

College of Saint Benedict and Saint John's University

DigitalCommons@CSB/SJU

Psychology Faculty Publications

Psychology

6-11-2018

The Leadership Style of North Korean Supreme Leader Kim Jong Un

Aubrey Immelman

St. John's University / College of St. Benedict, aimmelman@csbsju.edu

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.csbsju.edu/psychology_pubs

Recommended Citation

Immelman, A. (2018, June). *The leadership style of North Korean supreme leader Kim Jong-un* (Working Paper No. 1.1). Collegeville and St. Joseph, MN: St. John's University and the College of St. Benedict, Unit for the Study of Personality in Politics. Retrieved from Digital Commons website: https://digitalcommons.csbsju.edu/psychology_pubs/120/

Copyright © 2018 by [Unit for the Study of Personality in Politics](#) / Aubrey Immelman

THE LEADERSHIP STYLE OF NORTH KOREAN

SUPREME LEADER KIM JONG-UN

- **Chairman of the State Affairs Commission**
- **Chairman of the Worker's Party of Korea**
- **Supreme Commander of the Korean People's Army**
- **Marshal of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea**
- **Chairman of the Central Military Commission**



Aubrey Immelman

Department of Psychology
Saint John's University
College of Saint Benedict
St. Joseph, MN 56374
Telephone: (320) 363-5481
E-mail: aimmelman@csbsju.edu

Working Paper — Release 1.1
Unit for the Study of Personality in Politics
<http://personality-politics.org/>

June 10, 2018

Acknowledgments. Feiran Chen, Eun-ah Kim, and Madison Skudlarek (2013); Meghan Keaveny, Franchesca Cromett, Cole Stang, Kristen Jacobs, Kara Fiedler, Grace Arrington, Abigail Granger, Meg McMahon, and Jacob Wankel (2017); and Katlin Rice, Austen Luetmer, Suntina Spehar, Hillary Rethlake, Lucas Vetsch, Amanda Olson, Mariah Ogden-Kellington, Meghan Keaveny, and Katelyn Hendrickson (2018) assisted with data collection. James Hasselbrink, ad hoc editorial assistant.

Abstract

The Leadership Style of North Korean Supreme Leader Kim Jong-un

Aubrey Immelman
Saint John's University
College of Saint Benedict
St. Joseph, MN 56374, U.S.A.
Unit for the Study of Personality in Politics
<http://personality-politics.org/>

This working paper presents a personality-based analysis of the likely leadership style of Chairman Kim Jong-un, supreme leader of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, in negotiations with U.S. president Donald Trump, inferred from the results of indirect personality assessments conducted 2013–2018 from the conceptual perspective of personologist Theodore Millon.

Kim's primary personality patterns were found to be Outgoing/gregarious and Dominant/controlling, supplemented by secondary Accommodating/cooperative, Ambitious/confident, and Dauntless/adventurous features.

Outgoing individuals are dramatic attention-getters who thrive on being the center of social events, go out of their way to be popular with others, and are confident in their social skills; they may have an impulsive tendency and be prone to boredom. *Dominant* individuals enjoy the power to direct others and to evoke obedience and respect; they can be tough and unsentimental and often make effective leaders. *Accommodating* individuals are cordial, cooperative, and amicable; they are polite, respectful, and agreeable, willing to adapt their preferences to reconcile differences, and to concede or compromise when necessary to achieve peaceable solutions. *Ambitious* individuals are bold, competitive, and self-assured; they easily assume leadership roles, expect others to recognize their special qualities, and may act as though entitled. *Dauntless* individuals tend to flout tradition, conventional standards, and cultural mores, dislike following routine, and may act impulsively and recklessly; they are resistant to coercion and may exhibit a strong need for autonomy and self-determination.

It may be inferred on the basis of his primary Outgoing personality pattern, infused with secondary Accommodating qualities, that in the absence of strong situational constraints Kim will be inclined to *congenial-cooperative* behavior in negotiations; a generalized expectancy for leaders with this particular psychological predisposition is to behave in a manner that is gracious, jovial, socially gregarious, agreeable, accommodating, and obliging in relating to others, along with an underlying attitude of benevolence and neighborliness and a preference for avoiding conflict and seeking harmony with others.

Framed in terms of heuristic leadership models in political psychology, Kim appears to be temperamentally *active-positive*, with an *active-independent* orientation to foreign affairs and *high-dominance extraversion* as his preferred operating style in the international system.

Introduction

In the first-ever meeting between the leaders of the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK) and the United States, North Korean supreme leader Kim Jong-un will sit down with U.S. president Donald Trump on Tuesday, June 12, 2018, at a summit in Singapore for negotiations involving the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula. That raises the question: What kind of negotiation partner will Kim prove to be? The failure of successive U.S. presidents since the Clinton administration to resolve the nuclear issue elevates the question of Chairman Kim’s leadership style — and that of his counterpart, President Trump¹ — to a matter of critical importance with respect to U.S. national security and the de-escalation of nuclear tensions in Northeast Asia.

Princeton University professor of politics Fred Greenstein (1992) made a compelling case for examining the personality of political leaders: “Political institutions and processes operate through human agency,” he wrote. “It would be remarkable if they were *not* influenced by the properties that distinguish one individual from another” (p. 124).

Within the field of political psychology, the study of personality in politics offers a window to anticipating political outcomes. That is because personality — a person’s ingrained behavior patterns — partially dictates how an individual will act over time across a broad range of situations. In short, accurate personality assessment enables political prognosticators to formulate general expectancies for leadership behavior in a variety of contingencies.

