

## **Adaptation in South Korean Society of North Korean Elite Defectors**

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*Abstract:*

This paper aims to explain the adaptation of North Korean elite defectors who fled from North Korea. Data used for the purpose of this article came from surveys of North Korean defectors conducted in the late 2000's. Findings of the realized research indicate that the majority of senior defectors are experiencing less psychological and material issues when adjusting to society than regular North Korean defectors. The paper will proceed in three steps: explaining the notion of defectors, outlining their background, and focusing on their adaptation in South. Although defectors as a whole has emerged as of the most research group as a minority in South Korea, the so-called senior defectors have hardly been spotlighted. Basically North Korean senior defectors are supposed to strengthen the anti-Kim movement and legitimize the power of the South Korean government and the image of South Korea abroad. What has to be enlightened upon is the fact that North Korean senior defectors partially disagree with the integration policy of South Korean authorities. A major research question emerges: How are the experience of elite defectors localized in South Korea? How do their specific identities impact their opinion within the South Korean society? The aim of the article is also to categorize senior defectors and to provide in a single document a list of senior North Korea defectors based abroad. This kind of information is only available for Korean speaking readers. I wanted to make it accessible to the English-speaking community.

*Keywords:* adaptation, cultural differences between both Koreas, integration in South Korea, North Korea, North Korean elites, North Korean senior defectors.

## **1. Introduction**

This article presents the results of a study of North Korean senior defectors (고위탈북자 – Kouï Talbukja) who escaped their home country and living now abroad. It provides also a historical account on the changing social definitions of North Korean defectors. It also provides an account of the difficulties of these individuals whose identities are between “defector” and “migrant”, the problems they face in capitalist South Korea are examined in the major areas of social changes – consumption, education, ideology, and work. To my humble knowledge, there are no published papers dedicated to the differences in experiences and adaptation of different groups of North Korean migrants to South Korea. According to Andrei Lankov, elite defectors represent 10 percent of the total number of refugees [16, p. 96]. There are around 28,000 defectors in South Korea. At the end of the article, the reader will find a list of senior defectors who defected abroad. No documents like this are available in western languages.

## **2. Objectives**

First, the author analyzed the roots of North Korean defections. Secondly, this article discusses, the adaptation of North Korean senior defectors to the South Korean one. In particular, this integration could be changed through changes of views on defectors by the South Korean population and by massive and regular campaigns. Third, the text provides some information related to the adaptation of defectors to other societies than the South Korean one.

## **3. Research Questions**

This article addresses the following research question: For which purposes North Korean elites are leaving their home country and to what extent even elite defectors have difficulties to integrate and to assimilate to the South Korean society.

## **4. Theoretical Framework**

This empirical research is based on adaptation and identity theories. According to Eric Erickson, the identity must fit into the larger society in order to reduce the unsuccessful outcomes of identity formation [8, p. 47]. These include “negative identity” based on opposition to others’ wishes. According to Wenger, socio-cultural learning theory argues that people learn through engagement with actions and interactions and participations within socio-cultural and historical contexts. Participation “refers not just to local events of engagement in certain activities with certain people, but to a more encompassing process of being active participants in the practices of social communities and constructing identities in relation to these communities” [19, p. 4]. I will consider that adaption may be related to three areas: psychological, sociocultural, and economics [4, p. 6]. Psychological adaptation means interaction between environment and behavior, sociocultural is the adaptation to the society and economics adaptation is the behavior in a society with new economic rules.

Another suitable framework for the examination of adaptation of North Korean defectors is the one developed by the South Korean researcher Kim Young-yun. He prepared a relevant theoretical framework which is related to the adaptation of refugees. Kim conceptualizes an adaptation as an interplay between the person and the environment. According to Kim, humans have a capacity to adapt themselves to environmental challenges, secondly, the adaptation of an individual in a different cultural environment occurs through communication. Finally, the process of adaptation is a dynamic process that brings about qualitative changes of the considered individuals. Kim believes that in a new environment, human beings have the natural tendency to adapt. The process of adaptation takes place through communication where partners gets information and

responds to information [20, p. 28]. According to Paulisch, being a defector is only a temporary situation [1, p. 119].

