Constitutional Handbook on Korean Unification

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Introduction
Political and Social Issues
Law Issues
Economic Issues

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Note about the Project

Due to a number of organizational and political intricacies, the publication of the final report was much delayed. This is a "preprint" of my own contribution (chapter) to this report. To some extent this chapter is self-contained, but obviously it was designed to fit into a much more comprehensive treatment and would gain from being read in this larger context. Initially, the following scholars were supposed to contribute (affiliations as of fall 1998).

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Political Culture and Mass Sentiment

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Political Culture and Mass Sentiment

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Introduction

In this chapter, we will focus on *mass sentiment* towards unification, both as a factor of accelerating or slowing down actions and initiatives of the political elite affecting the process that hopefully will lead to unification at some point and as a crucial element for the legitimacy and stability of an emerging new democratic order for all of Korea. This project is based on the vision of a peacefully unified democratic Korea. In 1998/99, when most of this chapter was written, this was nothing but a vision. The unexpected thaw in intra Korean relationships, the historic summit of June 2000, and subsequent more concrete steps to bring the North and the South closer together have raised hopes that important steps towards unification can be achieved in the foreseeable future. However, it is too early to determine the true significance of the events in the summer of 2000 for the long-term goal of peaceful Korean unification and it is prudent to remain aware of the continuing differences and the difficulties still lying ahead.

Preceding chapters analyze and discuss constitutional settings and specific institutional arrangements most suited to establish such a political order. These chapters also discuss transitional measures and possible changes in the current South Korean arrangements as a means to pave the way for reaching the ultimate goal. Constitutional and institutional reforms are matters largely determined by discourse among the elites and by collective political action. The intermediation of political interests via political parties and interest groups is thoroughly analyzed in the two preceding chapters. However, a democratic system cannot function without the consent and approval of the people no matter how indirect (via elections) or direct (referenda), how conventional (using institutional channels) or unconventional (spontaneous protests, demonstrations, civil disobedience) mass participation may be. The distinguishing trait of any type of working liberal democracy is competition among the political elite and a reciprocal

relationship between interest articulation of the masses and of the elites[1]. On the one hand, mass sentiment defines the range of viable policy options while -- on the other hand -- mass sentiment is also shaped and molded by the views of the political elite.

We will refrain from a futile discussion about whether and/or how much mass sentiment is manipulated by the elites, but rather try to describe its dynamics over time. However, it would be naive to take mass sentiment -- as reflected in the responses to public opinion polls -- at face value. It is essential to interpret survey data against the backdrop of the larger political context to contribute to a fuller understanding of the existing political culture and its change over time.[2] In particular, we need to view attitudes and opinions about unification in the larger context of further developing the democratic system in South Korea and relative to the current economic and political situation. Obviously, a very important piece of this analysis will be missing: information about mass sentiment in North Korea. In contrast to former Communist countries in Eastern Europe (e.g., East Germany, Hungary, USSR) where some public opinion research was done though results were kept secret at the time (Kuechler 1998b), data of this kind simply do not exist for North Korea. How the North Koreans truly feel about their current regime, whether they view unification as desirable at all and, if so, at what terms will remain a matter of speculation. The only available information comes from reports by defectors, but these are typically biased and of questionable value in gauging the opinions and belief of the average North Korean.[3] Given this

[1] Liberal democracies differ in the institutional arrangements and the preferred mode of conflict resolution for this competition placing varying emphasis on consensus building versus simple majority rule. Again, the advantages and disadvantages of various types of democracy for the Korean context are discussed in the preceding chapters.

[2] It is beyond the scope of this chapter to review the pitfalls of the survey method in any detail. In addition, most methodological rules to ensure the validity of survey responses are based on research conducted in the Western democracies of North America and Western Europe. It is probably necessary to adjust some of these rules to other cultural contexts. However, this issue has hardly been studied systematically; see Kuechler (1998b) for a discussion of the proliferation of the survey method and its inherent problems.

[3] Obviously, defectors can provide valuable insights into the inner working of the North Korean system, but (continued)

lack of information, it appears prudent to assume larger rather than smaller obstacles to unification, e.g., overestimate the degree of successful ideological indoctrination (e.g., support for *juche*) rather than anticipate a widespread eagerness to succumb to an order similar to that in the South. No matter what the exact terms will be, even in the best of all circumstances, unification poses a tremendous challenge and requires significant adjustments on both sides to be truly successful – moving beyond a merger of rules and institutions to a nation unified in spirit. The German experience provides valuable lessons of potential pitfalls and unintended consequences in this process. A decade after formal unification, many – overly optimistic – expectations remain unfulfilled. And while German unification appears to be irreversible, and a solid majority of East Germans expresses mostly satisfaction with their own (economic) situation in united Germany, there are many signs that the Germans in the West and in the East are growing apart rather than growing together (Kuechler 1998a, Staab 1998). We will review the German experience for this very reason. However, we need to be aware of distinct differences in history, political experience, and culture between Germany and Korea. What worked in the German context, may not work for Korea; and what created serious problems in the German unification process may be of lesser significance in the Korean context. In comparing the two contexts, we will pay special attention to (latent) problems with the current South Korean system, potential threats to system support and stability, since unresolved issues are very likely to come to the forefront under the stress of a unification. This comparison will also provide the larger political and social context for the presentation and discussion of public opinion data for South Korea.

Unification context: Differences between Germany and Korea

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these reports are much more relevant for understanding and anticipating possible rifts within the ruling class and associated policy changes.

Despite the obvious commonality of national separation, with one part of the country under the influence of a Communist superpower and one part closely tied to the United States, the situation between Germany on the eve of unification and current Korea differs sharply in many important aspects.

History and sense of national unity. A united Korea first emerged well over a millennium ago with the establishment of the Shilla Dynasty in A.D. 668 which gave way to the Koryo Dynasty in 936 which in turn was replaced by Choson in 1392 lasting for over 500 years -- as any text on Korean history will tell. The Japanese annexation of Korea in 1910 ended its independence, but Koreans were still united and bound by a distinct language and a clearly defined territory. The establishment of two separate Korean states in 1948 following the occupation by the United States and the USSR after Japan's defeat in World War II, then, is a rather recent event. In a longer historical perspective, it may turn out as nothing more than a brief interlude.

The formation of the German national state, in contrast, occurred not before 1871 and its consolidation was impeded by two World Wars and a rather rapid succession of drastic regime changes from monarchy to democracy to authoritarian (barbarian) rule and back to democracy. At no time, did the German national state include all ethnic Germans, all native speakers of German – with the arguable exception of some early phase during World War II. The concept of a united Germany, then, is rather elusive and has been subject to change over time (e.g., Geiss 1997). Neither language nor geographical boundaries define in genuine ways what a united Germany should consist of. For example, until the *Ostpolitik* of the 1970s and the legal recognition of the boundaries between East Germany and Poland as final, West Germany entertained the idea of unification within the boundaries of 1937 (before the start of Hitler's annexations) bowing to the pressure of a significant segment of refugees and expellees from German territories incorporated into other countries (mostly Poland) after the war.

In comparison, then, Korea has a much stronger, more natural case for unification and we would expect a much more distinct sense of national togetherness in today's Korea than in the Germany of the late 1980s – were it not for the Korean War. The prevailing view in the West is that the war was started in June 1950 by an unprovoked act of aggression by North Korea in an attempt to unify Korea by force. However, some historians (e.g., Cumings 1997:247-260) point to the fact that the war was preceded by about a year of ongoing limited military attacks in which both North and South Korea took the role of the aggressor. There are indications that South Korea also entertained plans of a military unification – at a time when the North was still engaged in the Chinese civil war and appeared to be weak. Whatever will finally emerge as the historical truth, the Korean civil war caused a great number of casualties and left deep-rooted suspicions on both sides about the other side's commitment to refrain from military aggression. For the most part, North and South Korea have seen each other as enemies basically ready to exploit any perceived weakness by military means.[4]

The situation in Germany was quite different, never anywhere close to a civil war. There were threats to take over West Berlin – located in the middle of East German territory – but the USSR not East Germany was the driving force behind these threats. And there were casualties along the German-German border, but predominantly caused by East German border guards shooting at East Germans trying the flee the country. The Germans, then, never suffered the trauma of a civil war, of killing each other, which made it much easier for the West Germans to differentiate between the "bad" ruling elites and the "good" average East Germans. Also, the "bad" East German regime was hardly ever seen as a threat to West German security.

[4] There is little, if any hard evidence that -- at least during the last ten years -- South Korea has indeed entertained any plans of aggressive military action against the North. It is also doubtful that North Korea would be able to carry out a successful invasion of the South. I am simply pointing to mutual perceptions. And what people perceive as real needs to be treated as part of reality from a sociological point of view – irrespective of factual truth.

Establishment of a democratic order. By the late 1980s, West Germany was a firmly established liberal democracy with solidly grounded political and legal institutions and widespread consensus on basic democratic norms and values (e.g., Kuechler 1993). West Germany had successfully overcome several challenges of its political order, and satisfaction with the political system was at a high level. Obviously, this statement needs to be understood in a larger historical and international frame. System support, e.g., as measured by survey questions concerning satisfaction with "the way democracy works in Germany" has shown fluctuation over time, but its average level is high compared to the European neighbors (e.g., Kuechler 1991). On the other hand, the genre "politicians" has never attracted a whole lot of confidence in the German public, and the role "parties" actually play has come under increased scrutiny. All this criticism, however, has not led to significant alienation with the political, social, and economic order (Kuechler and Dalton 1990).

In contrast, South Korea's experience with a democratic system is still limited. The constitution of the *Sixth Republic* was approved just some 12 years ago in October 1987 and the election of President Roh in 1987 was the first constitutional transfer of power in Korea's history. And while the election of Kim Dae-Jung as President in December 1997 proved elections to be a working mechanism to shift executive power between competing political camps, the ensuing haggling over the appointment of a Prime Minister and the election of a Speaker seriously impeded parliamentary work and raised doubts about the efficacy of this specific democratic system. But the discussion about a reform of the political system started even before the elections were decided. As a concession to the ULD for their support of Kim Dae-Jung in the Presidential race, NCNP and ULD agreed to push for the introduction of parliamentary system in case of victory. It is doubtful, however, whether this continuing debate will strengthen the public's confidence in democracy. As we will discuss in more detail below, the Korean public has quite ambiguous feelings about

democracy. Democratic norms and values -- as understood in the West – are not yet fully internalized.

It is important to note that the United States has taken very different approaches in shaping the political system in Germany and in Korea after World War II. In Germany, the United Sates engaged in a massive reeducation program to foster democratic norms and values and they monitored the drafting of a new constitution and its implementation very closely. It is doubtful whether the reeducation efforts would have been successful by themselves, but the West Germans experienced democracy concurrently with a drastic increase in economic well being. The making of a democratic society and the 'economic miracle' are intimately linked; the Germans experienced democracy as an efficient means to solve economic problems and to lead a country from the ruins of war to unprecedented prosperity. In their classic "Civic Culture" study, Almond and Verba (1963) still questioned the Germans' commitment to democracy and wondered what would happen if the economic fortunes turned. But by the late 1970s, after weathering an economic downturn and a change in executive power via elections, West Germany's successful democratization was widely acknowledged (e.g., Almond and Verba 1980).

In contrast, the United States did not take much interest in fostering democracy in South Korea after the end of World War II. Instead, support for the dictatorial regime of Syngman Rhee, was seen as the best course of action to stop a further spread of Communism and to protect U.S. interests. Notwithstanding some unhappiness with Rhee and other autocratic leaders following him (Park, Chun) and sporadic efforts to protect human rights and democratic leaders, the United States typically chose not to intervene on behalf of the democratic movement -- from Park's military coup to squash the short-lived Second Republic (South Korea's first attempt at democratic

rule in 1960/61) to the Kwangju massacre in May 1980 paving the way for Chun to usurp power.[5] Very much in contrast to Germany, South Koreans did not experience the United States as an uncompromising champion of democracy and human rights. For many years, advocacy for democracy was linked to left wing activities, to alleged anti-Americanism and to support for the North Korean regime. In addition, even the current Sixth Republic did not provide a fresh start in that Chun's hand picked successor (Roh) managed to win the 1988 Presidential elections and succeed him after all. South Korea, then, has hardly had sufficient time to develop a deeper commitment to democracy as the optimal form of political rule. And the question remains what form of democracy, what kind of political structure would best serve its needs.

Integration into the Western World. Beyond the fact that it had established itself as a stable Western democracy politically and that it had established good relations with all its neighbors, West Germany had found its place in the world, actively seeking further European integration as well as staying firmly committed to the Atlantic partnership with the United States. Culturally, West Germany had fully embraced and accepted American hegemony. Germans start instructions in a second language in sixth grade (at the latest), and English is the language of choice for the overwhelming majority. Positive sentiment towards the Americans runs high in the German public (clearly exceeding sentiment for the French or the British), American goods and services are easily accepted by the consumer, and the United States is a highly popular vacation destination. Even at the height of the student movement in the late 1960s and 1970s, anti-Americanism did not spread far and, typically, a clear distinction was made between the American government (of Johnson and Nixon) and the American people. The root for this strong pro-American sentiment lies in the role the United States played in protecting West Germany and West Berlin from Soviet

[5] This brief summary is based on Cumings' (1997:337-393) description of the democratic movement 1960-1996.

aggression. The Berlin airlift of 1948 -- keeping the connection to West Germany and providing essential supplies after the blockade of surface access -- is still remembered with much gratitude after 50 years. And John F. Kennedy was arguably more popular in Germany than he ever was in his own country -- not the least due to his swift and unequivocal show of support after the erection of the Berlin Wall in 1961. After Hitler, nationalism and patriotism were in bad repute in Germany, there was little to be proud of as a German. To some extent, then, the United States provided a cosmopolitan symbol to attach to. And even some resurgence of national pride – actively fostered by conservative forces in Germany – has not altered this pattern. Unlike France, Germany does not feel a need to defend its cultural heritage against an American *Überfremdung*.