That perspective provides the context for the current report, which presents a personality-based analysis of Kim Jong-un’s projected leadership style — including his policy preferences and executive performance — in negotiations with the U.S. and more broadly as supreme leader of the DPRK. Conceptually, the personality assessment aspect of the study is informed by Theodore Millon’s (1969, 1986a, 1986b, 1990, 1991, 1994, 1996, 2003; Millon & Davis, 2000; Millon & Everly, 1985) model of personality as adapted (Immelman, 1993, 1998, 2002, 2003, 2005) for the study of personality in politics. The prediction of leadership style is informed by the work of James David Barber (1972/1992), Lloyd Etheredge (1978), Margaret Hermann (1987; Hermann & Preston, 1995), Dean Keith Simonton (1988), Stanley Renshon (1996), Juliet Kaarbo (1997; Kaarbo & Hermann, 1998), and Blema Steinberg (2008).

I employ the term *personality* in Greenstein’s (1992) narrowly construed sense, which “excludes political attitudes and opinions ... and applies only to nonpolitical personal differences” (p. 107). Following Millon (1996), personality may be concisely defined as:

a complex pattern of deeply embedded psychological characteristics that are largely nonconscious and not easily altered, expressing themselves automatically in almost every facet of functioning. Intrinsic and pervasive, these traits emerge from a complicated matrix of biological dispositions and experiential learnings, and ultimately comprise the

¹ See “The Leadership Style of U.S. President Donald J. Trump” by Aubrey Immelman, Unit for the Study of Personality in Politics, St. John’s University and the College of St. Benedict, January 2017. Available for download at Digital Commons website: http://digitalcommons.csbsju.edu/psychology_pubs/107/

individual's distinctive pattern of perceiving, feeling, thinking, coping, and behaving. (Millon, 1996, p. 4)

As reported in this paper's companion report,² "The Personality Profile of North Korean Supreme Leader Kim Jong-un" (Immelman, 2018), Kim's primary personality patterns are Outgoing/gregarious and Dominant/controlling, supplemented by secondary Accommodating/cooperative, Ambitious/confident, and Dauntless/adventurous features — a personality composite characterized as a *high-dominance extravert*.

Because leadership behavior is dictated as much by circumstances and structural constraints on power as by personality — frequently more so — personality analysis can go only so far, painting leadership prospects with respect to international relations (including threat assessment, deterrence, and prospects for diplomacy) in broad strokes rather than in minute detail.

Method

Materials

The materials for constructing Kim Jong-un's personality profile (Immelman, 2018) consisted of biographical sources and the personality inventory employed to systematize and synthesize diagnostically relevant information collected from the literature on Kim.

Sources of data. Diagnostic information pertaining to Kim was collected from a broad array of more than 100 media reports that offered useful, diagnostically relevant psychobiographical information.

Personality inventory. The assessment instrument, the Millon Inventory of Diagnostic Criteria (MIDC; Immelman, 2015), was compiled and adapted from Millon's (1969, 1986b; 1990, 1996; Millon & Everly, 1985) prototypal features and diagnostic criteria for normal personality styles and their pathological variants. Information concerning the construction, administration, scoring, and interpretation of the MIDC is provided in the Millon Inventory of Diagnostic Criteria manual (Immelman, 2014).³

The 12 MIDC scales correspond to major personality patterns posited by Millon (1994, 1996), which are congruent with the syndromes described in the revised third edition, fourth edition, and fifth edition of the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-III-R, DSM-IV, and DSM-5)* of the American Psychiatric Association (APA; 1987, 1994, 2013) and coordinated with the normal personality styles in which these disorders are rooted, as described by Millon and Everly (1985), Millon (1994), Oldham and Morris (1995), and Strack (1997). Scales 1 through 8 (comprising 10 scales and subscales) have three gradations (a, b, c)

² "The Personality Profile of North Korean Supreme Leader Kim Jong Un" by Aubrey Immelman, Unit for the Study of Personality in Politics, St. John's University and the College of St. Benedict, April 2018. Available for download at Digital Commons website: https://digitalcommons.csbsju.edu/psychology_pubs/119/

³ Inventory and manual available to qualified professionals upon request.

yielding 30 personality variants, whereas Scales 9 and 0 have two gradations (d, e) yielding four variants, for a total of 34 personality designations, or types. Table 1 displays the full taxonomy.

Table 1
Millon Inventory of Diagnostic Criteria: Scales and Gradations

Scale 1A:	Dominant pattern a. Asserting b. Controlling c. Aggressive (Sadistic; <i>DSM-III-R</i> , Appendix A)
Scale 1B:	Dauntless pattern a. Adventurous b. Dissenting c. Aggrandizing (Antisocial; <i>DSM-5</i> , 301.7 / F60.2)
Scale 2:	Ambitious pattern a. Confident b. Self-serving c. Exploitative (Narcissistic; <i>DSM-5</i> , 301.81 / F60.81)
Scale 3:	Outgoing pattern a. Congenial b. Gregarious c. Impulsive (Histrionic; <i>DSM-IV</i> , 301.50)
Scale 4:	Accommodating pattern a. Cooperative b. Agreeable c. Submissive (Dependent; <i>DSM-5</i> , 301.6 / 60.7)
Scale 5A:	Aggrieved pattern a. Unpresuming b. Self-denying c. Self-defeating (<i>DSM-III-R</i> , Appendix A)
Scale 5B:	Contentious pattern a. Resolute b. Oppositional c. Negativistic (Passive-aggressive; <i>DSM-III-R</i> , 301.84)
Scale 6:	Conscientious pattern a. Respectful b. Dutiful c. Compulsive (Obsessive-compulsive; <i>DSM-5</i> , 301.4 / F60.5)
Scale 7:	Reticent pattern a. Circumspect b. Inhibited c. Withdrawn (Avoidant; <i>DSM-5</i> , 301.82 / F60.6)
Scale 8:	Retiring pattern a. Reserved b. Aloof c. Solitary (Schizoid; <i>DSM-5</i> , 301.20 / F60.1)
Scale 9:	Distrusting pattern d. Suspicious e. Paranoid (<i>DSM-5</i> , 301.0 / F60.0)
Scale 0:	Erratic pattern d. Unstable e. Borderline (<i>DSM-5</i> , 301.83 / F60.3)

Note. Equivalent *DSM* terminology and *DSM / ICD-10-CM* codes are specified in parentheses.

