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# Knowledge Transfer as Intercultural Translation in the German-Korean Context – Facing Possible Future Challenges within the Triangle of Unification, System Transformation and Societal Integration

Everhard Holtmann, Eun-Jeung Lee & Christian Rademacher\*

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**Abstract:** »Wissenstransfer als interkulturelle Übersetzung im deutsch-koreanischen Kontext – Möglichen künftigen Herausforderungen begegnen im Dreieck von Vereinigung, Systemtransformation und sozialer Integration«. It is evident that Korea and Germany are embedded in different cultural traditions and are part of different scenarios of international politics. Acting on this general assumption, a coincidence of national unification and abrupt system change similar to the German process of transition does not seem likely. At most a policy of small steps may be an alternative. This is the reason why South Korean project partners are also interested in the antecedent times of two divided German states. From a theoretical perspective, the attempt of transferring the knowledge of unification to Korea requires a new contextualization of knowledge. This act can be understood as a process of transcoding. Having the practical expectations of Korean project partners in mind, a set of "manuals" has been worked out for seven domains of transfer. Additionally, a simulation game has been created and already tested. The written manuals may be useful to promote at least incremental steps towards a controlled institutional change of a dictatorial regime.

**Keywords:** System change, transcoding, domains of policy-transfer, controlled institutional change, national unification.

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## 1. Comparing Germany and Korea – Specific Dimensions of Unification and System Change

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The essays presented in this HSR Forum will serve to provide in a condensed form an overview of the results of the transfer project "Knowledge Transfer as

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Intercultural Translation: Development of Exemplary Practices of Transformation-preparing Activities in Korea” for selected working fields and problems.<sup>1</sup> The transfer project’s leading questions and results on their part are based on theoretical reflections and empirical findings which have been elaborated by the Collaborative Research Center 580 (“Social developments after structural change. Discontinuity, tradition, structural formation”) at the universities of Jena and Halle (Saale). The objective of the transfer project which was also co-funded by the German Research Foundation (DFG) was to “transfer select explanatory approaches and empirical findings of transformation research which had been compiled for the cases of unified Germany, and Eastern and Western Europe from a comparative-expanded perspective, to South Korea” (Holtmann and Lee 2012, 3).

All project members acknowledged from the outset that the situation of East and West Germany in 1989/90 is vastly different from the current situation on the Korean peninsula apart from the environment of national division and dependency on international conflict situations. Korea is not Germany – both states and civic societies took diverging historical paths of development a long time ago (Lee 2014). Moreover, Germany and Korea are embedded in different cultural traditions. The involvement into international power conflicts of both the divided partial states of Germany and Korea respectively resulted in contrasting developments: While the four powers of the former anti-Hitler coalition gave up their reservations about German reunification, such an agreement between the USA and China – North and South Korea’s protective powers – is still not in sight (Kydd 2015; Hundt 2010; Kim 2006, 2003).

Notwithstanding this, German unity keeps the hopes for a future national reunification aflame in the Republic of Korea. Since 1990, not only have over 5000 scientific papers about this topic been published, the issue has also been mentioned in parliamentary debates more than a similar number of times while simultaneously being an ongoing issue in the media. In this way a public discourse about the “lessons” of the German unification has emerged (Lee 2014).

The knowledge transfer was performed in two directions within the German-Korean project network. Firstly, findings and experiences, research questions and problem definitions regarding the German reunification are transferred into schemes or rather forms under consideration of the Korean expectations, i.e. more practically applicable forms. These forms “can serve as

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<sup>1</sup> This transfer project was jointly financed by the South Korean Ministry of Unification and the German Research Foundation (DFG). It was executed from 2012 until 2015 under the leadership of the Zentrum für Sozialforschung Halle (Center for Social Research) and the Institute of Korean Studies of the Freie Universität Berlin in close cooperation with colleagues of the former collaborative research center 580 from the University Halle and University Jena, as well as numerous Korean experts, politicians and scientists.

‘lessons’ for the preparation and support of transformative activities in Korea” (Holtmann and Lee 2012, 2). In doing so, the transfer project – and this is an explicitly intended side effect – also makes the Korean domestic discourse about the German reunification accessible for international transformation research. Secondly, the SFB 580 was also able to control its own explanatory models in regard to generalizability and transferability from the European into the East Asian context, a field that had so far been largely neglected by comparative transformation research.

The special (i.e. the particularly strained) relationship between North and South Korea makes a coincidence of national unity and abrupt system change similar to the German case seem unrealistic, or at least imponderable. In the medium-term, small-scale patterns with intermediate problem-solving goals seem to be at best conceivable. These should be sounded out by the way of international rapprochement and collaboration, starting from building regional or local contacts. This way of a “policy of small steps” was pursued by the Brandt/Scheel administration at the end of the 1960s during the so-called *Neue Ostpolitik* (New Eastern Policy).

This was accompanied by hopes for a “change through rapprochement” on the West German side. However, our South Korean cooperating partners are well aware of the fact that the détente policy that was introduced at that time despite the ongoing East-West conflict created the psychological and material preconditions within the intra- German relations for the – albeit ultimately surprising – German reunification. Hence, their primary interest about the “German case” lies in the time period that may be understood as the *prehistory of German unification*, i.e. the time interval between the late 1960s and the end of the 1980s.