From the theoretical political background, these North Korean elites belong to the first class of North Korean citizens. According to the North Korean class system (Songbun) established in 1957 on a decree entitled "On the transformation of the Struggle with Counterrevolutionary Elements into an All-People All-Party Movement" passed by the Politburo for the WPK, there are 3 major social classes (*kyechung*) according to the degree of loyalty toward the WPK and the parental background of the population. The core class (*haksim kyechung*) is composed of bereaved families of the Korean War. The second class (*tongyo kyechung*) consists of some merchants, who may act against the regime and intellectuals [15, p. 185]. The third class is called the antagonist one (*choktae kyechung*) considered as antagonist to the regime, such as landlords and capitalists<sup>1</sup>. These senior defectors are defined in the present article as people belonging to the *haksim kyechung*. They are usually either members of the Korean Workers' Party, or citizens of Pyongyang, people with a high education, people who travelled abroad and in the majority men. Interestingly, defectors of the *tongyo* or *chokate* classes are usually women, who left their country for economic reasons.

Finally I would like to introduce the concept of acculturation which is a cultural change resulting from contacts between two cultural groups [2, p. 69]. I do consider here that North and South Korean are similar but only to a certain extent. They do have a similar language, some similar dishes and games but basically they developed each other in a different environment. The concept of assimilation needs also to be noted in this article. According to Berry, structural assimilation is a high degree of contact and participation, regarding cultural assimilation, it's a high degree of cultural mix [4, p. 12].

## 5. Hypothesis

In preparing the present article, I have hypothesized that most senior defectors do not interact with foreigners due to their limited speaking capability. They do not have real interactions with other communities than the Korean one. Therefore, foreign South Korean communities play a role of adjustment environment for North Korean senior defectors. I also consider that North Koreans who are abroad are only temporary defectors. After an adaptation period, they must adapt and adjust themselves to their new environment.

## 6. Methodology

Generally speaking, on a regular basis, surveys are conducted in order to get a better understanding of North Korean defectors. Nevertheless, surveys focused on North Korean senior defectors are barely available. It's probably due to the sensitivity of the positions of these former North Korean people. Another important issue is the fact, that many senior defectors are afraid to speak out even under the condition of anonymity. They feared of being murdered or excluded by the defectors community. I must recognize the dubious practices that underpin most research articles based on interviews with North Koreans living in South Korea as all that North Koreans do and say in South Korea is heavily surveilled by the South Korean intelligence services, some are even afraid that if they speak out against the approved narrative, they fear being murdered. Finally, I must also underline that there are some limitations on the preparation of this research article as access to North Korean senior defectors is highly difficult especially during the worsening of relations between both Koreas. It's clearly affecting the quality and the potential of this research paper.

## 7. The Notion of Defector

First overall, the division of the Korean Peninsula is a result of the World War II. Around 65 years ago, important differences emerged between both Koreas. Since the 60s, many North Koreans are risking their lives to cross the border between both Koreas. Leaving their home country without a

permission is still considered as being illegal under the North Korean criminal code (북한형법 – Pukhan Hyongbom). Since the end of the Korean War 1953, 300,000 North Koreans fled abroad mainly to China and Russia. Most of whom have gone to Russia or China. Religious groups supporting defectors consider, that there are more than 1,000 defectors in Russia and approximately 100,000 – 200,000 in China [12, p. 3]. Between 1950 and 1989, 607 North Korean defectors arrived in South Korea. From the 1990s, North Koreans began to move to China in large numbers. To cross the border between North Korea and China is not an unreachable task as both countries are separated by the Tumen and Yalu river which is narrow, and frozen during winter times. As of the end of 2015, there are 28,597 North Korean defectors established in South Korea. Based on a study of South Korean defectors, women are the majority of defectors. As of 2002 they represented around 56% of defections to South Korea (1,138 people) and in 2011 the figure rose 71% (2,706 people). More women leave the North because they suffer of economic difficulties. Being employed in the service and administration sectors, they earn low salaries [9]. Men still mainly defect for political and ambition reasons as their aspirations are limited on North Korea. In South Korea there are different ways of calling defectors. The average North Korean defector is a poor woman from the Northern part of North Korea. In comparison, the typical Soviet defector was a member of the Soviet *Intelligensia*. As I mentioned previously, senior defectors represent 10% of the global population of defectors. Secondly defectors had been granted different identities taking in account the historical timeframe. Several terms are referring to North Korean refugees. Until 1993, North Korean defectors were called *kwisunsa* (귀순자 – defectors) or *kuisunyongsa* (귀순용사 – brave defectors), between 1994 and 1996 *Ttalpukja* and *kuisunpukhantongpo* (귀순북한동포). Between 1997 and 2004, two appellations were used: *Ttalpukja* (탈북자 – “people who fled the North”) and *Pukhanitaljumin* (북한이탈주민 – “people, who renounced from North Korea”). Starting from 2005, the South Korean Ministry of Unification (통일부 – *Tongilbu*) started to use the term of *saeteomin* (새터민 – “people of new land”) instead of *ttalpukja*, a term unappreciated by North Korean officials.