Diagnostic Procedure

Personality assessment. The diagnostic procedure for constructing the personality profile, termed *psychodiagnostic meta-analysis*, can be conceptualized as a three-part process: first, an *analysis* phase (data collection) during which source materials are reviewed and analyzed to extract and code diagnostically relevant content; second, a *synthesis* phase (scoring and interpretation) during which the unifying framework provided by the MIDC prototypal features, keyed for attribute domain and personality pattern, is employed to classify the diagnostically relevant information extracted in phase 1; and finally, an *evaluation* phase (inference) during which theoretically grounded descriptions, explanations, inferences, and predictions are extrapolated from Millon’s theory of personality based on the personality profile constructed in phase 2 (see Immelman, 2003, 2005, 2014 for a more detailed account of the procedure).

Leadership inference. The prediction of leadership style involves a more subjective process in which Millon-based inferences from the personality profile are coordinated with leadership models developed by Barber (1972/1992), Etheredge (1978), Hermann (1987), Simonton (1988), Hermann and Preston (1995), Renshon (1996), Kaarbo (1997; Kaarbo & Hermann, 1998), and Steinberg (2008). Figure 1 depicts Immelman’s (2003) generative conceptual model for assessing personality and predicting political performance.

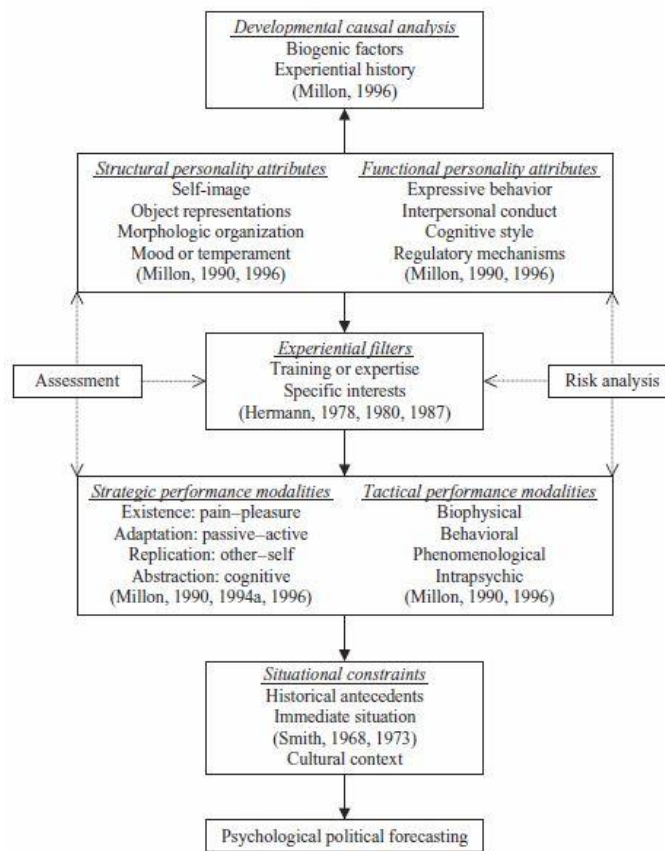


Figure 1. A generative conceptual model for assessing personality and predicting political performance. From “Personality in Political Psychology,” by A. Immelman, 2003, in I. B. Weiner (Series Ed.), T. Millon & M. J. Lerner (Vol. Eds.), *Handbook of Psychology: Vol. 5, Personality and Social Psychology*, pp. 599–625. Copyright © 2003 by John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

Results

The analysis of the data includes a summary of descriptive statistics yielded by the MIDC scoring procedure, the MIDC profile for Kim Jong-un, and the diagnostic classification of the subject. Detailed clinical interpretation of significant MIDC scale elevations derived from the diagnostic procedure is provided elsewhere (Immelman, 2018).

Kim received 40 endorsements (diagnostic criteria rated “affirmative,” or present) on the 170-item MIDC. Descriptive statistics for Kim’s MIDC ratings are presented in Table 2.

Table 2
MIDC Item Endorsement Rate by Attribute Domain for Kim Jong-un

Attribute domain	Items
Expressive behavior	8
Interpersonal conduct	9
Cognitive style	8
Mood/temperament	7
Self-image	8
Sum	40
Mean	8.0
Standard deviation	0.6

Kim’s MIDC scale scores are reported in Table 3. The same data are presented graphically in the profile displayed in Figure 2.⁴

⁴ Solid horizontal lines on the profile form signify cut-off scores between adjacent scale gradations. For Scales 1–8, scores of 5 through 9 signify the *presence* (gradation *a*) of the personality pattern in question; scores of 10 through 23 indicate a *prominent* (gradation *b*) variant; and scores of 24 to 30 indicate an exaggerated, *mildly dysfunctional* (gradation *c*) variation of the pattern. For Scales 9 and 0, scores of 20 through 35 indicate a *moderately disturbed* syndrome and scores of 36 through 45 a *markedly disturbed* syndrome. See Table 1 for scale names.