As discussed above, South Korea's experience with the United States is different. In particular, there are lingering doubts about the United States' commitment to containing the North – from President Carter's plan of a unilateral troop withdrawal to ongoing suspicions about lack of cooperation and withholding of information within the joint military command. Koreans may feel that they need the United States and its troops, but the relationship is short on genuine affection. A (latent) Anti-Americanism -- complex and ambiguous -- seems to prevail and there is a distinct view that Koreans have "different values and interests as people in the West."[6]

(West) Germany was fully integrated into the West, had embraced the American hegemony on every level whereas South Korea is still in search of its permanent role and function in the world order. This is not necessarily a hindrance to unification. As a matter of fact, this may be an advantage for any kind of unification other than a complete absorption (as in Germany). However,

[6] The New Korea Barometer Survey of June 1997 (Shin 1997) – a national representative survey of 1,117 Koreans -- shows that only 19 percent felt that Koreans have (mostly) values and interests as people in the West, and 37 percent felt "definitely" a difference in values and interests (question 44d). And, even in June 1997, long before the IMF bailout, 30 percent blamed the Americans "a lot" and another 51 percent blamed them "somewhat" for their "country's political problems." North Korea and even Japan were viewed (somewhat) more positively (question 24a, f, g).

as an unresolved conflict within South Korea it also adds to the uncertainty about how well Korea will be able to cope with the stress of a unification.

Economic strength. Economically, West Germany had been a dominant economic power in Europe offering its citizen a high level of affluence, job security, and social benefits. Arguably, West Germany offered the highest standard of living in the world.[7] South Korea has risen to the 11th largest economy in the world, and its economic development in the last ten years has been considered a model, a success story par excellence. However, this situation changed drastically with the monetary crisis emerging in late 1997 and the ensuing IMF agreement. Most of 1998 and the first part of 1999 were marred by rising unemployment and a general sense that a quick resolution of the economic problems was not likely. By late 1999, however, at least unemployment was curbed and started to decline and foreign currency reserves were sufficient again. Still, relatively little progress has been made in fundamental structural reforms and President Kim Dae-Jung's declaration that Korea had completely overcome the foreign exchange crisis in November 1999 (see also his opening remarks at the "International Conference on Economic Crisis and Restructuring in Korea" in December 1999) may have been a bit premature. While the need for structural changes is widely recognized, there is considerable disagreement about both scope and mode of implementation of such changes. Despite the positive signs, though, it will take South Korea more time to implement necessary reforms and to create a stable economic and social environment. While economic indicators may show a quick recovery, the damage to the public confidence in the strength of the economy may be much more lasting.

[7] Obviously, an indicator like per capita GNP would not put Germany ahead of the United States. However, if one also considers quality-of-life factors (numbers of paid vacation days, average work hours per week, health and maternity benefits, etc.) and looks beyond statistical means and per capita measures to complete distributions (taking variation and spread into account), one may well make the case that Germany offered (and still offers) a higher standard of living to a larger share of its citizens than any other country.

Notwithstanding a significant gap in productivity and standard of living between West Germany and East Germany, the East German economy was strong in comparison to its neighbors in the East. The basic needs of the East Germans were taken care of. In contrast, North Korea has been confronted with a string of crises, struggling to provide even a very basic level of food, shelter, and health care to its citizens. The task of eliminating economic inequities is even more daunting in the Korean case, the cost of unification in all likelihood significantly higher than in Germany. And for some time to come South Korea will not be in a position to afford massive transfer payments to the North -- even assuming that the more modest cost estimates are realistic.[8] An affluent (West) Germany, then, contrasts with a South Korea just having faced severe economic hardship and considerable social strain.

Internal cohesion. The West Germany of the late 1980s was remarkably free of political, social, regional or cultural cleavages. Over the years, political preferences such as vote choices as well as social opportunities like access to education or professional careers had become less and less determined by class membership, religious affiliation, and/or regional origin. *Individualization* rather than group membership had become the driving force behind social processes in German society. And though the state of Bavaria takes pride in being special and different[9], there were no serious regional conflicts – in contrast to Spain, Belgium, or Italy and in stark contrast to South Korea. Here, regional cleavages are still strong and dominate electoral behavior to this very day (see the discussion of the 1997 Presidential elections below). In addition, many divisions remain

[8] For an overview of different cost estimates see e.g. Yang (1998:32) or Lee (in this volume).

[9] Formally, Bavaria has its own independent "Christian" (=conservative) party, the CSU, and the Christian Democrats (CDU) only exist in the rest of Germany. For all practical purposes, however, CDU and CSU have acted as one party notwithstanding at times heated intra-party squabbling. And while the CSU has dominated both federal and state elections in Bavaria since the end of WW II (in the early years in coalition with the *Bayernpartei* [BP] later merged into the CSU), the Bavarian capital of Munich has been governed by Social Democrats at various points in time.

from Korea's fight for democracy; between those who collaborated with or appeased to the dictatorial rulers of the past and those who fought for individual rights and democracy at great personal risk. Kim Dae Jung's election may be a symbol of national (South Korean) reconciliation, but it seems to be more a beginning of this process than its end. While East and West Germans had to overcome the estrangement between them – and are still working at it – Koreans need to overcome multiple cleavages potentially pitting underdeveloped and/or underprivileged regions in the South against the North.[10]

Information and mutual acquaintance. East Germans had relatively easy access to information about the West – especially via television. In addition, it was easy for retired people to obtain travel permits to the West, and this option was widely used. In contrast, North Koreans are much more effectively shut off from independent information and have to rely almost exclusively on government-controlled information. This information is extremely biased, painting the South Korean government as puppets and lackeys of the United States and Japan out to destroy the peace-loving and hard-working (North) Koreans.[11] While these gross exaggerations may seem as little effective to someone used to a free press and to a spectrum of differing viewpoints and opinions, in the absence of competing information and over time the government propaganda may have left an impact. As noted above, it is prudent to assume that hostile feelings about South Korea extend beyond the ruling class and its immediate benefactors (like the military and the bureaucracy).

And, looking at the situation from the other side, South Korea has long tried to control information

[10] The one serious cleavage that West Germany did face in the 1980s (and still faces) is the one between native Germans and foreigners (see e.g. Kuechler 1994). And though there are hardly any foreigners in East Germany, xenophobia there runs at least as high as in West Germany.

[11] This assessment is based on an analysis of the English language service of the North Korean News Agency available via the Web (http://www.kcna.co.jp/). It appears that style and tone of the KCNA releases are remarkably similar to that of its (former) East German counterpart.

about the North in similar ways. Article 7 of the National Security Law makes it a criminal offense to "praise anti-state groups" (such as the government of North Korea) or to disseminate material of such groups.[12] With the election of Kim Dae-Jung these policies have begun to change[13] and the government has released a large number of political prisoners – many of them held simply for their belief in communism and their refusal to recant their allegiance. West Germany had banned the original German Communist Party (KPD) in 1956, but had allowed a new Communist Party (DKP) to form in 1968 and to operate freely – though, like many other groups and organizations considered to be extreme, under the watchful eye of the German *Verfassungsschutz.*[14] However, in the1970s and in response to the emergence of a growing number of mostly student based Communist organizations and other groups challenging the existing order, German authorities officially barred avowed Communists from working for the government -- be it as teachers or as postal workers. This policy was denounced by a larger coalition of oppositional groups as *Berufsverbot* (prohibition to work), drawing a parallel to Nazi policies against Jews and other groups deemed undesirable. Unevenly enforced from the start and of decreasing relevance as the Communist groups waned, it serves as a reminder that West Germany's liberalism is contingent

[12] "Ordinary people do not have the information and knowledge and understanding to know what is wrong and what is good," the New York Times quoted Lt. Gen. Park Yong-ok, then the assistant defense minister and continued: "On that basis, it remains illegal in South Korea to listen to North Korean radio or watch North Korean television. Anyone can be imprisoned for speaking out in favor of the North Korean system, and opposition groups say there are still hundreds of political prisoners in South Korea, some of whom have been in prison for more than 20 years." (Kristof 1996) – And in the fall of 1997, the South Korean government decreed a blackout of *GeoCities*, a free web home page and e-mail service with over 1 million members worldwide, after it discovered a site providing (positive) information about the North Korean *juche* system hosted by the Australian GeoCities affiliate (Brekke 1997). See also the Amnesty International (1997) report on South Korea and Watanabe (1996) about the use of the NSL by the South Korean government to restrict the free flow of information.

[13] We will discuss policies related to unification in more detail below.

[14] The DKP remained in existence after unification considering itself as a party in the tradition of the Communist Party founded by Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg after WW I. It supports the PDS (the renamed ruling party of former East Germany) in election campaigns, but has not given up on the idea of a communist revolution – denounced by the major Communist parties throughout Western Europe. German authorities estimate its membership to be just around 6,000. And an attempt by the DKP to extend into East Germany was met with little success.

upon the lack of perceived threat. While the North Korean policies are no surprise, the restrictive policies in the South can only be explained by the deep seated suspicion about the North's ulterior motives and a profound feeling of vulnerability; remnants of the civil war, now over 40 years in the past but still awaiting a formal resolution and a credible renunciation of military force. Reconciliation has not made significant progress[15], but without open channels of communication and markedly increased personal interaction this will not change. In Korea, then, we have to anticipate a much more pronounced lack of mutual acquaintance and familiarity with the people, the life, the norms and values in the other part of the country -- if not downright hostility in certain segments of both populations.

Self-confidence and bargaining power. Right from the beginning, from the formation of two German states after World War II, West Germany was the dominant, the more successful the state – judged by almost any criterion. West Germany was considerably larger in territory (roughly twice as large), larger in population (roughly three times as large), more industrialized, and better prepared to succeed in a competitive global economy. Coincidentally, the division of Germany by the allied powers reflected a historical divide of the regions west and east of the Elbe river. Different heritage rules had led to much diversified landownership in the West, to a social culture fostering small business and entrepreneurship, whereas the East had remained a mostly agricultural society dominated by a relative small class of large landowners and masses of dependent farm workers well into the 20th century. But, more important than these historical differences and – possibly – a difference in preparedness for further economic growth and development, was the role of the United States on the one hand and of the USSR on the other.

[15] The Joint Communique of 1972 and its reaffirmation in form of the Agreement on Reconciliation, Nonaggression, and Exchanges and Cooperation of 1991were both promising starts, but there was little progress with the implementation of either one.

While West Germany received generous assistance as part of the European Recovery Plan (ERP – commonly known as Marshall Plan), the USSR exploited East Germany in many ways making it virtually impossible to keep up with West Germany in economic terms. And much of the collective self-confidence of the West Germans – or, negatively put, arrogance and condescension – rests on the economic achievements, their rise to an economic super power. West Germany never felt threatened by East Germany on any level, never felt other than vastly superior to the East.[16] The situation in Korea is quite different. The North is slightly larger in size (covering about 55 percent of the Korean territory) while the South is more densely populated. But the population ratio of about 2:1 is more even than in Germany. Economically, the North started out as the more developed, more industrialized part and, with assistance from both China and Russia as well as other socialist countries (see e.g. Fendler 1996), North Korea achieved impressive development and growth and was clearly ahead of the South till about the mid 1970s. Growth rates for North Korea were still modestly positive during the 1980s, but turned negative in the 1990s. The prevailing view is that this downturn was an unavoidable consequence of market distortions inherent in socialist development models in general and the overemphasis of self-reliance and independence in North Korea in particular (see, e.g., Kim 1998:223).[17] Only over the last 10 years, did the South Korean economy move ahead of the North, in part due to its own successful growth, in part to the concurrent decline of the North Korean economy.

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[16] The sole area of exception may be sports. Here, East Germany did make tremendous efforts to outdo the West, and to some extent they succeeded; but not until the 1970s and not in soccer – the most important sport in (West) Germany. As a matter of fact, the surprising win of the 1954 World Championship by the West German soccer team was an important step in rebuilding German self-confidence after two lost wars. And, these days, the inordinate amount of attention the – surely remarkable – success of a female South Korean golfer (Se-ri Pak) receives provides another example of the powerful symbolic value of athletic achievement for national pride especially in times of hardship and strain. Fittingly, Se-ri Pak rather than Kim Dae Jung appeared on the cover of the Asian edition of TIME magazine (of August 13, 1998) honoring Korea's 50th anniversary.

[17] A more optimistic assessment emphasizing transitional problems of shifting from heavy industries to high technologies is provided by Shen (1996).