## 8. Motives of Defections

Regarding motives of defections, according to the South Korean researcher Sung Hong-ko, on a global scale until the early 1990s, motives were rather political, because people were dissatisfied with the North Korean regime and its policy. Those who defected were diplomats based abroad, soldiers, students and traders based abroad and representing North Korean companies. Later, starting basically from 1995, the economic motive was prevalent due to the food crisis [10, p. 75]. Since the mid 1990s, defecting women became also more dominant especially from the northern parts of North Korea (from the following provinces: Jjagang, North Hamgyung, North Pyongan, and Ryanggang). Interestingly not only people with a low-background are going to South Korea. Some North Korean elites are also moving from their former country for the following reasons. The first one is that these people do not feel secure in their own country, this argument is prevalent for important for North Korean defectors who belonged to the key structures of the North Korean apparatus (Korean Workers’ Party, Korean People’s Army, Foreign Trade North Korean Company). As examples we can quote the personalities of Hwang Yan-yop, the initiator of the North Korean ideology, the Juche, and the chief political ideologue; Choe Kun-Chol – former Regional Korean Workers’ Party Secretary). Regarding regular North Korean defectors, they used to defect because of economic issues and to a lower extent because they were in position of being threatened, because they expressed some kind of scepticism over the North Korean system or feared that it may collapse. In April 1991, Ko Young-hwan, a former diplomat at the North Korean embassy to Zaire was in a way afraid that a similar situation to the execution of Nicolae Ceausescu may happen in North Korea. One month later Ko defected as he was afraid of being sent back to Pyongyang for his

remarks. As of now he lives in South Korea and works as a senior analyst for Unification organizations.

## **9. Classification of North Korean Defectors**

According to the South Korean researcher Sung Ho-ko, the Koreans exist as a single ethnic group for more than 2000 years. Following the Korean War (1950 – 1953), the situation of Korean evolved quickly. The number of defectors started to increase with economic problems of North Korea in the 80's. Before there were no real cases of defections. For example, there were only 59 defectors from 1971 till 1980. People within the North Korean defectors community differ in their sense of identification with South Koreans. Despite of having a common history until 1950, the Korean and Cold Wars created two distinct countries. The degree of intensity with which they share majority beliefs. Some of them identify to Koreans, some other feel that they are foreigners in South Korea. North Korean elite defectors can use one of the various subterfuges to enter into South Korea or a foreign country. They may try to defect while being abroad (Hwang Jang-yop, Kim Dok-hong) or by using a kind of Very Important Person treatment (quick transfer to South Korea via direct flight from Shenyang to Seoul, etc.) [7, pp. 239 – 247]. Some of these elite defectors are freedom fighter. These people try to improve the situation of their country-mates who are still in North Korea. Other elite defectors are the members of the Kim family who avoid to appear in public. Their position is more neutral than the others mentioned previously. These people defected in any cases for economic reasons. They defected either for political (Hwang Jang-yop) or philosophical reasons (Ri Han-Yong). Some of these North Korean elite defectors moved to the US. Two of them are Ri Kang and Ko Yong-Suk. Both of them belong to the ruling Kim family in North Korea. They supposedly moved for freedom reasons to a third country and finally established in the United States at an undisclosed localization. Ri Kang is running a laundry business. Their three children are studying in different states of the United States [11]. Other members of their family defected earlier. One of them is Ri Han-yong. Ri Han-yong's mother was Song Hye-rang, a sister of Song Hye-rim, and a former mistress of Kim Jong-il. He studied mainly in Moscow, travelled all over Europe (including Poland) and for freedom reasons, defected to South Korea in 1982 during his studies in Switzerland. Globally speaking, the integration in South Korea is very upsetting and stressful for North Koreans. The majority of North Korean defectors identify themselves as North Koreans [17]. They usually feel stressed in South Korea Nevertheless, those who are too much depressed, are moving to other countries face with a different other level of difficulties. In spite of their education, many North Korean elite defectors faced with language barriers and to a lower extent in comparison to life in South Korea, fail to adapt to their new life. Some of them were educated in former communist countries and may speak in Russian or other similar languages as they used to study in foreign universities. Some of them have a limited knowledge of foreign languages as they started to study in foreign countries and learnt basic of a specific language (usually the mother tongue of the country where they studied). Otherwise the majority of elite defectors, that I identified, do not speak in English, none of them were living in an English-speaking country. Basically out of South Korea, North Korean elite defectors tend to live either with other Koreans in Korean towns (like in Los Angeles or in New Malden, a suburb in south-west of London) but to a lower extent than regular North Korean defectors.