Table 3
MIDC Scale Scores for Kim Jong-un

Scale	Personality pattern	Raw	RT%
1A	Dominant: Asserting–Controlling–Aggressive (Sadistic)	15	30.6
1B	Dauntless: Adventurous–Dissenting–Aggrandizing (Antisocial)	5	10.2
2	Ambitious: Confident–Self-serving–Exploitative (Narcissistic)	5	10.2
3	Outgoing: Congenial–Gregarious–Impulsive (Histrionic)	15	30.6
4	Accommodating: Cooperative–Agreeable–Submissive (Dependent)	5	10.2
5A	Aggrieved: Unpresuming–Self-denying–Self-defeating (Masochistic)	0	0.0
5B	Contentious: Resolute–Oppositional–Negativistic (Passive-aggressive)	2	4.1
6	Conscientious: Respectful–Dutiful–Compulsive (Obsessive-compulsive)	2	4.1
7	Reticent: Circumspect–Inhibited–Withdrawn (Avoidant)	0	0.0
8	Retiring: Reserved–Aloof–Solitary (Schizoid)	0	0.0
	Subtotal for basic personality scales	49	100.0
9	Distrusting: Suspicious–Paranoid (Paranoid)	4	7.0
0	Erratic: Unstable–Borderline (Borderline)	4	7.0
	Full-scale total	57	114.0

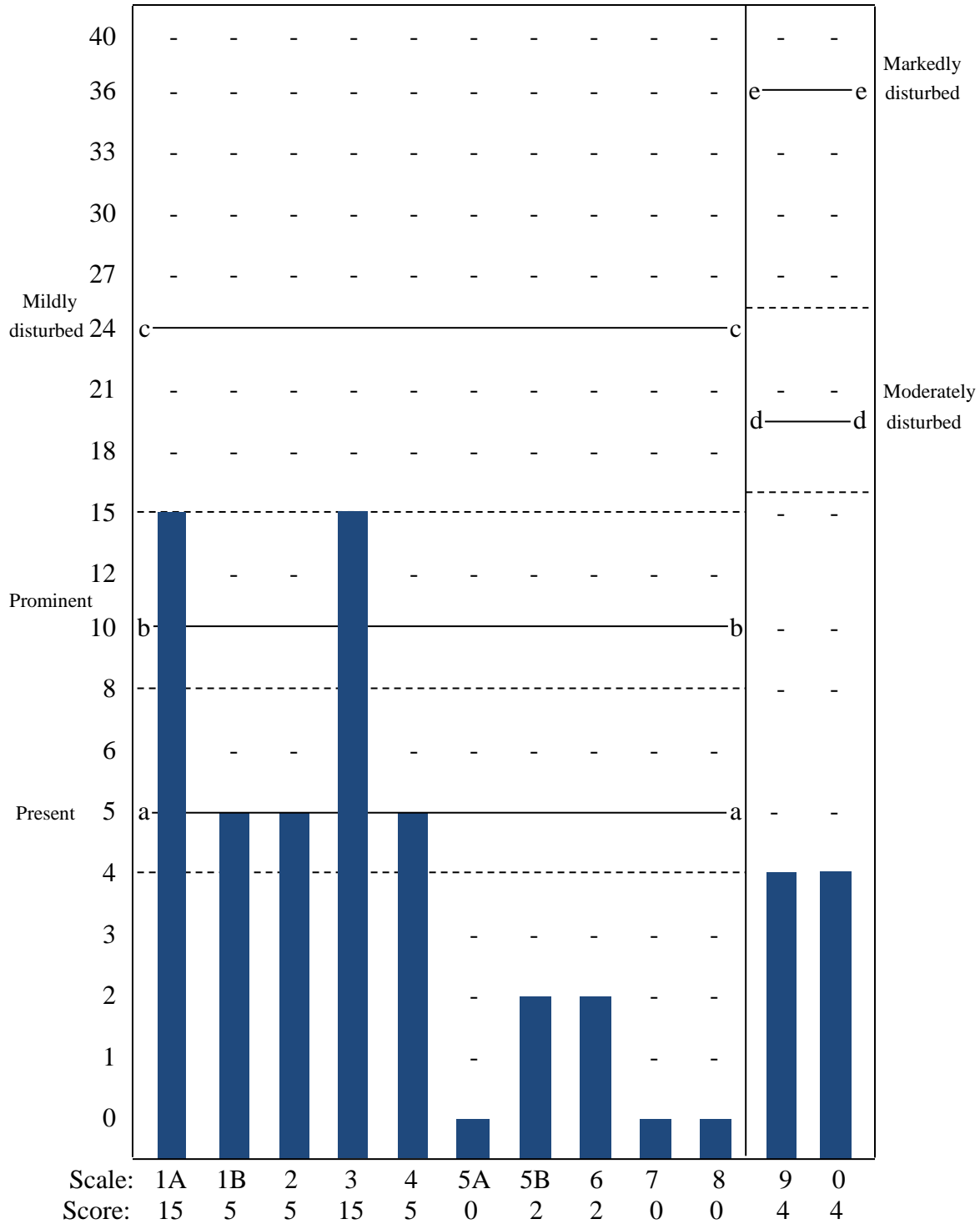
Note. For Scales 1–8, ratio-transformed (RT%) scores are the scores for each scale expressed as a percentage of the sum of raw scores for the ten basic scales only. For Scales 9 and 0, ratio-transformed scores are scores expressed as a percentage of the sum of raw scores for all twelve MIDC scales (therefore, full-scale RT% totals can exceed 100). Personality patterns are enumerated with scale gradations and equivalent *DSM* terminology (in parentheses).