Only then, South Korea became the "rich relative" that West Germany had always been. While the current problems with covering even basic needs (food) in North Korea are severe, it is doubtful whether the "affluence card" that Chancellor Kohl played so successfully in the German case has the same power of conviction for the people in North Korea. After all, the North Korean system manages to survive, and it is not plausible to explain its survival *exclusively* with the exercise of suppression and military rule. And, the economic problems surfacing in the fall 1997 in South Korea may raise further doubts about a development model committed to global competition and to at least economic integration into the West. Even if the ordinary people in North Korea are fully aware of the relatively recent affluence in the South, rising unemployment and labor strife may lend some credence to long-standing North Korean propaganda. Relatively speaking, *juche* may be gaining in attraction, at least as a symbol of an alternative way to national prosperity and internal peace.

The German situation was very lopsided with respect to relative bargaining power. With the first free elections in East Germany in March 1990 (*Volkskammerwahlen*), the majority of the East Germans had – as a matter of fact – authorized a friendly takeover by the West in exchange for a favorable, but economically unjustified exchange rate and the promise of rapid and continuing gains in affluence.[18] The leaders of the civil rights movements and any visions of a "humane socialism" were quickly abandoned at the polls.[19] As to Korea, it seems rather doubtful that a large majority of the North Koreans would find it attractive to simply adopt the social, political, and economic system of the South -- even if the current regime collapsed. It appears worthwhile

[18] It is a matter of scholarly debate whether the exchange in itself was a grave mistake or whether other economic policies like guaranteeing wage and salary increases not tied to productivity gains did more harm (see, e.g., Yoon 1996). Both measures, however, were motivated by a political, election-oriented strategy to sell unification as a quick way to affluence.

[19] Whether it was prudent on part of the West German leadership to take full advantage of this lopsided bargaining position is another issue that we will address below.

to entertain the hypothesis that there is a significant sentiment in favor of independence from Western dominance – even at the price of severe economic hardship. In spite of lopsided economic indicators, South and North Korea seem to be on a much more equal level with respect to bargaining power than the two Germanys had been.

Summary. German unification came unexpectedly, certainly for the public at large. However, in retrospect it appears that the stage had been set. Even without a long historical past of a unified Germany and rather diffuse concepts of a German nation, the Germans in the East and in the West had lived in largely peaceful coexistence, reasonably familiar with each other, and united in their strong desire for individual affluence. Still, the success of (formal) unification is under debate, and we will discuss the present situation in detail below. In contrast, Korea may not be ready for unification yet. The two Koreas have grown too much apart for a German-style unification by absorption to work – even ignoring the cost involved. Just by analyzing the contexts, it appears that a process of reacquainting and of national consensus building while maintaining two separate entities is necessary to lay the groundwork for a successful unification.

The state of German unification ten years after the fact[20]

National community. Whether German unification is more of a success or more of a failure depends on the point of view. Ten years after the fact, almost everyone will admit that the (overly) optimistic vision of East Germany as a land of milk and honey[21] was an illusion. The East German economy still faces serious structural problems, the standard of living in East Germany still lags behind that of the West, the process of eliminating these inequities is slowing rather than

[20] Large parts of this section are based on Kuechler (1998a), a summary (in German) of various findings presented at a symposium on the "Inner Wall" at the University of Cologne in September 1997. Since all contributions in the edited volume based on this symposium (Meulemann 1998) are in German, I will omit specific references.

[21] In Chancellor Kohl's original prose: *blühende Landschaften* or literally translated *flourishing countryside*.

accelerating despite an enormous amount of transfer payments.[22] But, on the other hand, there are tangible improvements in East Germany and in the life of the East Germans: new roads, new telecommunication systems, renovations and expansion of the housing stock, new plants and factories, new jobs (though not enough) and overall a significant improvement in the personal economic situation of the average citizen even in the eyes of the East Germans notwithstanding continuing high levels of dissatisfaction with the unification process on a more general level -- as many public opinion polls and surveys show. So, yes, the price tag was much higher than most expected; and, yes, the progress was not as quick and as comprehensive as promised, but those who are longing for the *status quo ante* are a relatively small minority – both in the West and in the East. In October 2000, the monthly Politbarometer poll showed that 88 percent of the respondents felt (in retrospect) that unifying Germany was the right thing to do. At the same time, less than 25 percent felt that the problems associated with unification have largely been solved, and over half of the respondents felt that East Germans and West Germans have "hardly" (if at all) come closer together. And a similar monthly poll, the DeutschlandTREND of September 1999, showed that a third of the respondents in both the East and the West were (mostly) dissatisfied with the course of the unification in Germany. Almost two thirds of the East German respondents felt that it would take over ten years to reach the same standard of living as in the West, while -- from a personal point of view more than half felt that they were among the winners of unification. Ambivalence abounds.

So, why all the talk about an *inner wall* (in Germany)? To a large extent, the use of this term was an attempt to frame the political debate, either -- by pointing to its very existence -- discrediting the policies of the Kohl government or -- by denying its existence -- to control the spin about the

[22] A number of recent economic indicators like unemployment rates, female labor force participation, salaries and wages demonstrate the inequities quite clearly (Statistisches Bundesamt 2000).

continuing problems. These problems rose to much prominence in public debate during the second legislative period (1994-1998) after unification. After a narrow reelection victory in 1994, the governing coalition led by Chancellor Kohl quickly lost popularity and trailed, at times badly, in the polls. Though closing the gap in the weeks before the election, the Kohl government was soundly beaten in the 1998 election. While these elections were by no means a referendum on unification, the lack of voter support in East Germany was an important factor. However, the new Social Democratic government under Chancellor Schröder has not fared much better with East German voters and the change in executive power has made little difference in overcoming the still remaining divisions. And whether the election of Angela Merkel, a former second-tier minister under Kohl from East Germany and secretary general of the CDU thereafter, as new party chair in the spring of 2000 has any long-term impact remains to be seen.

Beyond the 1998 elections and party politics, a very serious and important question for scholarly analysis remains: Have the Germans succeeded (yet) in rebuilding a *national community*? Do the Germans equally share trust and confidence in their political, social, and legal system; do they feel as equals on a fundamental level; do they share the same values and norms; do they believe in their government as providing social justice -- notwithstanding disputes and differences of opinion with respect to specific policies and measures? *National community* is not to be misunderstood as an obsolete ideal of a totally integrated, homogeneous society. Quite the contrary, the historic trend (at least in Europe) goes towards multi-cultural societies. Against this backdrop, (national) community refers to a fundamental consensus in a society on how to deal with diversity, on what is just and what is unjust, and to a shared trust in the basic institutions. It certainly goes beyond having common laws and common institutions.[23] National community is an important resource in

[23] For an opposite view -- dismissing the need for community -- see, e.g., Veen (1997) who is a senior researcher at a CDU-affiliated think tank (*Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung*).

times of difficulties and crises, a reservoir needed to overcome social and/or economic problems. Lack of community, in contrast, leads to deepening cleavages, a segregation of society into segments with strained relations and governed by mutual distrust. In the worst case scenario, these strained relations will turn into civil unrest or civil war, as in the ongoing conflict in the former Yugoslavia or as in the race riots in the United States in the 1960s – or, even more to the point, as in Yemen after the first (1990) unification attempt.[24] Obviously, Germany is not even close to such a situation, but -- as history shows -- such hostilities can have a long latency period and then erupt with little advance warning. While the Koreans have long recognized the importance of building national consensus as a prerequisite for unification (see section on current unification policies below), a similar debate did not take place in Germany or – at least – it had little impact on shaping actual unification policies.

Basic values. The existence or the degree of national community is difficult to determine in strict operational terms. Liberal (Western) democracies are characterized by pluralism and diversity, by freedom of speech and open criticism. And national community is more than just the sum of individual opinions. It is of little use to cast a wide net and enumerate any (statistically) significant differences one may find. Even marked differences may not indicate a serious lack of *community*, they can be of little consequence for the existence of an *inner wall*. A case in point (for Germany) are values and behavior related to church and religion. The survey by Klages and Gensicke[25]

[24] The 1994 Yemeni civil war has been analyzed by five international area experts including Michael Hudson of Georgetown University's Center for Contemporary Arab Studies (Al--Suwaidi 1995). In this analysis, the South's fear of Islamic fundamentalism emanating from the North is contrasted with Northern concerns of a Southern push to advance social progress at the expense of traditionalism.

[25] Helmut Klages, based at the university-level School of Administrative Sciences at Speyer, is arguably the most eminent scholar of value change in Germany. After an extensive survey on values and value change conducted in both parts of Germany in 1990 (summarized in Klages and Gensicke 1993), his research group replicated the study in early summer of 1997 with sample sizes of N=2000 in the West and N=1000 in the East (as reported in Meulemann 1998).

measures the importance of each of a set of 24 values on a seven-point scale; the only truly remarkable difference between East and West shows for the value "to believe in God" where the mean value in the East is 2.1 scale points lower than in the West.[26] However, what could potentially be a divisive cleavage given a general trend towards desecularization and religious fundamentalism in many countries like in the United States or in Algeria[27], is largely irrelevant for German society. Here, churches have continually lost influence despite massive support by the state – e.g., by collecting taxes for the established churches or by granting them seats on boards overseeing state-run radio and television stations. For the most part, people turn to the churches to provide rituals for individual events of mourning (deaths) and of celebration (births, marriages) and for collective festivities (Christmas), but, other than that, churches have little impact on how the individual leads his or her life.[28] And beyond churches, there is no significant religious grass root movement. So, even if not a single East German did believe in God or belonged to a church, the consequences for national community would be minuscule.

If not religion, then what else may stand in the way of national community in Germany? As mentioned already, no distinct and persistent pattern of differences across the remaining 23 values in the list used by the Klages group could be found. After belief in god, the next largest difference shows for *diligence & ambition* (Eastern mean higher by 0.42 points) followed by *high standard*

[26] The mean in the East was 2.5 compared to 4.6 in the West on a scale from 1 to 7 where the endpoints were labeled as 1 meaning "unimportant" and 7 meaning "extremely important".

[27] Obviously, there are important differences between the United States and Algeria in this respect. While religious conflict has led to armed conflict bordering on civil war in Algeria, desecularization in the United States is mostly peaceful (except for isolated bombings of abortion clinics and murders of health professionals performing abortions). However, the *Christian Coalition* has gained considerable influence on all levels of government and, more generally, there is an increased interest in religion and in religious studies of many varieties and not necessarily linked to established churches.

[28] As an example, a cross-national Gallup (1997) study on *Family Values* published in November 97 shows that only 9 percent of Germans (East and West combined) find it *morally wrong if unmarried couples have children* compared to 47 percent in the United States.

of living (East higher by 0.41 points), and *striving for security* (East higher by 0.36 points). West Germans put slightly more emphasis on *political activity* and on *preserving the old* where their means are by about a quarter point higher.[29] The differences for the remaining 18 values were smaller than 0.20 points. Not impressive in quantitative terms to start with, the few statistically significant differences can easily be explained by differences in the current situation of East Germans and West Germany. Responses in surveys can only show the *actualization* of values, the current importance of values relative to present living conditions. More emphasis is placed on needs where the fulfillment cannot be taken for granted. For example, a *high standard of living* or *job security* become more important if wages are low or jobs are scarce. There is little hard evidence, then, that there are genuine differences in fundamental values between East Germans and West Germans.

Further analyses, in particular an analysis by Michael Häder, show that there are also no significant differences in goals for raising children (*Erziehungsziele*). So, the values parents try to instill into the next generation are largely identical as well. On the other hand, there are some discrepancies. For example, the Klages survey presents the respondents with five comprehensive and partially conflicting *views on life* [30] and, on average, the East Germans express higher agreement with each single one than the West Germans. This may point to a higher level of ambivalent and/or not fully settled attitudes on part of the East Germans. More differences emerge

[29] The translations are literal and may not fully convey the semantic contents of the original German wording. *Am Alten festhalten* (preserving the old) intimates both preserving and keeping traditions as well as resistance to innovation. In East Germany, it may be also be interpreted as a preference for the old (Communist) system. *Politisch engagieren* (political activity) is laden with West German history where a period of wide spread political abstinence ("*Ohne mich*") in the 1950s and early 1960s was followed by a flourish of citizen initiatives and calls for more citizen say in everyday political decision making, the *era of new social movements* in the 1970s and 1980s (see, e.g., Dalton and Kuechler 1980).

[30] *Bedeutung von Lebenszielen* in German; example: "Especially today one needs to know what one wants to be successful in life" (Gerade heutzutage muss man wissen, was man will, um im Leben erfolgreich zu sein).

when using more complex statistical analyses moving away from comparing simple frequency distributions. For example, the Klages group finds some interesting differences between East and West by using their value typology.[31] According to this typology, East Germans are more likely to lack perspectives, being resigned (19 percent in this category compared to 16 percent in the West in 1997, and up from just 10 percent in 1990) and less likely to be idealistic nonconformists (11 percent compared to 19 percent in the West in 1997, and basically unchanged compared to 1990). But, again, the difference in actual living conditions is likely to be the decisive factor. Overall, there is surprisingly little hard evidence of any lasting effects of 40 years of political socialization under a Communist regime on fundamental values. Apparently, the East German regime did not succeed much in its attempts to create a "new socialist human being" (*neuen sozialistischen Menschen*).

