Kim Il-sung was someone who was narcissist, nationalistic, and eager to build his secured kingdom. Kim Il-sung stabilized his power by constantly purging potential enemies and it shows his brutality and firm will. He went through lots of guerrilla warfare and was a confident man. He believed in the power and looked down on South Korea, especially in the 50s and 60s, which gave him more confidence. In this period, North Korea's provocations were bold and inexorable. A Number of incursions and intrusion were there as well as terrors, hijacks, assassination attempts, and so on. There were lots of spontaneous soldier to soldier confrontations near DMZ. Frequent and intrepid threats reflect Kim Il-sung's superiority over South Korea. However, as South Korea grows bigger, his loss of confidence was shown by expanding the provocation to the international area. By doing so, he aimed to degrade South Korea's international reputation.

Continuing, Kim Jong-il was a narcissist and very self-centered. However, he was someone who was different from his father. Kim Jong-il is described as cunning, who prefers guile. In Kim Jong-il's era, the threat level has risen to missile launches. After 1984, when North Korea first launched SRBM, within Kim Jong-il's era, the frequency of local incursions or intrusions dropped remarkably. There still were local invasions and battles in the West sea, however, the overall

number of provocation decreased. He was someone who made indirect threats instead of direct confrontations like Kim Il-sung.

Finally, Kim Jong-un came on the surface and had to seize the power in a short period. His root was vulnerable and domestic power was not strong enough; compared to his father Kim Jong-il who steadily succeeded power for 20 years. Beyond this complex and fear, he knew how to enjoy the spotlight. He is a narcissist who is fond of being recognized. In this sense Kim Jong-un's threat is at a high level and very frequent, considering each threat was highly grave. However, the year 2018, when he was holding the provocations to reach his goal by talking with South Korea and the US, was the evidence that he can be patient for what he pursues.

North Korea's provocation patterns differed over the period. As Gause (2015) has claimed, North Korea's political purpose has shifted from hostility based to defensive and reactionary based, comparing the 60s to 90s. Also, as the era changes, the technology of threat has developed to a severe level. Even so, the frequencies and the way of provoking reflected each Kim's characteristics. Provocations under Kim Il-sung was confident, under Kim Jong-il it was relatively indirect, and Kim Jong-un used high-risk threats for attention.

Table 2.

*Summary of relevance between each leader's characteristic and provocation*

	<b>Characteristic</b>	<b>Provocation pattern</b>
Kim Il-sung	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Confident</li> <li>- High self-esteem</li> <li>- Merciless to potential challengers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Very frequent</li> <li>- Intrusions, incursions</li> <li>- Bomb terrors, hijacks</li> <li>- Attempt to assassinate South Korean leaders</li> <li>- Missile tests (total 15 tests in 10 years)</li> <li>- Targeted South Korea and later extended to the international boundary</li> </ul>
	<p>- Kim Il-sung's confidence-based provocations were innumerable, bold, and direct. When he felt superior to South Korea, his provocations were highly risky, however, as he lost confidence over South Korea, the provocation boundary was stretching outward.</p>	
Kim Jong-ill	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Complex about parents</li> <li>- Crafty and paranoid</li> <li>- Fears threat</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Less local provocations</li> <li>- Missile tests (total 16 tests in 17 years)</li> <li>- The more negotiation tables with the US, the less missile tests</li> </ul>
	<p>- Kim Jong-il's risk-averting personality decreased the total number of</p>	

provocations. Especially the missile threats were relatively low, in spite of technology development. They were more tend to indirectly deliver messages.

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|-------------|-------------------------------|---|
| Kim Jong-un | - Complex about root          | - High level of threat                              |
|             | - Fear of instable succession | - Missile tests (total 91 tests in 8 years)         |
|             | - Enjoys attention            | - Nuclear tests (total 4)                           |
|             | - Wants to be recognized      | - Remarkable decrease of other types of provocation |
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- Kim Jong-un's desperate desire to be recognized in North Korea and international society is expressed with high level and frequency of threat. However, the vacancy of threat in 2018 represents that he can be patient and rational for what he aims for.

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