## **10. North Korean Elite Defectors and Their Adaptation to South Korea**

According to John Berry, adjustment can be considered as being a process of an individual coming into harmony with various conditions and circumstances [3]. This article defines the adjustment of North Korean defectors as a complex issue of inter-cultural adaptation. In spite of similar language and common ethnicity, North Korean defectors shall adjust more or less to South Korean society. Regular North Koreans defectors experienced great difficulties and challenges and do not adapt to the South Korean society. A limited number of defectors can be considered as experiencing a real

“adjustment” or “integration”. The majority of them are first workers and traders who works in foreign currencies companies, secondly former Central and Eastern European students, and thirdly diplomats who were based abroad. All of them were exposed to foreign systems and therefore possess knowledge and skills. Therefore some created successful commercial activities in South Korea such as Choe Sae-ung (최세웅), the owner of an exchange company [22]. Other successful adjustments are realized by those who starts a new University education in South Korea. Except education they are also educated to South Korean manners. Later they may get a job in the South Korean administration however they are more successful by running their own businesses.

What needs to be underlined is the so-called socioeconomic background of these defectors. If they had a high social status in North Korea, their social adjustment is done easily and they remain to a certain extent to the same social position. Any downgrading is still limited. That’s why all of that leads to the creation of class differentiation between Korean defectors. Defectors who either worked in foreign trade companies, or were students in foreign countries are said to have adapted most successfully, as they were already used to a different society from the North Korean one. For example, one defector arrived to South Korea during the summer 1990, and operates currently an IT software production entity. He obtained a degree of Applied Mathematics at the University Khabarovsk, in the state of Russia. Through utilizing his network, when he came to South Korea, he imported less expensive, skilled programmers from Russia to create IT products [21]. Lee Chong-guk, a son of an elite clan, who was a cooker at Chongryugwan, the most famous of all Pyongyang restaurants, established his own restaurant chain in South Korea.

Sin Yong-hui, dancer in the Mansudae troupe became a moderately successful actress. The father of her husband was working in the financial department of the KWP. Her husband Choi Se-ung, worked for many years in the overseas offices of North Korean trade companies, founded a highly successful company that deals in currency exchange. The creation of self-companies seems to be more profitable for these senior defectors than working in regular companies. It may be due to the fact, that they are not discriminated, being the owners of their own business. Many of these defectors who were working in foreign Furthermore, North Korean elite defectors used also to be students in the best universities. In spite of having no access to Internet while being in North Korea, at their universities they used on a regular basis “decent” computers, used the North Korean Intranet and therefore have IT skills [7, p. 277].

In opposition, the Russian researcher Andrei Lankov considers that even elite defectors are facing challenges in South Korea. They have trouble to find a prestigious job, because their potential employers feel suspicious about their origins and lacks of networks. North Korean elite defectors belong in any cases to networks from people from the same region, same university, or same clans [16, p. 98]. Therefore, even elite defectors feel lonely in South Korea.