Other differences. Much more important differences show in other areas. Both the survey of the Klages group as well as a comprehensive secondary analysis of data from various sources presented by Ulrich *Rosar* show a markedly lower level of trust in institutions on part of the East Germans. In addition, Michael *Braun* demonstrates significant differences in the perception of gender roles based on ALLBUS data.[32] This does not come as a surprise since women had made considerable progress in eliminating gender inequities under the East German regime. Participation of women in the workforce was strongly encouraged and aided in practice by

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[31] The Klages group uses a classification scheme comprised of five value types: *conventionalists emphasizing order*, *resigned without perspectives*, *active realists*, *hedonistic materialists*, *idealistic nonconformists*. This typology was developed partly in response to Inglehart's postmaterialism scale. In contrast to Inglehart, it tries to capture a multidimensional value space which does not necessarily juxtapose material interests and communitarian inclination. Obviously, I cannot address the extensive literature and debate on value change and the different attempts to define value types here in any detail. The Klages typology is used as a heuristic example only.

[32] The ALLBUS is the German version of the *General Social Survey (GSS)* in the United States. Both surveys are conducted on a regular basis (ALLBUS mostly biannually since 1980, GSS mostly annually since 1972) under the direction of a board representing the national academic community in sociology and funded by premier national funding agencies (DFG for ALLBUS, NSF for GSS). The data are freely available to the academic community and -- (continued)

convenient child care facilities (often right at the work place); women had entered non-traditional occupations to a much higher degree than in West Germany; and women had played a much larger part in public life – though not at the very top of the political hierarchy. Last but not least, East German abortion laws gave women the right to decide for themselves.[33] As a group, women were the losers in the unification process (Young 1999). However, no significant women's movement emerged to preserve these advances and/or to regain lost ground.

The most important indicator for a lack of national community, however, is the widespread belief of East Germans to be *second-class citizens*.[34] After a steady decline from 87 percent in December 1990 to 69 percent in the fall of 1995, more recent data show a reversal. The percentage of East Germans feeling as second-class citizens rose over 74 percent in 1996 to 80 percent in May of 1997. There is ample evidence that these feelings are correlated with beliefs and attitudes about economic issues. Also, when asked directly -- in the 1997 study -- why they feel as second-class citizens, economic reasons are mentioned most often like *lower wages and salaries for the same work* (88 percent), *high unemployment* (73 percent), or *unfair competition or exploitation by West German businesses* (72 percent). But, in addition to these tangible issues, hurt pride and (perceived) lack of respect is another major factor as indicated by reasons like *the achievements of the GDR are now worthless* (62 percent), that it was *not a unification, but an annexation* (59 percent), or that the *West Germans don't see the East Germans as equals* (53 percent) or that they

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due to the replicative nature of the projects -- allow to track trends over time.

[33] The East German abortion law was the sole exception to the complete adoption of West German laws in the process of unification. As specified in the unification treaty, it was to remain in effect for a transition period not exceeding two years while a new abortion law was drafted. The newly drafted and passed law was a compromise respecting the rights of women in the East, but major provisions were ruled unconstitutional in a successful effort by conservative forces in the West to abolish the right of self-determination.

[34] These data are excerpted from the contribution by Dieter *Walz* und Wolfram *Brunner* in Meulemann (1998) who analyzed a number of surveys conducted by the EMNID organization including annual surveys on political trends between 1990 and 1997.

treat them with contempt and arrogance (51 percent).[35] I think it is a moot point to argue which of the two factors is more important: economic deprivation or the intangible issues of respect and recognition. The sheer percentage figures do not provide conclusive evidence. From a psychological point, it is much easier for a respondent to point to objective conditions (like unequal wages or high unemployment) than to vulnerabilities (like lack of respect). In everyday life, denial is not an uncommon coping strategy and the same applies to response behavior in surveys.

Seven years after the fact, the estrangement between East Germans and West Germans had not been overcome. And more recent data (Statistisches Bundesamt 2000:593) show that 57 percent of East Germans and 39 percent of West German still perceive strong conflicts between themselves. Subjectively, in the fall of 1998, 61 percent of the East Germans saw themselves as members of the working class and only 36 percent as middle class compared to 29 percent working class and 59 middle class among West Germans. Over two thirds of the East Germans (but just 22 percent of the West Germans) feel that the basic right to choose your occupation (as laid down in article 12 of the German Basic Law which serves as a constitution) is not realized and almost half feel the same about the freedom to develop your personality (article 2). In addition, over two thirds feel that there is insufficient social security as well as public safety, while comparable figures for West Germans are much lower.[36]

System stability. On the other hand, it is doubtful that the lack of national community will have

[35] Despite the strong empirical evidence that Walz und Brunner provide, they conclude that there is no *inner wall* between the Germans. This rather strange conclusion may be explained by the authors' ties to the Konrad-Adenauer-Foundation, a think tank associated with the conservative party (CDU). However, they do realize the need for significant economic change to neutralize this considerable amount of dissatisfaction to ensure continued system support.

[36] All data are from the "Wohlfahrtssurvey 1998" (literally: Welfare Survey, but more adequately translated as "Survey of Well Being") as reported in Statistisches Bundesamt (2000:603-608). An English version of the questionnaire is available online at http://www.zuma-mannheim.de/data/social-indicators/ws98qu.pdf

a major impact on the stability of the political system -- at least in the short run. For one, the widespread dissatisfaction with the unification process, the omnipresent feeling of being second-class citizens is countered by the realization that -- on the individual level -- the East Germans have done quite well in the years of unified Germany. This should limit the individual willingness to act in accordance with the perceived discrimination and deprivation. In addition, for collective action to emerge is takes more than just individual dissatisfaction. Following resource mobilization theory (e.g., McCarthy and Zald 1987), every society has a large supply of dissatisfaction and disenchantment, and the emergence of social movements depends on the presence of political entrepreneurs that are able to funnel individual discontent into collective action. So, the lack of national community remains inconsequential as long as there are no entrepreneurs, no leaders to challenge the existing order for the benefit of the dissatisfied segment. As to East Germany, such an entrepreneur could emerge on either the Left or the Right of the political spectrum. On the Left, the most likely candidate is the PDS (the former ruling party, then named SED) – matching a pattern of re-emerging Communist parties in several Eastern European countries. The civil rights movements that brought down the wall was soundly defeated in the first free elections in March of 1990 and its leader have either retired from public life or have been absorbed into the parties dominated by West German interests. At first, it appeared doubtful whether the PDS would be able to assume such a leadership role, to become a powerful representative of genuine East German interests. Its electoral success in 1994 came as a surprise to many but after their strong showing in the 1998 election[37] -- despite an all-out attempt by the

[37] German electoral law requires a party to gain five percent of the popular vote nationwide or a plurality in at least three of the 328 constituencies. For the first election in 1990, the PDS was exempt from the five-percent threshold and it was widely expected that the PDS would fail the threshold in 1994. As expected, the PDS received less than five (only 4.4) percent of the popular vote, but it gained a plurality in 4 out of 5 constituencies covering the former East Berlin. Consequently, the PDS received its full proportional share of 30 seats in the *Bundestag*. In 1998, the PDS passed the threshold (5.1 percent) and captured again 4 out of the 5 East Berlin constituencies.

ruling parties to cast the charismatic and personally very popular PDS leader, Gregor Gysi, as a collaborator of the East German security police (*Stasi*)[38] – the PDS can no longer be dismissed as just capturing amorphous protest votes. And in a series of state elections in 1999, the PDS repeated its electoral success, e.g., capturing over 20 percent of the vote and becoming the second strongest party in both Saxony and Thuringia. The PDS still lacks a feasible plan for an alternative social and economic order in Germany, but it provides a powerful symbol of a separate East German identity and East German independence.

On the Right, however, there is no clear candidate. While the elections in the (East German) state of *Sachsen-Anhalt* of April 1998 brought a surprising strong showing of the right-extremist and openly xenophobic DVU (*Deutsche Volksunion*, German People's Union) which captured 12.9 percent of the vote – neither the DVU nor other extremist parties have been able to achieve continuing success at the polls. Quite obviously, not all DVU voters were right extremists. However, based on a survey conducted after the April 1998 elections, Stöss and Niedermayer (1998:28) conclude that 48 percent of the East Germans compared to 32 percent in the West display either right-extremist or anti-constitutional attitudes and form a pool of possible voters for anti-system parties: a dangerously large supply of dissatisfaction.

Obstacles and mistakes: a summary. Germany is still struggling with building a national community, an *inner wall* is still dividing the nation though -- in contrast to the situation in Yemen in 1994 – it is not posing an immediate threat to system stability. Still, it is important to focus on these problems while trying to chart a more productive course for Korea:

a. *Ambivalence on part of the West Germans; lack of a widespread consensus on unification goals*

[38] The majority of special investigative panel of the German parliament (*Bundestag*) found Gysi guilty of such collaboration, abusing his position as a lawyer and acting against the best interests of his clients. The legal battle over these findings continues. After the 1998 elections, Gysi remained a member of parliament, after being convincingly reelected in the constituency he captured in 1994 with more than 50 percent of the vote (*Erststimmen*).

The West Germans' attitude towards unification was ambivalent from the start. Unification had solid support, but only to the extent that no major sacrifices were necessary. Though somewhat skeptical from the start about promises that unification would be a non-zero sum game with winners only, the public did not see — and was not offered — a viable alternative to Chancellor Kohl's approach (see Kuechler 1992, 1993 for more details).

b. *Lack of a realistic scenario provided by the political leadership; unification strategy unduly influenced by electoral politics*

Sensing the reluctance on part of the West Germans, the government chose to avoid an honest debate on the sacrifices that it would take to truly unite the two Germanys. In addition, by following a very generous monetary policy in exchanging East Germany currency at a vastly inflated rate, the government raised unrealistic expectations on part of the East Germans. Though this strategy was highly successful in achieving victory in the first free East German elections (*Volkskammerwahl* of March 1990), it hurt rather than helped to solve the real problems in the long run.

c. *Ambivalence on part of the East Germans; overemphasis on quick affluence*

The anti-regime movement in East Germany was largely confined to a relatively small segment of population. Though somewhat affiliated with the Protestant church, the movement's (vague) ideology can best be described as "humane socialism", governed by a vision to combine the social securities of socialism (employment guarantee, easy availability of health care and child care at low cost, etc.) with more personal and cultural freedom. The movement's leader did not envision a total surrender to the norms and values of the West German society. However, the masses that turned out at the "Monday demonstrations" (and even more so those that remained passive) were more interested in economic affluence. The movement's leader were quickly left behind, the political organizations representing the movement were soundly beaten at the polls in March 1990.

d. *Lack of mutual respect for accomplishments*

Public sentiment — especially when it is based on long harbored latent dispositions[39] — is not easily changed. However, the almost complete unwillingness to recognize anything of the old structure in the East as worth preserving (even in modified form) made the process of building mutual trust and respect even more difficult. From the East German point of view, the unification treaty amounted to a surrender and this contributed greatly to the widespread feeling of being second-class citizens. Exploiting its bargaining power to the fullest, thus, may have not been in the best long-term interest of the West.

[39] Tensions between East Germans and West Germans -- with the territories roughly divided by the Elbe river -- go way back in history. The division after World War II while imposed by exterior forces also reflects historical roots and traditions. For example, in the territory East of the Elbe large landownership prevailed and subsequently a much lower rate of industrial growth ensued in contrast to the West where different heritage rules resulted in a large number of small, but independent farmers and a much more pronounced culture of entrepreneurship.

Korean Unification: Policies and Preferences

Policy positions on unification in North and South Korea. It is outside the scope of this paper to review the various policy positions on unification over time. This brief summary is solely intended as an anchor for the analysis of mass sentiment towards unification and towards North Korea in the South over time; see, e.g., Park (1998:103-115) for more detail. Following the summit meeting in June 2000, there are indications of more flexibility on both sides and of related changes in public opinion, but it is too early to assess these developments more fully.

North Korea. North Korea's position is summarized in a speech by Kim Jong Il (1997) delivered on the occasion of the 52nd anniversary of Korean's liberation from the Japanese occupational forces. In this speech, Kim Jong Il reaffirmed the principles laid down by Kim Il Sung. He refers to "three charters for national reunification by which comrade Kim Il Sung elaborated the basic principles and methods of national reunification into an integral system on the basis of his great Juche idea and his valuable experience of the struggle to reunify the country." These three charters are

- the three principles of *independence* (self-reliance), *peaceful reunification* and *great national unity* as specified in the Joint North-South Communique of July 4, 1972 (MOU, no date);
- the "Ten-Point Program of the Great Unity of the Whole Nation for the Reunification of the Country" of April 6, 1993 (Kim 1993); and
- the plan of establishing a Democratic Confederate Republic of Koryo (DCRK) of October 10, 1980 (Kim 1980).

