

▶ Chapter 4

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## North Korean Society and Values in Transition ——The Impact of the Emergence of the Market and a Decreasing Birthrate and Aging Population

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[Key Points]

- Since the 1990s, North Korean society has witnessed the weakening of collectivist values and growth of individualistic values, the emergence of cracks in the fabric of society due to the unequal distribution of wealth between classes, intergenerational conflicts and gaps, and a change in the mindset of the North Korean people due to the influx of information and culture from outside its borders.
- However, these changes have not developed into political change and they appear to remain a matter of personal choice.
- Since Kim Jong-un came to power, North Korea's focus has been economic development. In addition to measures such as the granting of greater autonomy to companies, the strengthening of material incentives, greater openness to the outside world, and the expansion of the tourism industry, cultural changes are also emerging, as can be seen from the example of the Moranbong Band.
- The changes that have occurred to date have the potential to lead to political change, but it would be fair to say that the North Korean administration has accepted these changes and internalized them as institutions.



Key Data

## Change in North Korea: Factors and Modality

Factors Contributing to Change	Modality of Change
Introduction of the market	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Weakening of state planning and expansion of the market economy</li></ul>
Influx of information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Influx of information from outside North Korea and the cultural impact thereof</li></ul>
Introduction of technology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• New technology and changing cultural values</li></ul>
Emergence of a generation gap	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Conflict between the values of the new and old generations in terms of culture, morals, etc.</li><li>• Split in attitudes to reform and opening up</li></ul>
Cultural transformation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Rediscovery of personal life and greater diversity in consumption</li></ul>

Source: From Jang Dal-jung et al. (2013), *Lectures in Contemporary North Korean Studies*