North Korean elites who are defecting to South Korea have a special treatment upon their arrivals. These elites are used by South Korean Authorities in order to obtain a better understanding of the North Korean reality [12, p. 10]. Based on research conducted by the Center of Unification (*Tongilbu 통일부*), many North Korean are considered as being welcomed upon their arrival in South Korea. Regarding North Korean elites, due to their special statue, these people are considered as regular North Korean escapee or Heroic Defector. Heroic defectors are mainly related to people who escaped North Korea at the beginning of the Cold War. We can quote No kum-sok, an Air Force senior lieutenant who flew North Korea on the 21th September 1953. He resides now in the United States. Kim Shin-jo, a member of a group which was supposed to assassinate Park Chung-hee in 1968 (the so-called *Simildo* Incident). He lately became a missionary and help North Korean to defect in South Korea. Finally, we can quote Jang- Gil-su, a child who defected and depicted the North Korean reality of Labor Camps (*Kwanliso*). Due to integration problems, many senior defectors are rather entering research institutes than private or own business. In these private institutions, they sell their knowledge. Nevertheless, supply of jobs within these institutions is more than limited especially taking in account that South Korean institutions are cutting funds for these research centers. Some of these elite defectors met with the regular defectors community through the participation to broadcasted South Korean TV shows such as *Ijae Mannaro Kamnida*

(이제만나리갑니다 – “on my way to meet you”) or *Pukhan Suda* (북한수다 – “meetings with North Korea”). The senior defector Kang Myong-do is participating to the first one. Some of these North Korean defectors are one of the main source of information for the South Korean government and affiliated institutions. Elite defectors are those who can provide more valuable information as being in the past inside the North Korea system. These elites tend to make more money from their research activities than from working in a regular company. Many North Korean senior defectors have an aversion towards organizational life. They still are sceptical and considered as unwanted by South Koreans in South Korea and abroad [13]. The majority of other defectors are working in North-South Organizations. Interestingly, the majority of them are still in touch with North Korean authorities or people (North Korean and foreigners) living in North Korea. Some of these senior defectors do not feel secure in North Korea, and have financial problems (such as Lee Myong-Kuk or the deceased Ri Han-yong). Therefore, they publish book telling their histories in North Korea. For example, Ri Han-yong authored a book called 대동강로열패밀리 – the Taedong River Royal Family: my 14 years incognito in Seoul] and published in 1996. Hwang Jang-yop, the former North Korean KWP Secretary who escaped in 1997, published also more than 10 books, being in South Korea (the most famous is 나는역사의진리를보았다 – I was a witness of History, written by Hwang Jang-yop) [12, p. 5]. Some of elite family members are defecting while being abroad. We can quote for example, Ri Eun-kyong, the daughter of Choe Sam-suk (a famous North Korean actress) who escaped while working in a North Korean restaurant or Hwang Jang-yop who escaped during a trip to Beijing. Regarding him, he defected probably for political reasons being feared of a purge in North Korea. Hwang Jang-yop mainly mentioned that he defected for freedom issues, but being a high dignitary while in North Korean, we can put in question his motive for leaving North Korea. His statue was very high, he was practically a member of the Kim family and the initiator of the Juche (self-reliance) ideology. Therefore, I consider that he defected because he felt unsecured in North Korea.

An important category of senior defectors are nuclear scientists. North Korean nuclear scientists who defected are literally caught either by South Korean or American authorities. They are supposed to possess the most important information regarding the military system of their former country in the eyes of the United States and South Korea. One of them is Kyong Won-ha, the so-called father of the North Korean nuclear program. He defected during the operation Weasel in March 2003. Some other North Korean scientists defected also through the currently closed embassy of Nauru in Beijing. Most of them live now in the United States, where they feel more comfortable than in South Korea as they feel less stressed and living in a more friendly environment [14, pp. 15 – 21].

Interestingly, in spite of their material situation, some of the North Koreans elite defectors are re-defecting by leaving South Korea to another western country. We can quote for example Lee Young-kuk. With his family, he was living in South Korea and finally moved from this country. This former bodyguard of Kim Jong-II reached Canada in March 2016. He fled South Korea and became an asylum seeker, claiming against threats and persecution by South Korea for his outspoken criticism of the North Korean regime [5]. Their defections are due from one side to adaptation problems in South Korea, but also in the seeking of new challenges. The key adaptation problem is related to long-term issues and financial one. The adaptation issue is due to a lack of recognition by South Korean citizens. For regular defectors they do have a double adaptation problem. First, they need to understand the technology and the way of living of South Korean people. Then, they need to fit to the South Korean society getting in interactions with them. Regarding senior defectors their major problem is related to psychological, and sociocultural issues. They do face difficulties to find friends within South Korean people, due to their former *songbun*, they do not feel also comfortable with regular South Korean habitants. In North Korea, they were highly respected. At their arrival in South Korea, they became regular citizens with some extra financial benefits but nothing else. Regarding economic matters, they usually use their maintained background for developing a business in South Korea. The economic aspect is the base for their