These plans call for a stepwise procedure, first establishing a confederation "based on one nation, one state, two systems, and two governments", the *Democratic Confederate Republic of Koryo (DCRK)* and emphasize the necessity to remove the danger of war and the desire to achieve unification based on peaceful coexistence. At first sight and taken at face value, these three charters seem to constitute a sensible and conciliatory approach. But Kim Jong-Il leaves no doubt that despite all rhetoric only unification on North Korea's terms will be acceptable denouncing "the successive rulers of south Korea" as having committed "anti-reunification treachery to the country and the nation, with the backing of the United States, following its aggressive policy" and rejecting "flunkeyism and dependence on foreign forces." Quite obviously, there is no room in North Korea's policies for establishing a united Korea as a liberal democracy with close ties to the Western World.

South Korea. As documented by a variety of documents made available by the South Korean Ministry of National Unification (MONU -- now MOU or Ministry of Unification) during the Kim Young Sam government, South Korea, too, favors a gradual approach, an extended period of peaceful co-existence and gradual assimilation over the quick annexation strategy employed in Germany. The *Korean National Community Unification Formula* of 1994 (following an earlier formula introduced by President Roh in 1989) entails a three-step build-up of the *national community* composed of 1. reconciliation and cooperation, 2. a Korean commonwealth, and 3. the completion of the unified country (MONU, 1994).

The last phase, however, is based on the assumption that the unified Korea will be a "liberal democracy" (Park 1998:112) which has made the South Korean plan under the Kim Young Sam government unacceptable to the North. A less definitive plan allowing for a much broader interpretation of "democracy" and envisioning a "federation phase" to follow the "confederation (commonwealth) phase" was put forward by the Kim Dae-Jung Peace Foundation (Park

1998:112-114) in 1995.

With Kim Dae-Jung elected as President, unification has been de-emphasized as an immediate goal. As stated in the new government's "North Korea Policy" of May 1998 (MOU 1998) -- more commonly referred to as the *sunshine policy*: "At the present stage, it is more urgent to establish durable peace and assure the peaceful coexistence of the two Koreas than to push for immediate unification." This policy further postulates three principles:

- No armed provocation by North Korea will be tolerated
- A takeover or absorption of North Korea will not be attempted
- Reconciliation and cooperation will be expanded

In addition, it calls for a "reactivation of the 1991 Basic Agreement through dialogue" and a separation of business from politics, the latter a rather drastic shift in South Korean policy. This policy has been reaffirmed in 1999 – despite disappointments and criticism – and the government has presented a positive assessment of this policy (MOU, 1999). An independent description and assessment of the Sunshine Policy is presented by Moon and Steinberg (1999).

Comparison. The crucial difference between the unification policy of the North and the South is the North's insistence that unification must be based on the principal of *national independence*, on preserving a unique Korean national character, and on maintaining the principle of self-reliance (*juche*). And while the (South) Korean unification formula also emphasizes self-determination, peace, and democracy – the concepts behind the words are quite different pointing to further integration of Korea into the world market as a liberal Western-style democracy, a commitment to universal globalization.

The "North-South Agreement" of 1991 was an important step in reducing the military tensions on the Korean peninsula, but little of it was implemented. The effort by Kim Dae-Jung to revitalize this agreement is commendable, but it remains to be seen whether the "carrot" of economic

cooperation and assistance (including food aid) will be sufficient to generate a genuine change in the relationship between North and South. As long as there are fundamental differences on what grounds *national unity* should be built, on what actually constitutes the *national character*, on where happiness and prosperity for the Korean people might lie, all talk about establishing a confederation or a commonwealth is just that, mostly rhetoric with uncertain chances of realization.

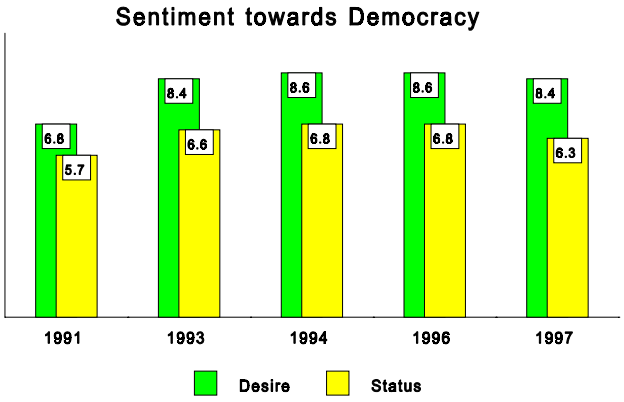
Again, we notice distinct differences between Germany and Korea. East Germany never actively pursued a unification policy – apart from the general concept that one day socialism would defeat capitalism everywhere. What East Germany wanted foremost was recognition as a sovereign state, to be accepted as an equal partner in the international community. Given the Nazi past, nationalism could not play a major role in any unification strategy on the part of the elites and it was not a major factor in mass sentiment. While East Germany was content with a state of peaceful coexistence, North Korea has pursued a much more aggressive strategy denying the legitimacy of the South Korean government and portraying itself as the only true representative of the Korean people -- up to the summit meeting of June 2000. For now, it appears safe to view this strategy as suspended rather than as abandoned.

South Korean Democracy

North and South Korea are nowhere close in their views of what a united Korea should look like. But even in the South, there are differences with respect to the final form of a united Korea beyond a common commitment to "democracy" leaving specific modalities aside. It is important, then, to consider what democracy means to the South Koreans, how firmly democratic values and beliefs are embedded, and what form of democracy may have the best chances to unite at least the South behind one specific goal. This analysis is also important for an assessment of the stability of the current South Korean system and the identification of weak points that need to be addressed before

unification should even be seriously attempted.

Mass attitudes over time. A series of replicative surveys[40] provide a suitable database for tracking mass sentiment towards democracy over time. Personal preference for democracy has been measured on a 10-point scale, where 1 means *complete dictatorship* and 10 means *complete democracy* (Shin and Rose 1997:22) in reaction to the following stimulus: "To what extent would you personally desire our country to be democratized?" The mean response rose from 6.8 in 1991 over 8.4 in 1993 to 8.6 in 1994 and 1996 before declining to 8.4 in 1997. More impressively, the percentage of respondents choosing scale points 9 or 10, i.e., (almost) complete democracy, rose from 18 percent in 1991 to 57 percent in 1994, but fell to 50 percent in 1997. The data for 1997 show a minor age effect only: no difference with respect to preference for democracy among the young (18-29 year olds) and the middle-aged (30-59 year olds); 53 percent in both age groups are



strongly in favor of democracy in contrast to only 33 percent among people over age 60.

Using a different indicator, we find very similar results. In response to the question: "Let us consider the idea of democracy, not its practice. In principle, how much are you for or against the idea of democracy?" 54 percent in 1997 said that they were *very much* and 38 percent said that

[40] This section is based on data from a series of replicative surveys first conducted by the Institute of Social Sciences at Seoul National University (in October 1988, November 1991, and November 1993), then by Gallup Korea (in November 1994, 1996, and May/June 1997) directed by Professor Doh Shin.

they were *somewhat for* democracy. Similarly, 47 percent *strongly agreed* and 42 percent *somewhat agreed* that "our political system should be made a lot more democratic than what it is now." And the current state of democracy has been consistently judged below the mark of how much democracy is desired (Shin and Rose 1997:24) -- as shown in the chart.

However, simultaneously, 66 percent of the respondents agreed (strongly or somewhat) that "the dictatorial rule like that of a strong leader like Park Chung Hee would be much better than a democracy to handle the serious problems facing the country these days" – up from 61 percent in 1994. And again 61percent agreed with the statement that "If a government is often restrained by an assembly, it will be unable to achieve great things." Combined, 85 percent agreed with at least one of the two statements (Shin 1988:16-18). Shin further combines the responses about authoritarian procedures and democratic institutions into a typology of

- Representative democrats (9 percent in 1997), full support for democratic institutions and full rejection of authoritarian solutions
- Delegative democrats (49 percent), full support for democratic institutions, but (partial) preference for authoritarian solutions
- Soft authoritarians (37 percent)
- Hard authoritarians (5 percent)

Based on 1994 data, Shin (1995) had developed a similar, but not directly comparable typology. Here, he found that only 36 percent of the respondents can be considered as *authentic democrats* (rejecting dictatorial rule and supporting further democratization). Almost half the respondents (47 percent) were labeled as *hybrids* (people who express a preference for more democracy while simultaneously viewing dictatorial rule as better suited to address the country's problems). By 1996, *fully committed* democrats accounted for 38 percent and *positively committed* for 53 percent

(Shin and Shyu 1997:117-118), no significant change from two years earlier.[41] The more recent, but differently constructed 1997 typology depicts an even larger segment of South Koreans as holding politically ambivalent beliefs not firmly committed to democracy.

The reservations about the effectiveness of democracy show in the responses to another question as well: "During the present Kim Young Sam government, to what extent is democracy suitable for our country?"[42] Again, on a 10 point scale where 1 means complete unsuitability and 10 means complete suitability, only 8 percent find democracy (almost) completely suitable – using scale points 9 or 10. The large majority (69 percent) expresses ambiguity using scale points between 4 and 7.

And, in addition to the 61 percent agreeing that parliament is likely to keep a government from doing great things (above); 60 percent agree that "we can leave things to morally upright leaders"; 67 percent agree that "too many competing groups would undermine social harmony"; and 65 percent agree that "too many diverse opinions would undermine social order." The percentages among young Koreans (under 30 years of age) are only slightly lower, mostly within statistical margins of error.

And there is very little trust in primary political institutions. Close to 80 percent of all respondents *do not trust much* or *do not trust at all* the "National Assembly" and the "Political Parties", and almost half of the respondents do not trust the courts (much).[43] In contrast, the military and the churches/temples (in this order) are the most trusted institutions. About two thirds of respondents

[41] Despite the change in labeling, the construction of the typology was the same for the 1994 and the 1996 data.

[42] The wording of this question is not optimal. The explicit reference to Kim Young Sam tends to obscure the stimulus. However, the results fit the general pattern of deeply ambiguous feelings about democracy.

[43] Again, figures are taken from Shin and Rose (1997); marginal distributions for the (multi-part) questions 28 and 51.

each trust (*much* or *somewhat*) these institutions – notwithstanding the fact that 41 percent of the respondents state that they do not have a religion.[44] Distrust of the political institutions is even more pronounced among the young. There is little evidence to suggest that the ambiguity towards liberal democracy and pluralism is just a transitory phenomenon, gradually declining in the process of generational replacement.

However, it would be wrong to conclude that South Koreans are hopeless authoritarians. Responses to other questions shed a rather critical light on past regimes and governments. 65 percent of the respondent *strongly disagree* that the army should govern the country, over 80 percent disagree (*strongly* or *somewhat*) that it would be better to get rid of the parliament and have a strong leader decide everything – with even higher disagreement among the young. Apparently, the feelings towards the government under Kim Young Sam and towards democracy are intertwined and cannot be easily separated. This is not surprising, given the relative short life of the Sixth Republic and the concurrence of Kim Young Sam's leadership for about half this period. The dissatisfaction with Kim is high, no matter how one approaches the issue. 63 percent blame Kim *a lot* for the country's political problems and another 33 percent blame him *somewhat*; only the *chaebols* receive a similar level of blame (54 plus 40 percent). On a scale from 1 to 10, where 1 means complete dissatisfaction and 10 means complete satisfaction, the Kim Young Sam government gets a mean of 3.6 for their handling of the problems facing society. And the "system of government under the presidency of Kim Young Sam" gets a mean of 38 on a scale from 0 (worst) to 100 (best), even below the mark for the "government under the presidency of Roh Tae Woo." Since democracy in action has not worked that well in the view of the Koreans, the widespread ambiguity showing in these survey data is not surprising. Democratic theorists may

[44] Note that the CIA World Factbook 2000 reports very different figures for the religious affiliation of South Koreans: 49 percent Christians and 47 percent Buddhists.
(continued)

postulate that, for a democracy to thrive, citizens must be able to distinguish between system performance and the legitimacy of democratic institution, but values and beliefs are based on concrete experience – and only performance provides this kind of experience.

After all, the (West) Germans did not embrace democracy immediately either. As discussed above, Germans experienced democracy as delivering highly valued material affluence and over time democratic values were implanted deep enough so that they could weather economic storms. Korea has had comparable economic success (up to the setback in fall 1997). But the rise to the 11th ranked economic power in the world, the acceptance into OECD are not intimately tied to the establishment of a democratic system. These historical facts are also reflected in the survey responses, economic beliefs have at best a very modest effect on various indicators relating to support for democratic ideals, evaluation of democratic achievements, and a perceived gap between democratic ideals and democracy in action (Rose at al. 1998). In contrast to Germany, there is no clear and positive connection between democracy and affluence in Korea, neither as a matter of fact nor in the minds of the people. In part, democracy and democratization have increased labor conflicts and contributed to economic problems, but the relation is much more complex (see Mo and Moon, 1999). And, *democratic reforms* are seen as the prime culprit for the country's political problems. 28 percent think that democratic reforms are to be blamed *a lot*, and another 52 percent feel that they ought to be blamed *somewhat* (Shin and Rose 1997:17).