Kim's primary scale elevations occur on Scale 1A (Dominant) and Scale 3 (Outgoing), both within the *prominent* (10–23) range, with identical scores of 15. The secondary Scale 1B (Dauntless), Scale 2 (Ambitious), and Scale 4 (Accommodating) elevations, all with scores of 5, are within the *present* (5–9) range. No other scale elevation is remarkable or of psychodiagnostic significance.

In terms of MIDC scale gradation (see Table 1 and Figure 2) criteria, complemented by clinical judgment, Kim was classified as having an Outgoing/gregarious and Dominant/controlling composite personality, supplemented by secondary Accommodating/cooperative, Ambitious/confident, and Dauntless/adventurous features.⁵

⁵ In each case, the label preceding the slash signifies the categorical personality pattern, whereas the label following the slash indicates the specific scale gradation, or personality type, on the dimensional continuum; see Table 1.

Figure 2. Millon Inventory of Diagnostic Criteria: Profile for Kim Jong-un



Discussion

For a discussion of the personality profile yielded by the psychological assessment of Kim Jong-un, see Immelman (2018). The present discussion is limited to a synthesis of Kim's leadership style and its political implications, derived from his personality profile.

Few people exhibit personality patterns in “pure” or prototypical form; more often, individual personalities represent a blend of two or more primary orientations. With his moderately elevated scores on Scale 3 (Outgoing) and Scale 1A (Dominant), Kim emerged from the assessment as a blend of the *gregarious* and *controlling* types — prominent variants of, respectively, the Outgoing and Dominant patterns.⁶ The Millon Index of Personality Styles manual (Millon, 1994) describes Outgoing personalities as dramatic attention-getters who thrive on being the center of social events, go out of their way to be popular with others, have confidence in their social abilities, and become easily bored, especially when faced with repetitive and mundane tasks (pp. 31–32). Dominant personalities — labeled *Controlling* — enjoy the power to direct others and to evoke obedience and respect. They are tough, competitive, and unsentimental, and often make effective leaders (p. 34). Given his Outgoing–Dominant primary personality composite, Kim may be classified as a *high-dominance extravert*.

The interpretation of Kim's profile must also account for secondary elevations on Scale 4 (Accommodating), Scale 2 (Ambitious), and Scale 1B (Dauntless). The Millon Index of Personality Styles manual (Millon, 1994), employing the label *Agreeing*, describes Accommodating personalities as notably cooperative, amicable, participatory, and compromising, conveying a self-respecting, congenial obligingness — a willingness to adapt their preferences to be compatible with those of others, to reconcile differences to achieve peaceable solutions, and to concede when necessary (p. 34). Ambitious personalities — labeled *Asserting* — are described as bold, competitive, self-assured individuals who easily assume leadership roles, expect others to recognize their special qualities, and often act as though entitled (p. 32). Dauntless personalities — which Millon labels *Dissenting* — tend to flout tradition, act in a notably autonomous fashion, dislike following routine, occasionally act impulsively and irresponsibly, and are inclined to elaborate on or shade the truth and skirt the law (p. 33).

⁶ *Note on clinical judgment vs. empirical observation:* Empirically, Kim Jong-un's score on Scale 1A (Dominant) is identical to his score on Scale 3 (Outgoing); however, on rational-intuitive grounds it is my opinion that Scale 3 should be accorded precedence when interpreting the personality profile within the broader political context. Specifically, totalitarian regimes serve as more of a conduit for the expression of dominant/aggressive personality traits than for outgoing traits, which raises the possibility that traits associated with dominance may be overrepresented in the universe of data in the public domain sampled for at-a-distance psychological assessment. Moreover, media reports sometimes conflate aggressive regime behavior with the personal psychology of the political actor, so it is conceivable that aggressive traits attributed to Kim Jong-un may be inflated in media reports.

Inferring Kim Jong-un's Leadership Orientation

There is utility in coordinating the present findings with alternative models of personality in politics. With the caveat that the leadership models referenced in this section focus largely on the U.S. presidency, the present psychological assessment offers an empirically based framework for anticipating Kim Jong-un's political leadership style in a chief executive role generally and his behavioral predispositions in responding to arising or unforeseen circumstances in particular.

Renshon's Character-Based Modalities of Political Performance

Stanley Renshon (1996) developed a psychologically grounded theory of political performance, proposing "three distinct aspects" (p. 226) of political leadership shaped by character: *mobilization*, the ability to arouse, engage, and direct the public; *orchestration*, the organizational skill and ability to craft specific policies; and *consolidation*, implementing one's policy proposals (pp. 227, 411).

Kim's greatest leadership strength, by dint of his outgoing personality in concert with substantial dominance and ample self-confidence, is *mobilization*, which could be instrumental in rallying, energizing, and motivating his followers. In the sphere of *orchestration*, Kim's deficit of personality traits related to conscientiousness (e.g., diminished capacity for sustained focus and insufficient attention to detail), along with an extravertive inclination to nondeliberative decision making and susceptibility to boredom, may serve as an impediment to executive performance; he is not what one would call a "policy wonk" — an attribute firmly embedded in his personality. Finally, Kim's dominant personality attributes — though not his primary leadership strength — will aid Kim in *consolidating* his power and consummating his policy objectives.

Barber's Temperament-Based Model of Presidential Character

James David Barber (1972/1992), focusing more narrowly on presidential temperament, developed a simple model of presidential character that has shown some utility in predicting successful (active-positive) and failed (active-negative) leadership in the realm of the U.S. presidency. Kim seems most similar to Barber's active-positive character — epitomized in contemporary U.S. politics by Bill Clinton: energetic, optimistic, self-confident, and deriving pleasure from the exercise of power in pursuit of political objectives.