integration in South Korea where South Korean citizens consider that the economic success is a key element of mutual acceptance. However, their total integration cannot be pursued as the South Korean society cannot be considered as a framework explicitly open to foreigners and different cultures. North Korean felt prejudiced in South Korea and thus refuse assimilation. That's why usually North Korean defectors remain in their own community with their own system of value. It's less true for elite defectors who based their integration and then recognition by South Korean citizens on economic issues. These senior defectors are better assimilated than regular ones. They also accept the assimilationist policy of the South Korean government and accept to be a part of the major group of the population. They fit with the structural assimilation but accept to a lower extent the cultural assimilation by spending their free time only with other senior defectors.

## 11. Conclusion

In spite of their material situations, some North Korean elites decide to defect abroad. They defect mainly for safety reasons as they do benefit from financial advantages in North Korea, as they belong to the *haksim kyechung*, nevertheless in spite of this, they do not feel secured in North Korea and may defect. After the defection process, North Korean senior defectors adapt themselves to the South Korean society by working in institutions dealing with North Korean Issues or running their own businesses. They are working either in public institutions (Ministry of Unification, The Committee for the Five Northern Korean Provinces (이북 5 도위원회 literally “The North's Five Provinces Committee” – a South Korean government body under the Ministry of Security and Public Administration) or private institutions (Free North Korea Broadcasting – 유북한방송 Jayu Pukhan Bangsong). As I mentioned earlier, some of them feel persecuted or cannot adjust to the South Korea society and are looking for asylum in other countries especially in Canada, the US and Europe, and Japan [6, p. 97].

The majority of these elite defectors adjusted with difficulties to the South Korean or foreign societies due to a theoretical problem of communication-adjustment. Nevertheless, some of these senior defectors such as former students or business representatives in foreign countries have less difficulties out of South Korea. Therefore, the major adaptation problem for North Korean elite defectors is not related to economic issues, but to sociocultural ones and to their socialization. They face huge difficulties to get back their position they obtained in North Korea. And that's their major adaptation problem. Therefore, most of them consider that working for the Korean Unification can improve their sociocultural adaptation (even in spite of the fact they were not keen on this topic being based in North Korea). Consequently, many of the North Korean elite defectors can be categorized as being openly “Freedom fighters”. Those who are based out of South Korea are usually not fighting, at least officially, for the freedom of North Korea or the Unification of both Koreas. Those who are belonging to the Kim family are sometimes showing openly their harsh criticism of the North Korean regime (Ri Han-yong, Hwang Jang-yop), however to a lesser extent than other senior defectors. Some of defectors are also going to North Korea however it's still a minority [18].

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#### ANNEX - Selected list of North Korean elites who fled to South Korea

Identity	Year fled	Last position in North Korea	Current position	Current place of living
Choe Ju-hwal	1996	Deputy director at the Section 1 of the Foreign Affairs Desk of the Foreign Affairs Department of the Korean People's Army	Researcher	South Korea
Choe Kun-chol	Unknown	Former Regional Korean Workers' Party	Advisor, New Focus International	South Korea
ChoeMyung-chul	1994	Professor, Kim Il-sung University	Politician, Saenuri member	South Korea
Choi Se-ong	Unknown	Foreign Trade official	Owner of a	South Korea