At this point, it is not clear in which direction South Korea is moving. While there is abstract support for more democracy, retrospective evaluations of the democratic system in action are largely negative, core political institutions are met with widespread mistrust, and there is little confidence in the problem-solving abilities of a pluralistic society. It is conceivable that support for "democratic ideals" is much more a condemnation of the abuses of power, of the violation of

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http://www.odci.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/ks.html#People

human rights, of greed and corruption experienced under past regimes than a genuine endorsement of a society foremost focused on individual freedom and opportunities for the individual to develop and succeed. The French Revolution was based on the three ideals of liberty, equality, and fraternity – but in the successful democracies of today, at least fraternity has not fared well and equality is predominantly understood as equality of opportunity rather than equality of outcome.[45] Modern competitive, pluralistic democracy is not easily reconciled with Confucian values and traditions – but neither are totalitarian regimes. Confucianism calls for authority and respect for authority, but it also calls for commitment to the common good, for mutual respect and for achievements. From this point of view, the prevailing attitude towards "democracy" fits into a somewhat coherent and consistent pattern. But if this is a coherent and consistent belief pattern, and not just an early transitory stage of ambivalence in a (Western-style) democratization process, the future course of (South) Korea is even more uncertain. Then, institutional arrangements genuinely suited to these basic preferences need to be created from scratch rather than that models proven successful in established Western democracies can be adopted (see, e.g., Helgesen 1998 for a fuller exposition of this view).

The 1997 Presidential Elections and beyond. The outcome of the December 18, 1997 Presidential elections is often seen as an important marker on (South) Korea's path to a mature democracy -- especially in the West. For the first time, an opposition candidate was elected -- after three unsuccessful attempts.[46] Moreover, with a life long record of fighting for democratization, and having been subject to persecution and assassination attempts, Kim Dae Jung's victory may

[45] The Unites States is the most succinct example; the "welfare states" of Western Europe have realized at least "institutional fraternity" in form of extensive social welfare legislation.

[46] Though not quite as dramatic as in the Korean case, the 1969 elections in West Germany were a similar landmark, the first change in executive power on the federal level with the establishment of the social-liberal coalition under Chancellor Willy Brandt after 20 years of rule by the Christian-Democrats.

be seen as the final redemption. However, there are several other factors that need to be considered as well:

1. The ruling party (New Korea Party; merged with the Democratic Party and reconstituted as *Hannara* or Great National Party in November 1997) did not unite behind its candidate (Lee) after the nomination congress in July 1997 and Lee Hoi Chang slipped quickly in the polls from about 50 percent to under 20 percent in late August. Subsequently, Rhee In Je, after losing the nomination to Lee, broke away from the NKP and formed the New People's Party (NPP) with dissidents from both the old NKP and DP. So, while formally representing two different parties, the support for the ruling party was split between Lee and Rhee. Between them, Lee and Rhee obtained 57.9 percent of the vote.

2. Traditionally, regional preferences have dominated Korean voting. In particular, a deep cleavage between the less affluent, less developed Southwestern Cholla provinces and the Kyongsang provinces in the Southeast has determined the allocation of political power. Both regions tend to vote 9:1 in favor of a candidate from their own region, and so far, the -- more populous -- Kyongsang region had dominated. Representing the Southwest, Kim Dae Jung had been at a serious structural disadvantage in previous elections. This time, however, his two major rivals did not come from the Kyongsang provinces; indeed, Lee was born in the North. While Kim Dae Jung swept the Cholla provinces as expected (with over 97 percent of the vote in the principal city of Kwangju and close to 95 percent overall), the "third party" candidate Rhee had his strongest results in South Kyongsang (31.3 percent) and the city of Pusan (29.8 percent). Kim Dae-Jung received less than 15 percent in this region. Rather than signaling a decline of regionalism, the 1997 elections confirmed the strong impact of region. Under these conditions, i.e., with a limited "market" of open-minded, not traditionally bound voters, the split within the (former) NKP was particularly costly.

3. The alliance between Kim Dae Jung and Kim Jong Pil (of the United Liberal Democrats) gave Kim Dae Jung additional support despite serious questions about the sustainability of this alliance in the long run.[47] At least in the short run, the alliance worked out. With Kim Jong Pil dropping out of the race, his home region of Chungchon (including the city of Taejon) became a free-for-all and Kim Dae Jung gained about 45 percent of the vote.

4. By late November, Kim Dae Jung's once formidable lead over Lee in the polls (34.5 to 16.1 percent by October 25)[48] had dwindled to a statistically insignificant margin at the start of the official campaign. The momentum was clearly on Lee's side when the financial crisis emerged resulting in the IMF intervention. Unlike Lee, Kim Dae Jung played the populist card calling for the renegotiation of the IMF agreement and contributed to the further erosion of international confidence into the soundness of Korean monetary and economic policies and, consequently, to further decline of both stock market and Korean currency. Only after massive criticism in the leading newspapers and an intervention by the incumbent President, Kim Dae Jung retreated. Whatever the consequences in the long run, in the short term it help him to funnel widespread disappointment and bitterness about the incumbent government into votes for him, the outsider.[49] Kim Dae Jung did not win based on a better program, a more convincing vision for a better Korea, but by exploiting regional allegiances and his ties to the trade unions and in attracting the protest vote. Despite Kim's populist stance in the final days of the campaign, he, as a matter of fact,

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[47] In exchange for UDL support in the Presidential race, Kim Dae Jung agreed to initiate a constitutional reform if elected. According to this agreement, the current Presidential system was to be replaced by a German-style parliamentary system by the time of the next parliamentary elections in 2000. But, in summer of 1999 this plan was officially abandoned while talks about less drastic electoral reforms continued.

[48] Polls conducted by Gallup Korea for Chosun Ilbo and MBC.

[49] Whether this was a deliberate move by Kim Dae Jung is -- admittedly -- speculation on my part. In a private conversation, sources close to the campaign have described this incident as a blunder. Whatever the intention, the effect was the same.

appeared to have the best chances to guide South Korea through the difficult times lying ahead. The austerity program mandated by the IMF was certain to cause major hardship, in particular, to lead to rising unemployment, as unprofitable and/or mismanaged companies would have to be closed or downsized. Kim's ties to the trade unions appeared to put him in a position to push through unpalatable reforms. Also, given his age and long political life, he was above a need to seek popularity at any price. The turn of events in 1998 and 1999 has proven this assessment as correct. At least in relative terms, Kim Dae Jung has had a good deal of success in bringing business, labor, and government together, in rebuilding confidence in the international financial community, in forging even closer cooperation with the United States, and in starting a new initiative towards improving North-South relations.

But, the 1997 Presidential elections were not a triumph for democracy. Political parties and leading politicians were held in low esteem and the 1997 campaign did little to build and/or restore trust and confidence. For the first time, television played a major role in the campaign with both paid advertisements and three scheduled debates between the main contenders. But the debates were dominated by bickering and personal insults. They were hardly a model for substantive discourse on the major political problems. The ensuing political battle after the elections over the appointment of Kim Jong-Pil as Prime Minister and not so subtle attempts to change the parliamentary majority by way of defections only contributed to the public's weariness and downright disgust with politicians and parliament. It took almost eight months for the assembly to elect a speaker and until mid-August of 1998 to have Kim Jong-Pil officially installed as Prime Minister – after it had become apparent that the GNP would soon lose its majority due to ongoing defections.

This conflict is difficult to understand from a Western point of view. It is an integral part of a Presidential system that -- at times -- the President's party will not have a majority in parliament

and that, as a consequence, the President has to work with a Prime Minister from the opposing camp. France with its various periods of "cohabitation" is the prime example. Kim Dae-Jung's insistence on nominating a candidate without a majority and the subsequent attempts by the NCNP to prevent a (unfavorable) vote count reflect poorly on their willingness to work within the given constitutional framework. And the final election of the speaker (against the GNP still holding 151 out 299 seats) was marred by allegations that a number of GNP members voted for the candidate of the rival camp only out of fear of being exposed to corruption charges otherwise.[50]

Despite Kim Dae Jung's pledge to reform the political system and to overcome regionalism, little progress has been made towards this end. The NCNP reinvented itself as the MDP, but only modest changes were made to the electoral system. The parliamentary elections of April 2000 were marred by the usual partisan bickering, charges of misconduct and corruption, and in the end produced a another win for the GNP though the GNP fell short of an absolute majority of seats. The ensuing quarrels over the status of the much smaller ULD faction and the nomination of Lee Han-dong as Prime Minister did little to raise public confidence and trust in parliament and political parties. South Korea still has a low supply of diffuse system support, hardly sufficient to absorb a major shock – be it triggered by reemerging economic problems and hostile labor relations or be it triggered by a major change like a unification.

Mass sentiment in the South towards unification and towards North Korea

The data presented in this segment are drawn from various sources including annual surveys of

[50] However, we should not lose sight of the fact that voting against party lines is quite common in the United States. And often considerable arm-twisting as well as quid pro quo deals are involved. Also, Germany -- with a strong tradition of voting along party lines – experienced massive attempts to induce members of parliament to switch parties after the first change of executive power from the Christian Democrats to Social Democrats in 1969 leading to the (failed) attempt to topple the Brandt government by a "vote of confidence" and to elect Rainer Barzel as new Chancellor simultaneously.

public opinion sponsored by the Sejong Institute (1995, 1996), a survey by the Korean Development Institute (Park et al. 1998), a series of national surveys conducted by Media Research (1996), several surveys by the Research Institute for National Unification (RINU 1995), surveys by the Korean daily newspaper Joong Ang Ilbo (1996), again the 1997 New Korea Barometer (Shin and Rose 1997), and previous elections studies from 1988 and 1992.[51]

Issue salience. An open-ended question about what respondents thought was the "most serious problem" that had "to be solved immediately in Korea" in the 1988 election study[52] had only 63 or 3.1% out of 2000 respondents mention unification. In contrast, 223 mentioned *political instability,* 205 *instability in prices*, and 111 *dissolving urban-rural disparity*. The 1992 National Election Study[53] confirms the findings from 1988. Not many see unification as a top problem facing the nation. This time, using a list of 12 problems including "South-North relationship/ Unification", only 18 out of 1206 respondents name it as the *most serious problem*, and only additional 52 name it as the second most serious problem. It ranks above only two other problems, *juvenile delinquency* (but not by much) and *sexual discrimination* while *regional anti-sentiment* is more widely considered a serious problem.

More recently, the Sejong Institute surveys address the relative salience of the unification issue over the last three years (1995-97). Unfortunately, the question format was different in each year, so that the figures are not directly comparable. In spring of 1995, respondents were asked to pick

[51] Very few of these studies are documented in English. A search of the integrated data base of CESSDA (=Consortium of European Social Science Data Archives, which includes ICPSR in the US and the Australian data archive) produced just four relevant surveys. These are available via the Web from the Swedish data archive (http://www.ssd.gu.se/enghome.html).

[52] This study was executed by the Korea Research Gallup Polls Ltd. before the election day (April 26, 1988) in the period between April 12 and 15. The valid sample size was 2000. All information is taken from a codebook made available by the Swedish Social Science Data Service (study # SSD 0392) on the Web.

[53] The data for *Korean National Election Study 1992* were originally collected by the Institute for Korean Election Studies (IKES) under the auspices of the Korea National Council for Research Promotion and the National Election Management Bureau. The interviews were conducted during five days between March 26 and 30, 1992. The (continued)

one problem: 40.2 percent picked price stability, 14.9 percent corruption, only 9.1 percent unification -- with the same percentage for education (Sejong Institute 1995:94). In the first wave of the spring 1996 election panel study, respondents were asked to pick *two* problems (so, percentages add up to 200): 59.1 percent picked the economy, 29.8 percent traffic congestion, 23.3 percent social welfare, 21.1 percent political reform, and only 12.2 percent unification (Sejong Institute 1996:86). In 1997, respondents were asked to rate each of 13 issues separately on a 4 point scale: 43.3 percent rated unification as *very important* and 43.6 rated it as *important* (Han 1998:313). However, this is the lowest percentage of *very important* ratings among the 13 issues; again price stability leads with 85.7 percent followed by corruption (74.2 percent) and traffic congestion (73.6 percent).[54] At no time -- before the events leading to unification in Germany unfolded, shortly thereafter, or in more recent years -- has unification been an issue at the top of people's agenda. Even before the emergence of serious economic difficulties in late 1997 and the subsequent IMF intervention, other issues always had much higher priority for the vast majority of Koreans.

Basic sentiment towards unification. The "New Korea Barometer" of May/June 1997, shows that mass support for Korean unification in South Korea was lukewarm at best. Only a minority of 47 percent found "reunifying North and South Korea" *highly desirable*. Another 32 percent found this *somewhat desirable*, but given the social desirability factor[55] this is a rather weak endorsement. More importantly, the young generation was decidedly less enthusiastic about the

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data were made available by the Swedish Social Science Data Service (study # SSD 0394).

[54] Obvious typesetting errors in Han (1998:313, table 2) have been taken into account.

[55] Societal norms (whether legally codified or simply perceived as generally expected behavior) tend to bias truthful individual responses. Many people are reluctant to admit to behavior or opinions perceived as outside societal expectations in conversations with strangers (like interviewers). The stronger a societal norm, the more pronounced a social desirability effect in the survey responses.

prospect of re-unification. Only 37 percent of the under 30 year old respondents found re-unification *highly desirable* in contrast to 70 percent among the over 60 year old Koreans (Shin and Rose 1997:20-21). A more detailed follow-up question ("If it cost a lot of money to people like yourself to reunify Korea, how would you feel about it?") reduced the percentage of unequivocal supporters (*welcome re-unification regardless of its cost*) to just 28 percent, while 26 percent took a fatalistic stand (*accept re-unification as an act that cannot be refused*) and 32 percent expressed limits (*support re-unification as long as costs were not too much*).