Simonton's Five-Factor Model of Presidential Styles

Dean Keith Simonton (1988) proposed five empirically derived presidential styles (charismatic, interpersonal, deliberative, neurotic, and creative) that offer a promising frame of reference for establishing links between personality and political leadership, given the fidelity with which they mirror the currently popular five-factor model, whose correlates with Millon's personality patterns have been empirically established (Millon, 1994, p. 82).

From Simonton's perspective, Kim's primary MIDC elevations on the Outgoing and Dominant scales, in conjunction with his secondary elevation on the Ambitious scale, imply a "charismatic" leadership style, which conceptually corresponds to the "Big Five" Extraversion factor. Framed in the context of American politics, Simonton (1988) describes the charismatic leader as follows:

[T]ypically "finds dealing with the press challenging and enjoyable" ... [Outgoing], ... "consciously refines his own public image" ... [Outgoing, Ambitious], "has a flair for the dramatic" ... [Outgoing], "conveys [a] clear-cut, highly visible personality" ... [Outgoing], is a "skilled and self-confident negotiator" ... [Dominant, Ambitious], "uses rhetoric effectively" ... [Ambitious, Dominant], is a "dynamo of energy and determination" ... [Outgoing, Ambitious, Dominant], ... "keeps in contact with the ... public and its moods" ... [Outgoing], "has [the] ability to maintain popularity" ... [Outgoing], [and] "exhibits artistry in manipulation" ... [Ambitious, Dominant]. (p. 931; associated Millon patterns added)

In addition, the charismatic leader "rarely permits himself to be outflanked" [Dominant, Ambitious] and rarely "suffers health problems that tend to parallel difficult and critical periods in office" (pp. 930, 931; associated MIDC patterns added).

Kim's weak loadings on the Conscientious (Scale 6) pattern, along with his primary elevation on the Outgoing (Scale 4) pattern and his secondary elevation on the Dauntless (Scale 1B) pattern, suggest that he is *not* likely to display Simonton's "deliberative" leadership style, which conceptually corresponds to the "Big Five" Conscientiousness factor. According to Simonton (1988), the deliberative leader in American politics

commonly "understands [the] implications of his decisions; exhibits depth of comprehension" ..., is "able to visualize alternatives and weigh long term consequences" ..., "keeps himself thoroughly informed; reads briefings [and] background reports" ..., is "cautious, conservative in action" ..., and only infrequently "indulges in emotional outbursts." (p. 931)

As a *nondeliberative* leader, Kim would be inclined "to force decisions to be made prematurely," lose sight of his limitations, and place "political success over effective policy" (pp. 930, 931). Based on his personality profile (but cognizant of the pitfalls of applying a U.S.-derived model cross-culturally to North Korea), those qualities could plausibly hamper Kim's executive performance.

Etheredge's Two-Dimensional Interpersonal Generalization Foreign Policy Theory

Lloyd Etheredge (1978) and Margaret Hermann (1987) developed personality-based models of foreign policy leadership orientation that can be employed rationally and intuitively to enhance and complement the predictive utility of Millon's model with respect to leadership performance in the arena of international relations.

Regarding foreign policy orientation, Kim's profile most closely resembles what Etheredge (1978), in his "four-fold speculative typology" of "fundamental personality-based differences in orientation towards America's preferred operating style and role in the international system"

(p. 434), has called the “high-dominance extrovert.” Etheredge contends that high-dominance extraverts (such as U.S. presidents Theodore and Franklin Roosevelt, John F. Kennedy, and Lyndon B. Johnson) share high-dominance introverts’ tendency “to use military force”

[b]ut in general ... are more flexible and pragmatic, more varied in the wide range and scope of major foreign policy initiatives. ... [In contrast to high-dominance introverts, they] want to lead rather than contain. They advocate change, seek to stir up things globally.... [and] are relatively more interested in *inclusion* [compared with high-dominance introverts, who favor exclusion], initiating programs and institutions for worldwide leadership and cooperative advance on a wide range of issues. (p. 449)

Hermann’s Foreign Policy Role Orientation Model

Etheredge’s high-dominance extravert is similar in character to the “active-independent” orientation to foreign affairs in Margaret Hermann’s (1987) sixfold typology of foreign policy role orientations. Hermann’s taxonomy pertains specifically to African leaders, which renders it particularly relevant to cross-cultural analysis. *Active-independent* leaders, though recognizing the importance of other nations, are self-reliant and prefer to participate in international affairs on their own terms and without engendering a dependent relationship with other countries (p. 168).

In terms of personal political style, they “[s]eek a variety of information before making a decision; examine carefully the possible consequences of alternatives under consideration for dealing with a problem; [and] cultivate relationships with a diverse group of nations” (Hermann, 1987, p. 169).

The foreign policy resulting from an active-independent orientation is generally “focused on economic and security issues.” The behavior of these leaders is “usually positive in tone but involves little commitment” because they “shun commitments that limit maneuverability and ... independence” (Hermann, 1987, p. 169).

Steinberg’s Framework for Inferring Leadership Style from Personality

Blema Steinberg (2008), in collaboration with the present author, endeavored to establish, on a rational-intuitive basis, a predictive model for inferring leadership style from MIDC-derived personality patterns by hypothesizing the influence of each personality prototype on leadership performance.

Employing executive leadership-style models developed by Hermann and Preston (1995) and Kaarbo (1997; Kaarbo & Hermann, 1998), as adapted by Steinberg (2008, pp. 349–356) and Immelman (2011), Kim Jong-un’s psychological profile raises the following generalized expectancies regarding his likely leadership style in a broad range of contexts relevant to executive leadership performance:

Leadership motives. Kim’s outgoing nature suggests a substantial need for popular approval and a striving for *self-validation* and the distinct likelihood that he will be more *pragmatic* than ideological in pursuing his political objectives. This tendency may be reinforced by Kim’s

accommodating tendency, which is similarly characterized by affiliation needs and a personal concern with issues of self-validation, in conjunction with a pragmatic political outlook.