	n		trading currency company	
Choi Seon-young	1996	North Korean official	Journalist, employee at the North Korean desk of the South Korean Press Agency Yonhap	South Korea
Hwang Jang-yop (passed away in December 2010)	1997	Secretary of the Central Committee of the Korean Workers' Party	Former politician	South Korea
Hyeon Seong-il	2009	Diplomat	Affiliated at the Faculty of North Korean Studies of the Dongguk University	South Korea
Im Young-sun	Unknown Date	Military officer	Director at Seoul Pyongyang TV	South Korea
Jang Jin-sung	2003	Poetry, Propaganda Department	Writer, activist	Seoul
Jang Seung-ho	1997	Diplomat at the North Korean delegation in France	Unknown function	South Korea
Jang Seung-il	1997	North Korean Ambassador in Egypt	Unknown function	Unknown localization
Joo Seong-ha	2002	Professor, Kim Il Sung University	Journalist	South Korea
Kang Myong-do	1994	Director at a university under the Ministry of the People's Armed Forces. Step-son of Kang Song-san, former North Korean Prime Minister	Researcher and Professor, Kyungmin University	South Korea
Kim Cheol-ung	2002	Pianist	Researcher, Donkkuk University	Unknown localization
Kim Dok-hong	1997	President of Yogwang General Trading Company and deputy chief of the office of documents of the Central Committee of the Workers Party.	Unknown function	South Korea
Kim Dong-sik	1995	Official, North Korean delegation of the World Food Organization	Researcher - Analyst at the Institute for National Security Strateg	South Korea
Kim Dong-soo	1998	Military officer	Unknown function	
Kim Heung-	2002	IT Professor at the Kim Il Sung	Founder and	Unknown

kwang		University	directory member of <i>North Korea Intellectual Solidarity</i>	localization
Kim Hyeong-soo	2009	biophysicist, Institute of Kim Il Sung Longevity (a.k.a the National Security Sciences Institute – <i>Mansumugang</i> Institute)	Unknown function	Unknown localization
Kim In-tae	Unknown	Unknown function	Researcher, Institute of National Security Strategy	Unknown localization
Kim Min-kyu	2009	Diplomat at the North Korean embassy in Russia	Unknown function	Unknown localization
Kim So-yeon	1992	Director, Kim Il Sung Longevity Institute (a.k.a the National Security Sciences Institute)	Unknown function	Unknown localization
Kim Tae-san	2002	North Korean Trading Company Official	Unknown function	Unknown localization
Kim Young-il	2006	Unknown function	PSCORE Organization Director (People for Successful Corean Reunification)	Unknown localization
Kim Yu-song	1991	Colonel, Korean People's Army	Board Member of Unification Organizations	South Korea
Ko Young-hwan	1991	Diplomat, director of the African Desk at the DPRK MOA, former first secretary of the North Korean embassy in Congo	Board Member of Unification Organizations	South Korea
Ko Yong-suk	1998	Member of the Kim family, younger sister of Kim Jong-un's sister	Unknown function	South Korea
Kyong Won-ha	2002	Scientist, sometimes considered as being the father of North Korea's nuclear program	Unknown function	South Korea
Lee Myong-kuk	2002	Kim Jong-il's bodyguard	Activist	Canada
Oh Young-nam	Unknown date	Captain in State Security, supposedly a relative of Marshal O Jin-u	Unknown function	South Korea
Park Seung-won	1999	Korean People's Army 2 stars general	Unknown function	South Korea

Park Sang-hak	1999	Employee at a propaganda unit of the Kim Il Sung Socialist Youth League	Activist, board member of foundations.	South Korea
Ri Han-yong (passed away in 1997)	1982	Member of the Kim family	Businessman	South Korea
Ri Kang	1998	Member of the Kim family	Businessman	United States
Seol Song-ha	2008	Foreign Trade Manager, Ministry of the Korean People's Army	Journalist	Unknown localization
Seong Ha-joo	2002 (left North Korea in 1998)	Lecturer at the Kim Il-sung University	Journalist	South Korea
Sin Yong-hui	Unknown date	Dancer at the Mansudae Theater	Actress	South Korea
Song Byeok	2002	Artist	Artist	South Korea
Thae Yong-ho	2016	Diplomat at the DPRK embassy in UK	Unknown function	South Korea
Yoon Tae-hyong	2014	Kim's family Fund manager in Russia	Unknown function	South Korea

Source: own research ([nicolaslevi.wordpress.com](http://nicolaslevi.wordpress.com))

## Notes

1. Each class is splitted in sub-classes. The *haksim kyechung* has 12 subclasses, the *tongyo kyechung*, 18, and the *chokdae kyechung*, 21. The first class represents 25% of the population. Tongyo and Chokdae 55% and 20% respectively.