Data from other surveys – using different question wordings – confirm these findings. Moreover, they show that pro-unification sentiment declined over time. A simple dichotomy contrasting the view that unification must be achieved with the position that it would be sufficient to reach a state of peaceful coexistence contained in the surveys conducted by Media Research (1996:80) shows a decline from 78.3 percent seeing unification as a must in 1993 to 66.1 percent in 1996. Again, support for unification is considerably stronger in the older age group (those 60 years and older) with still 82.9 percent in 1996. A follow up question in the Media Research surveys shows that support for unification is primarily based on the desire to reunite families and an emphasis on blood relations. About half of the respondents in favor of unification state these as their main reason, only about one quarter gives economic reasons. Despite the decline from 1993 to 1996, the level of support for unification appears to be quite high. Yet, this may be due to the question wording with just one other alternative. The Joong Ang Ilbo (1996:76) survey uses a more differentiated question which produces less than 10 percent respondents who express an ardent wish, an earnest desire for unification, some 30 percent with a more reserved, but still positive sentiment, and a about one quarter of the respondents who openly state that they do not want

unification.[56]

The Sejong Institute surveys also tried to identify the hard core of unification proponents. In 1995, respondents were given three choices: 9.5 percent supported a push for unification regardless of the regime type of the unified Korea; 78.1 percent thought that unification should come only after national homogeneity has been restored; and 7.1 percent did not want unification (Park 1998:99; Sejong Institute 1995:70). Obviously, the response choices were not optimal, offering a rather diffuse middle category combining all but the most determined proponents and adversaries of unification. In 1996 and 1997, a somewhat improved question was used: 22.4 percent (1996: 30.4 percent) supported unification as soon as possible being the most important aspiration of the Korean people; 70.7 (1996: 56.5) percent were in favor of proceeding slowly since unification may create problems; 4.3 (1996: 5.6) percent found unification unnecessary because it would only produce chaos and problems (Han 1998:314, Sejong Institute 1996:90).[57]

A survey by the Korean Development Institute from February 1998 used three different response choices: 35.2 percent of the respondents said South and North Korea must be reunited; 38.9 percent said that they should be reunited if possible; 25.9 percent preferred an effort to preserve the current situation (Park et al. 1998:197). The wording used in the KDI survey is close though not exactly identical to the wording used in 1995 RINU survey. Then, in late 1995, 58.0 percent

[56] This 1996 survey takes an interesting approach in that basically the same question is asked twice during the interview. As a lead-in question to a segment about unification, and as a concluding question to the same segment with eight questions covering different aspects/problems of unification in more detail – in my estimate about just 5-10 minutes apart in the interview. Given this short time span, one would expect that responses will not change (because there is a high likelihood that the respondents will remember what they said the first time and changing one's mind amounts to an admission that one had not thought about the issues carefully prior to the interview). Still, the percentage of ardent proponents drops from 13.3 to 9.1. In other words, one in three ardent proponents changes his/her mind when confronted with details and consequences of unification. This is another indication that support for unification is soft and can easily be overestimated by infelicitous question wording.

[57] By Western standards, these question wordings would be considered as "loaded", leading respondents to more positive statements about their feelings towards unification. However, these methodological rules of survey research are likely to be culture-bound and may not be applicable in a non-Western cultural context (Kuechler 1998b).

said that Korea must be united; 34.3 percent felt that this would be a good thing if it happened; only 7.7 percent preferred to keep the present state (RINU 1995:72). The KDI figures from February 1998 are corroborated by a follow-up question: Presented with a scenario in which North and South Korea are able to establish channels of free contact and free and friendly relations in interchange of physical resources, respondents were asked what they thought of the view that – under these circumstances – reunification need not necessarily be pursued: 14.2 percent agreed strongly, 52.1 percent were in favor, 23.6 were opposed, and 9.5 percent were strongly opposed (Park et al. 1998:198).

To summarize, like issue salience basic positive sentiment towards unification has declined. As of 1998, only about one third of the South Korean population strongly supported unification, seeing it as a non-negotiable necessity, not willing to settle for peaceful coexistence and open and friendly relations between North and South – however realistic such a scenario may be. Another quarter of the population could be seen as preferring the status quo, not expecting much good from unification. This left about 40-50 percent of the population in the middle, mostly positive towards unification, but emphasizing caution, not willing to take any risks. Support for unification is stronger among older Koreans (over 60 years of age), stronger among men than among women, stronger among more affluent Koreans than among people with more modest income while there is no clear linear trend with respect to educational attainment. Support for unification is stronger among people with a university degree and people with lower education than among people with a high school, but no college degree.

Expectations about time frame. In February 1998, 13.6 percent of the respondents expected unification to happen within the next five years, another 38 percent anticipated a span of 5-10 years, leaving almost half the respondents who saw unification more than 10 years away (Park et al. 1998:199). These figures have not changed much over the last few years. The RINU (1995:75)

survey of late 1995 showed 9.5 percent expecting unification to happen within five years and 40.9 percent in the 5-10 year range; the corresponding figures for the Joong Ang Ilbo (1996:60) survey of fall 1996 were 11.0 and 30.3 percent. However, they provide a stark contrast to the almost universal optimism of the early 1990s. In a survey from August 1991, concurrent with high level talks between South and North Korea (which eventually lead to the *Agreement on Reconciliation, Nonaggression and Exchanges and Cooperation)*, 40 percent of the respondents felt that unification could be realized within 5 years, another 48 percent thought that it would be done in 10 years.[58] The hopes for better relations between North and South were dashed by a new phase of withdrawal and isolationalism following the death of Kim Il-Sung. And despite all the apparent difficulties the North Korean regimes faces, only a small segment in the South anticipates a sudden collapse of the North Korean regime -- leading to unification by absorption. In 1996, only 10.3 percent anticipated a collapse of the North within one to two years, whereas the overwhelming majority (63.5 percent) expected it to last *quite some time,* another 7.5 percent saw a possibility that the system would reform itself, and the remaining some 20 percent professed ignorance (Sejong Institute 1996:89). Mass sentiment, however, is often not the best gauge for the likelihood of political events to occur. But, should such a collapse occur in the near future, the South Korean public would not be prepared for it.

Unification burdens. In Germany, basic support for unification was always at a fairly high level, but there was considerably less support when cost and necessary sacrifices were figured in. Data for Korea, however, show a more ambiguous picture. In February 1998, almost three quarters of the respondents said that they were willing to pay a unification tax to cover the cost of reunification. However, about seventy percent of those willing to pay (representing about half of

[58] The data utilized here were made available by the Swedish Social Science Data Service (study # SSD 0393). The data for *Korean National Opinion Poll 1991* were originally collected by Joong-Ang Daily News.

all respondents) did not want to pay more than about five percent of their income -- the lowest figure offered among five response choices (Park et al. 1998:200-201). Men (82 percent) were considerably more willing to pay an additional unification tax than women (61 percent). Given the economic hardship in the IMF era with rising unemployment and concrete threats of more layoffs, these numbers indicate a strong commitment to unification. It appears that while many people advocate caution and prefer gradual steps towards unification stretched over time, there is also a strong feeling of obligation in case unification does occur. In Germany, a special tax surcharge of 7.5 percent of the personal income tax was introduced which is widely unpopular in the West. Depending on the tax bracket, however, this amounts to an extra charge of just between two and three percent of the personal income for most people with a surcharge of less than four percent as the very maximum.

Data from other surveys corroborate these results though some of the questions are vaguely worded and leave a lot of room for speculative interpretations. The RINU (1995:109) survey showed that 19.5 percent *strongly agreed* and 50.0 percent *somewhat agreed* with the statement that "Unification should occur the sooner the better, even if there is an expense for unification." A survey of Sejong Institute (1995:222) from the same year showed that 20.9 percent would gladly take on the burden of unification costs and another 52.3 were more or less willing to do so. A question using concrete numbers in the following year, showed over 60 percent willing to contribute, about half of those ready to pay more than five percent of their income (Sejong Institute 1996:90). The 1997 question, however, is somewhat fuzzy: 28.0 percent are opposed to any tax hike to cover unification cost and 9.0 percent are willing to pay "as much as needed even if it poses a burden on the economic well-being of households"; but 58.5 percent chose the vaguely worded middle category, expressing a willingness to pay as long as "it does not burden the average household, even if the amount is insufficient to help reconstruction" (Han 1998:314).

As with the expectations about when unification may be achieved, the willingness to make sacrifices has declined over time. A question in the 1991 Korean National Opinion Poll which painted a grim pictures of the economic consequences of unification ("many say that South Korea will suffer from economic burdens amounting to 200-400 billion U.S. dollar as unification expenditures, ...") produced a nearly even split between those who felt that unification *must at all cost be achieved* and those who found it *not desirable to make haste unification, if such are* (assumptions) *true*. But, still, even at more recent levels, the sense of an obligation to make sacrifices for unification appears to be stronger in Korea than it ever has been in Germany (Kuechler 1992).

Not surprisingly, however, a unification tax is not the most popular way to cover unification expenses. The post-election wave of Sejong Institute (1996:104) election panel study offered four choices: 15.5 percent opted for a tax increase, 35.4 percent for reducing social welfare spending, 35.2 percent preferred that the government issue bonds, and 12.5 percent to get foreign loans. And an open-ended (no response choices offered) question in the 1996 Joong Ang Ilbo (1996:74) survey about how to pay for unification expenses had 48.4 percent suggesting to cut military spending, 25.8 percent opting for government bonds, and only 12.8 percent proposing a tax increase. So, given a choice, few people take the (realistic) position that some form of raising taxes will be necessary, but when presented with a tax increase as a (hypothetical) fact consistently about 70 percent of the respondents show some level of support.

View of North Korea. Only a slim majority of South Koreans feels that the North Koreans are either *just like us* (11 percent) or at least that *while circumstances have created some differences, at heart, they are just like us* (another 42 percent); whereas 43 percent feel that *they have a somewhat different way of life* and 3 percent even feel that they are *foreigners* (Shin and Rose 1997:20). Consistent with other data discussed above, the older generation is more likely to feel

close to the North Korean, but this difference is rather small (60 percent among the people 60 years and older in contrast to 50 percent of the under 30 population feel alike).[59]

A more concrete indicator of the South Korean's feelings about the North Koreans and their sense of togetherness is their attitude towards providing food aid to North Korea. The propensity to help, however, is confounded with considerations of whether food aid can be given in a way that it helps the ordinary people in North Korea, and not the military and/or the ruling class. In the February 1998 KDI survey, a majority of 55 percent supported food aid. This figure includes just 7.4 percent in favor of providing food aid with no conditions attached; 34.5 percent supporting food aid unless North Korea diverts food for military purposes; and 13.5 percent wanting it tied to reciprocal action on part of the North Korean government such as the reunion of separated families. On the opposite side, 36.3 percent wanted food aid postponed because of South Korean's own economic hardship, and 7.8 percent opposed it on the grounds that it only helped the North Korean government. Support for food aid had declined markedly in contrast to a July 1997 survey conducted by the Ministry of National Unification, where 71.4 percent supported food aid (Park et al. 1998:79-80). Figures from the spring 1996 Sejong Institute survey are closer to the 1998 KDI survey. There, 58.2 percent support food aid (46.1 percent thereof with the stipulation that it should not go to the military) and 32.4 percent saw no need for it with 9.4 percent undecided (Sejong Institute 1996:90). However, independent confirmation of the extent of the famine by international relief organizations may not have fully reached the public and the underlying need assessment may have been different. It is plausible to assume that over time people became more aware of an independently confirmed need for food aid, so – others things being equal – the percentage of people supporting food aid should have steadily risen. But, very clearly, the

[59] As an aside, only one percent of all respondents in this survey were born in North Korea; and just seven percent of the respondents 60 years and older were born there.

economic problems in South Korea have left their mark on people's practical solidarity. While the feelings towards the North Korean people are largely positive and even in hard times a good deal of solidarity remains, the view of the North Korean system and the North Korean government is overwhelmingly negative.[60] In the 1997 New Korea Barometer (Shin and Rose 1997:12-14), respondents were given a scale ranging from 0 (worst) to 100 (best) to rate various "systems of government". The North Korean system received a mean rating of 13, with 47 percent of the respondents giving it a straight zero. However, the ratings for the democratic South Korean governments under Kim Young Sam (mean of 38) and Roh Tae Woo (mean of 40) also show a considerable degree of dissatisfaction, whereas the autocratic Chun Doo Whan regime fared best (mean of 52). As with almost all issues related to unification, there are differences of opinion between age cohorts: The view of the North Korean system is somewhat more positive among the 18-29 year olds (mean of 18) than among people over 60 years of age (mean of 7).