Leadership orientation. Given his outgoing personality and conciliatory tendency, Kim will likely be more *relationship oriented* than goal directed, with a distinctive leadership interest in containing conflict and disagreement and focused more on policy *processes* rather than on policy achievement in a highly goal-oriented fashion. This implies that he will be more likely to take an interest in maintaining good relations with allies and negotiation partners than in accomplishing ideological goals at any cost. Furthermore, he is likely to place a high premium on loyalty.

Job performance. In terms of energy and time invested in the leadership role, outgoing leaders, despite being more relationship- than task oriented, are likely to be more *tireless* than circumscribed in terms of energy invested in the office — particularly if they also happen to be high on dominance, as is the case with Kim. However, this orientation may be offset by Kim's accommodating tendency, which suggests he may at times revert to a more circumscribed, casual, relaxed, *laissez-faire* leadership style.

Management style. In organizing and managing the decision-making process, Kim, as a primarily outgoing leader, will likely be highly involved, acting as an *arbitrator* or *consensus builder* across factional lines — a tendency reinforced by his secondary accommodating traits. However, the dominant aspect of his personality will impel him to act as a strong *advocate* for his own views and positions in areas where it matters most to him personally.

Information management strategy. Given his outgoing personality pattern (associated with social approval and conflict avoidance), interpersonal skill as an arbitrator and consensus builder, and relationship-oriented leadership style, Kim will likely exhibit an *intermediate degree of involvement* in managing information. This will predispose him to seek information and policy-relevant data both in-house (i.e., close advisors, members of his administration, civil service bureaucrats) and from a variety of independent sources — though his accommodating tendency (associated with a high premium placed on interpersonal trust) will likely result in a preference for obtaining information and policy-relevant data in-house from close advisors.

Executive style. In dealing with senior members of the ruling party, Kim, as an outgoing leader, is likely to be highly involved and to behave in a relatively *cooperative/harmonious* fashion. That inclination will be reinforced by his accommodating tendency.

Media relations. In the realm of media relations, the outgoing, relatively accommodating Kim is likely to be relatively *open* and accessible within the constraints imposed by an authoritarian regime.

Public relations. In relating to the public, outgoing leaders such as Kim typically are *active* (preferring direct engagement), preferring to articulate and defend their policies in person. However, in highly contentious situations Kim's accommodating, conflict-averse tendency may predispose him to relying on senior government officials to act as surrogates or proxies to articulate policy positions.

“The Art of the Deal” — Negotiating with Kim Jong-un

A primary Outgoing (Scale 3) pattern infused with secondary Accommodating (Scale 4) features — as is the case with Kim Jong-un — points to a personality composite that can be described as a *conciliatory extravert*. Following Millon (Millon, 1996, p. 374; Millon & Davis, 2000, pp. 242–243), this personality amalgam may be summarized as follows:

Conciliatory extraverts want to be liked and are driven to seek social approval. To achieve this goal, they typically act in a gracious, benevolent, neighborly manner — freely complimenting, praising, or commending others — and expect the same in return. They want to be seen as well-intentioned, which they are inclined to convey through genuine acts of goodwill. When disagreements occur, they are inclined to smooth things over and adopt an appeasing attitude, even when it requires them to yield by sacrificing ground, compromising their own desires, or conceding important points. Moreover, they are reluctant to retaliate against those who cannot be placated.

Interpersonal Maneuvers to Maximize Leverage and Gain Compliance in Negotiations

Embargoed

Continued on next page

Continued from previous page

Embargoed

Conclusion

Framed in terms of heuristic leadership models in political psychology, Kim appears to be temperamentally *active-positive*, with an *active-independent* orientation to foreign affairs and *high-dominance extraversion* as his preferred operating style in the international system. It may be inferred on the basis of his primary Outgoing personality pattern, infused with secondary Accommodating qualities, that Kim will be inclined to *congenial-cooperative* behavior in negotiations; a generalized expectancy for leaders with this particular psychological predisposition is to behave in a manner that is gracious, jovial, socially gregarious, agreeable, accommodating, and obliging in relating to others, with an underlying attitude of benevolence and neighborliness and a preference for avoiding conflict and seeking harmony with others. It should be noted, however, that the expression of these personal characteristics likely will be structurally constrained by historical antecedents, the immediate situation, and sociocultural and political contexts.