Military threat by North Korea. Going beyond simple dislike, the North Korean regime is perceived as a threat to South Korea. In a series of surveys conducted by Media Research from 1993 to 1996, respondents were presented with a statement that the ultimate goal of North Korea was to attack the South. Unfortunately, the response choices were altered – reducing a five point scale with an ambivalent middle category ("half and half") to just four response choices in 1996 forcing the respondents to take sides. Combining affirmative and ambivalent responses, perception of a North Korean threat rose from 54.1 percent in 1993 to 67.8 percent in 1994 and 68.3 percent in 1995 (Media Research 1996:76). Without the choice of the ambivalent response in 1996, 54.9 percent perceived North Korea as belligerent and 45.1 percent did not. This seems to

[60] When looking at these survey data, we need to keep in mind that expressing "praise" for the North Korean government and/or its ideology is technically a criminal offense (under article 7 of the NSL – as discussed above), so these questions are "threatening" in the jargon of survey methodology and not all respondents may have answered these questions with total frankness. However, all evidence taken together leaves little doubt that only a very small (continued)

indicate a further increase in perceived threat, given the results from another 1995 survey with a similar set of response choices, where only 36.8 percent agreed (including 4.7 percent agreeing strongly) with the view that North Korea will use military force to invade South Korea (Sejong Institute 1995:213).61 However, these figures are far from indicating widespread paranoia. Over the years, consistently less than 10 percent of the respondents have expressed *strong* agreement with the view that North Korea is out to attack. But a high level of weariness about the North remains.

The presence of U.S. troops in South Korea is seen as a major factor in preventing the outbreak of another armed conflict. In 1996, 72.3 percent felt that this would be the likely consequence of a withdrawal of the U.S. troops including 21.3 percent who rated this likelihood as very high. Among those 60 years and older – thus having personally experienced the civil war as a (young) adult – over 80 percent felt that another war was likely should the US troops withdraw. As with the question about the North's ultimate goals, a change in the response choices offered limits a comparison with the 1996 result. Again, combining the middle category and those indicating an even higher likelihood of new a conflict, fears of war remained on fairly the same level: 78.4 percent in 1993, 82.8 percent in 1994, and 75.8 percent in 1995. Looking at just those respondents who perceived a high likelihood of war in case of a U.S. withdrawal, the percentage almost doubled from 12.2 percent in 1995 to 21.3 percent in 1996 (Media Research 1996:78-79). While a large majority views the U.S. troops as a deterrent to armed conflict between North and South, there is also considerable ambivalence about their presence and almost half of the

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fraction of the South Korean population favors or supports the North Korean system.

[61] While both surveys used very similar response choices, the question stem was worded differently. Some of the increase in affirmative responses may be due to this difference. In particular, referring to the "ultimate goal" implies a longer time perspective and is clearly focused on intentions whereas the absence of any specific time reference may be interpreted by many respondents as "in the next few years" also leaving some ambiguity as to "intentions" versus "capabilities".

respondents would like to have them leave. In the second (post-election) wave of the Sejong Institute (1996:105) panel study, 4.8 percent wanted to get rid of the U.S. troops as soon as possible and 41.6 percent opted for a gradual withdrawal while 38.7 percent preferred the current state and 7.3 percent wanted an increase. These numbers reflected a slight increase in favor of keeping the U.S. troops compared to 1995 when 51.5 percent opted for immediate or gradual withdrawal (Sejong Institute 1995:100). South Korea's own level of defense is seen as inadequate. In 1996, only 9.8 percent felt that it covered all needs while another 33.6 percent expressed confidence that self-sufficiency was just a matter of time. However, 44.7 percent felt that the South Korean defense was (rather) weak and that therefore the U.S. forces must be retained (Sejong Institute 1996:90). A follow-up question about what to do with the national defense produced 34.6 percent in favor of keeping the present level and 44.7 in favor of improving and strengthening it; 7.6 percent wanted it to abolish it and a relatively high percentage of 13.1 did not have an opinion (or did not want to express one). It appears that neither the presence of U.S. troops nor strengthening the own defense enjoy wholehearted endorsement, but both are seen as necessary to keep North Korea at bay.

Economic cooperation and assistance. Over the years, a solid majority of the South Koreans has supported economic exchange as a means to improve relations between North and South. The Media Research (1996:103) surveys presented a series of four statements about economic cooperation to the respondents. In all four years, from 1993 to 1996, at least 80 percent felt that this would *establish trust*, at least 65 percent were in *favor of it regardless of attacks by the North*, 75 percent felt that it would *improve the standard of living in the North*, and less than 25 percent felt it would only *elongate Kim Jung-Il (Kim Sung-Il)'s rule*. More recently, the 1998 KDI (1998:203) survey addressed a more specific topic, whether private enterprise investment in North Korea should be allowed. Less than 10 percent felt that it should not be allowed because it would

help the North Korean government, and another 35 percent wanted it allowed only if North Korea took reconciliatory measures. The majority, however, supported private investment in the North without any strings attached. Almost a quarter even called on the South Korean government to actively support private investments. Clearly, Kim Dae-Jung's sunshine policy, his strategy of decoupling economics and politics is grounded in solid mass support.

More generally, economic exchange and cooperation is seen as the second most important item in taking a first step towards unification. In the 1996 Media Research (1996:83) survey, 21 percent of the respondents thought that economic assistance should be the first step compared to 19 percent in favor of a summit meeting. (Family) visits, however, were mentioned most often; by 39 percent. The numbers for 1994 and 1995 were very similar, but in contrast to 1993, economic assistance had gained much in importance (up from 10.5 percent) while visitations lost (down from 54 percent). These findings are confirmed by the 1995 Sejong Institute (1995:217) survey: 42.2 percent named family contacts, 20.2 percent economic exchange, 12.8 percent a summit meeting, 10.5 percent cultural and academic exchange, and 9.8 percent the free flow of information via mass media. The economic area is also the one in which the biggest problems in case of a unification are expected; 50.5 percent see the greatest challenge here, 24.5 percent in the political area, 16.4 percent in the social area, and 8.6 percent in military matters (Joong-Ang Ilbo 1996:61).

Future Korea. In the *1991 Korean National Opinion Poll*, 61 percent opted for a *liberal democratic system as* (in the) *South*, while 27 percent preferred a *mixed system of North and South*. Another ten percent had no opinion or did not care and less than 1 percent expressed preference for the Communist system of the North. The study of the 1992 Presidential election[62] included a

[62] This study was also sponsored by IKES (see note above) with field work by the Hyundai Research Institute. Again, the data were made available by the Swedish Social Science Data Service (study # SSD 0442).

similar question about the best way to unify the two Koreas. Only 10 percent of the respondents preferred that the South absorb the North, about half wanted the South to lead the process with the North's acceptance (however realistic this scenario may be), whereas the remaining (some) 40 percent opted for a compromise between South and North. Four years later, in 1996, 96.6 percent opted for a liberal democracy – when given a choice between this and a communist society (Media Research 1996:85). But given the vagueness of the terms involved, these data do not tell us much about exactly what form of society, what political system would enjoy the broadest mass support.

Reaction to the June 2000 summit. The most dramatic change in public sentiment after the June 2000 summit was more openness towards North Korea. However, there are often drastic changes in the responses to survey questions after dramatic political events and it is difficult to distinguish genuine change from temporary swings in public sentiment at this point. However, the summit itself and the underlying policy of Kim Dae Jung are rated overwhelmingly positive across a number of different polls. In a survey sponsored by the Chosun Ilbo and conducted by Gallup Korea, 76 percent said that it achieved more than expected; a survey conducted by the Unification Ministry showed an almost unanimous rating of the summit as successful. While both these surveys were conducted immediately following the summit, a survey jointly sponsored by the Joong-Ang Ilbo and the Korean Unification Forum in early August reconfirmed the positive public sentiment: 82 percent support the Kim Dae Jung administration's policy towards the North and towards unification and over 90 percent believe that unification should be achieved through negotiations. Family reunions and the establishment of peace continue to top the list of the most pressing issues. At the same time, there is great awareness that the unification issue has raised the level of intra South Korean political conflict and a different way of dealing with these issues must

be found.[63]

Conclusion

It appears that the Koreans have already learnt one important lesson from the German experience: the need to build a national community *before* the political and economic systems are merged. Several position papers issued by the Ministry of National Unification (including the White Paper on unification from December 1996) in the past and, more recently, the North policy formulated by Kim Dae-Jung emphasize the necessity to build mutual trust and respect (see also Moon and Steinberg 1999). But, until very recently, South Korea has strictly regulated contacts to the North. South Koreans wishing to contact residents of North Korea need to apply for permission and visits to the North are still very limited, as official government statistics show.[64] In 1997, less than 1500 South Korean visited the North, and according to press reports -- the large majority of these visits were connected to the Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization's (KEDO) nuclear reactor project in Sinpo, North Korea.

Despite a rhetoric of reconciliation and open communication, South Korean policy under Kim Young Sam was still deeply affected by the cold war mentality, a deep sense of insecurity and suspicion towards its own citizens. The government had little faith in its own citizens to reach their own conclusion about North Korea and the prospects of a Communist society. It is certainly difficult to determine where to draw the line between the right to freely express alternate political thoughts (such as advocating North Korean ideology) and the defense of the constitutional foundations of South Korea. West Germany went through some difficult times in the 1970s, and

[63] These survey results were reported in Chosun Ilbo of June 16, in the Korea Herald of June 21, and in Joong Ang Ilbo of August 14, 2000

[64] Overviews of "Intra-Korean Interchange & Cooperation" are made available by MOU at regular intervals on their web site (http://www.unikorea.go.kr/cgi-eg/eb.cgi?33C33/C333.htm).

many critics feared that the government was unduly restricting civil liberties.[65] So, South Korea is certainly not alone in grappling with this issue. However, it appears that the notorious article 7 of the National Security Law gives too much license to the government and that the Kim Young Sam government made too extensive use of it (Amnesty International 1997).

With Kim Dae Jung's presidency things have begun to change and the pace of change may increase dramatically after the summit of June 2000 in the process of implementing the rather vague general agreement, devising more concrete policies and procedures. Over the first half of Kim Dae Jung's single term presidency, a large number of political prisoners has been released, and acts against the constitutional order rather than the expression of thoughts are becoming the defining criterion for determining the line between legitimate opposition and subversion. Concurrently, the government took a much more liberal stand towards allowing contacts with North Korea, in particular business contacts. While North Korea was slow in reciprocating and, worse yet, committed new acts of aggression (e.g., the submarine incident of June 1998), Kim Dae Jung's policies toward the North came under heavy domestic attack though mass sentiment appeared to be on his side all along. The successful summit and -- even more so -- the continuing cooperative stance taken by Kim Jong-Il thereafter, however, solidified Kim Dae Jung's position domestically. Despite opposition from conservative quarters, the Kim Dae Jung government continues to seek reforms of the National Security Law though progress has been slow and has been hindered by the lack of a solid parliamentary majority that continues after the April 2000 elections.

While deeply committed to improving the relationship with the North and to reduce tensions, at present, the South Korean government is not pursuing unification as an immediate goal. In his

[65] In Germany a serious challenge to the political order, however, came from "autonomous groups" not groups sympathizing with East Germany. The "Baader-Meinhof Gang" or "Red Army Fraction (RAF)" was the most (continued)

speech at the occasion of Liberation Day 2000, Kim Dae Jung reiterated this policy in emphasizing five major tasks for the second half of his presidency: Executing major reforms as a democratic country respecting human rights in business, finance, government and labor; establishing a knowledge and information based country; creating a productive welfare system; realizing harmony between the people; and building an era of co-existence through peaceful exchange and cooperation between the two Koreas.

This appears to be a wise course of action. While the worst brought about by the foreign currency crisis and the ensuing IMF intervention may be over, South Korea is still facing a number of serious challenges in implementing genuine economic and financial reforms and in achieving a full "transformation from authoritarian rule to participatory democracy" – the first of six major tasks outlined by Kim Dae Jung in his programmatic address on the occasion of the 50th Anniversary of the Republic of Korea ("Let's Begin the Second Nation-Building"). Actual unification would be a challenge that South Korea is not yet ready for. Fortunately, after the change in North Korea's policies, its deliberate and assertive steps to improve hostile relationships with its neighbors and to become a regular member in the international community, thus qualifying for substantial international assistance, the likelihood of a sudden collapse of the North Korean regime seems to be quite low – if there ever was more than an outside chance for this to happen.

Based on the analyses presented in this chapter, three recommendations for South Korea's unification policies emerge:[66]

1. Stabilize the North by continuing and expanding economic cooperation and assistance

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prominent of these.

[66] Most of this chapter had been completed by early August 1998. The actual policy by the Kim Dae Jung government – still emerging in the summer of 1998 – has been following a similar pattern. These recommendations, then, constitute an endorsement for the current government's policies and an encouragement to continue along this (continued)

(including food relief) and working in concert with third nations (USA, Japan) in this respect; end the cold war, even if reciprocity is slow in coming at times and/or the post-summit implementation phase produces setbacks.

2. Continue the process of "democratization" within, fully realize civil liberties, and remove barriers hindering the free flow of information about the North. Encourage rather than suppress a public discourse on possible alternatives for Korean economic development and on the nature of national identity. In the process, work towards reducing regional cleavages and reforming political institutions to create a stronger, more unified South Korea with a political system having strong "diffuse" support by its citizen.

3. Seek an open discourse with the North about a Korean confederation with the genuine intent to tolerate two systems in one nation.

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