References

- American Psychiatric Association. (1987). *Diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders* (3rd ed., rev.). Washington, DC: Author.
- American Psychiatric Association. (1994). *Diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders* (4th ed.). Washington, DC: Author.
- American Psychiatric Association. (2013). *Diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders* (5th ed.). Washington, DC: Author.
- Barber, J. D. (1992). *The presidential character: Predicting performance in the White House* (4th ed.). Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall. (Originally published 1972)
- Etheredge, L. S. (1978). Personality effects on American foreign policy, 1898–1968: A test of interpersonal generalization theory. *American Political Science Review*, 72, 434–451.
- Greenstein, F. I. (1992). Can personality and politics be studied systematically? *Political Psychology*, 13, 105–128.
- Hermann, M. G. (1987). Assessing the foreign policy role orientations of sub-Saharan African leaders. In S. G. Walker (Ed.), *Role theory and foreign policy analysis* (pp. 161–198). Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Hermann, M. G., & Preston, J. T. (1995). Presidents, advisers, and foreign policy: The effects of leadership style on executive arrangements. *Political Psychology*, 15(1), 75–96.
- Immelman, A. (1993). The assessment of political personality: A psychodiagnostically relevant conceptualization and methodology. *Political Psychology*, 14, 725–741.
- Immelman, A. (1998). The political personalities of 1996 U.S. presidential candidates Bill Clinton and Bob Dole. *Leadership Quarterly*, 9(3), 335–366.
- Immelman, A. (2002). The political personality of U.S. president George W. Bush. In L. O. Valenty & O. Feldman (Eds.), *Political leadership for the new century: Personality and behavior among American leaders* (pp. 81–103). Westport, CT: Praeger. Retrieved from Digital Commons website: http://digitalcommons.csbsju.edu/psychology_pubs/52/
- Immelman, A. (2003). Personality in political psychology. In I. B. Weiner (Series Ed.), T. Millon & M. J. Lerner (Vol. Eds.), *Handbook of psychology: Vol. 5. Personality and social psychology* (pp. 599–625). Hoboken, NJ: Wiley.
- Immelman, A. (2005). Political psychology and personality. In S. Strack (Ed.), *Handbook of personology and psychopathology* (pp. 198–225). Hoboken, NJ: Wiley.
- Immelman, A. (2011). *Theoretical links between personality patterns and leadership style*. Unpublished manuscript, Unit for the Study of Personality in Politics, St. John's University and the College of St. Benedict, Collegeville and St. Joseph, MN.

- Immelman, A. (2014). *Millon inventory of diagnostic criteria manual* (3rd ed., rev.). Unpublished manuscript, Unit for the Study of Personality in Politics, College of St. Benedict and St. John's University, St. Joseph and Collegeville, MN.
- Immelman, A. (2015). *Millon inventory of diagnostic criteria* (3rd ed., rev.). Unpublished instrument, Unit for the Study of Personality in Politics, College of St. Benedict and St. John's University, St. Joseph and Collegeville, MN.
- Immelman, A. (2016, October). *The political personality of 2016 Republican presidential nominee Donald J. Trump* (Working Paper No. 1.2). Collegeville and St. Joseph, MN: St. John's University and the College of St. Benedict, Unit for the Study of Personality in Politics. Retrieved from Digital Commons website: http://digitalcommons.csbsju.edu/psychology_pubs/103/
- Immelman, A. (2018, April). *The personality profile of North Korean supreme leader Kim Jong-un* (Working Paper No. 2.0). Collegeville and St. Joseph, MN: St. John's University and the College of St. Benedict, Unit for the Study of Personality in Politics. Retrieved from Digital Commons website: https://digitalcommons.csbsju.edu/psychology_pubs/119/
- Kaarbo, J. (1997). Prime minister leadership styles in foreign policy decision-making: A framework for research. *Political Psychology*, 18(3), 553–581.
- Kaarbo, J., & Hermann, M. G. (1998). Leadership styles of prime ministers: How individual differences affect the foreign policymaking process. *Leadership Quarterly*, 9(3), 243–263.
- Millon, T. (1969). *Modern psychopathology: A biosocial approach to maladaptive learning and functioning*. Philadelphia: W. B. Saunders. (Reprinted 1985 by Waveland Press, Prospect Heights, IL)
- Millon, T. (1986a). A theoretical derivation of pathological personalities. In T. Millon & G. L. Klerman (Eds.), *Contemporary directions in psychopathology: Toward the DSM-IV* (pp. 639–669). New York: Guilford.
- Millon, T. (1986b). Personality prototypes and their diagnostic criteria. In T. Millon & G. L. Klerman (Eds.), *Contemporary directions in psychopathology: Toward the DSM-IV* (pp. 671–712). New York: Guilford.
- Millon, T. (1990). *Toward a new personology: An evolutionary model*. New York: Wiley.
- Millon, T. (1991). Normality: What may we learn from evolutionary theory? In D. Offer & M. Sabshin (Eds.), *The diversity of normal behavior: Further contributions to normatology* (pp. 356–404). New York: Basic Books.
- Millon, T. (with Weiss, L. G., Millon, C. M., & Davis, R. D.). (1994). *Millon Index of Personality Styles manual*. San Antonio, TX: Psychological Corporation.
- Millon, T. (with Davis, R. D.). (1996). *Disorders of personality: DSM-IV and beyond* (2nd ed.). New York: Wiley.
- Millon, T. (2003). Evolution: A generative source for conceptualizing the attributes of personality. In I. B. Weiner (Series Ed.), T. Millon & M. J. Lerner (Vol. Eds.), *Handbook of psychology: Vol. 5. Personality and social psychology* (pp. 3–30). Hoboken, NJ: Wiley.

- Millon, T., & Davis, R. D. (2000). *Personality disorders in modern life*. New York: Wiley.
- Millon, T., & Everly, G. S., Jr. (1985). *Personality and its disorders: A biosocial learning approach*. New York: Wiley.
- Oldham, J. M., & Morris, L. B. (1995). *The new personality self-portrait* (Rev. ed.). New York: Bantam Books.
- Renshon, S. A. (1996). *The psychological assessment of presidential candidates*. New York: New York University Press.
- Simonton, D. K. (1988). Presidential style: Personality, biography, and performance. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 55, 928–936.
- Steinberg, B. S. (2008). *Women in power: The personalities and leadership styles of Indira Gandhi, Golda Meir, and Margaret Thatcher*. Montreal & Kingston: McGill–Queen’s University Press.
- Strack, S. (1997). The PACL: Gauging normal personality styles. In T. Millon (Ed.), *The Millon inventories: Clinical and personality assessment* (pp. 477–497). New York: Guilford.