The German project partners can contribute insights into the inner societal development of the GDR before 1989. These insights consist partly of research results of the SFB 580 and to a degree emerged within the transfer project environment, the latter thus being the most recent findings. Firstly, the “GDR Representative Surveys”<sup>2</sup> that had gone largely unnoticed for decades and were recently been rediscovered for research and the public, document the general mood of the East German community at that time. They show clearly that: (1) The desire for reunification remained unbroken in East Germany from the 1960s. (2) Although the majority of the East German populace had come to terms with the prevailing conditions, they (3) saw a better alternative system in the Federal Republic of Germany. On the other hand, the East German people knew how to adapt to the economy of scarcity, which included a “creative barter economy,”

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<sup>2</sup> The former Ministry for All-German Affairs carried out annual interviews between 1968 and 1989 with GDR visitors who returned to the BRD about the attitudes of the East German contact persons (relatives, business partners) they visited. The reports were classified at that time (Holtmann and Köhler 2015).

with personal skill and individual initiative (Holtmann and Köhler 2015). This prevailing general mood explains why expectations of the East German populace were high at the time of German unification. The initial “unification euphoria” however, was quickly followed by a “transformational shock” (ibid.).

Secondly, memories about the times of the old system in the form of *biographical-formative experiences of the older generations* stay alive long after its demise (cf. Silbereisen 2016, in this HSR Forum). Multi-generational-interviews with East German families conducted during the transfer project<sup>3</sup> indicate that “system” and “living environment” become delinked in the personal memory. Although the oppressive character of the communist system is unquestioned by the older generation, in hindsight what really counts are positive memories about the private (and partly occupational) everyday life in the GDR. They evidently do not want *these* positive aspects of their personal biography taken away from them. This is supposedly a generalizable coping mechanism for system-change experiences: The memories of the “good aspects” of life under dictatorship that were experienced ‘in the shadow’ of the regime remain. This attitude requires however, that the regime permitted sufficient private freedoms.

Against the backdrop of these considerations, we can draw the following conclusions for the transfer of knowledge about unification that is “stored up” in the German transformation research and the SFB 580 to the Korean peninsula.

First, referring to the dimension of *range and time of change*, it shall be understood that the transfer project was neither focused on the question *whether or not* a reunification of both Koreas would be realistic in principle, nor at *which date* a reunification might happen.

Such long-term prognosis would not be useful, especially considering the fact that developments are usually predicted more pessimistic than they actually turn out to be. Instead, the transfer project hypothetically presumes a path of rapprochement and democratic transformation that has already been taken. Only by leaving open all possible scenarios can the transfer project’s findings unfold their full practical applicability. Studying the experiences of the German unity process can be useful for coping with an abrupt upheaval scenario as well as presenting a directed conversion scenario. At the same time, the manuals that were worked out in the project cooperation contribute to laying the foundation for a future transformation on their own.

Second, a *theory-based approach* to the problem of knowledge transfer in the field of intercultural translation” is required for bridging the gap between two different spheres of historically rooted political and societal cultures. Thus

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<sup>3</sup> Within the transfer project “Intergenerational understanding after the fall of the Wall” in 2015, 16 East German families were interviewed about how their grandparents and parents are passing on information about the GDR times to their children’s and grandchildren’s generation (a publication of the comprehensive interview transcripts is being prepared).

potential misunderstandings and wrong conclusions can be avoided more effectively. Third, normally there are *legacies* of the old system, living on after system change. Such legacies are deeply rooted and they encapsulate core elements of a national political and social culture, in both parts of Germany, for example, in the customization on welfare state (Gabriel, Holtmann, et al. 2015). After system change, this factor should be regarded thoroughly because it is these legacies which reflect path dependencies in political and social culture successfully overcoming the ruptures of system transition. Afterwards they help to preserve traditional social habits and moral norms as well as identifying ‘hidden’ endogenous talents such as local entrepreneurship (cf. the article of Fritsch and Wyrwich 2016, in this HSR Forum) both of which can help to face the emerging challenges of system change.

Fourth, strategic responses being adequate to arousing challenges of social, political and economic transition cannot disregard the field (importance) of *institutions*. The case of Germany demonstrates that it requires a long-term strategy or at least incremental steps of *controlled institutional change* in order to manage the enormous uncertainties. Fifth, as well as institutions, *actors do matter*. This refers to the key role devoted to political, economic and societal elites in times of system change (cf. the articles of Best and Vogel 2016, and Martens 2016, in this HSR Forum). Therefore, it is necessary to set free *decentralized resources* of political and economic modernization in the form of local autonomy, individual free entrepreneurship, or personal self-efficacy (all combined would be optimal) (cf. the articles of Holtmann and Rademacher 2016; Fritsch and Wyrwich 2016; and Silbereisen 2016, in this HSR Forum). And sixth, being confronted with unexpected risks of lifestyle changes, such as unemployment, career breaks and the devaluation of personal developmental assets, people affected by such misfortune tend to drop from high expectations into deep disappointment. In such cases, the new political order is usually declared responsible for causing these grievances. Therefore, stimulating decentralized resources of self-help is also important for ensuring the popular *legitimacy of the new system* in times of risk ‘between the systems.’

In the following articles in this HSR Forum we shall outline these dimensions of change by describing selected empirical facets of the German unification from a more general perspective. Beforehand, and as part of this introduction, the research area for the purposes of intercultural translation will be modeled theoretically.

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## 2. The Mechanisms of Transcoding

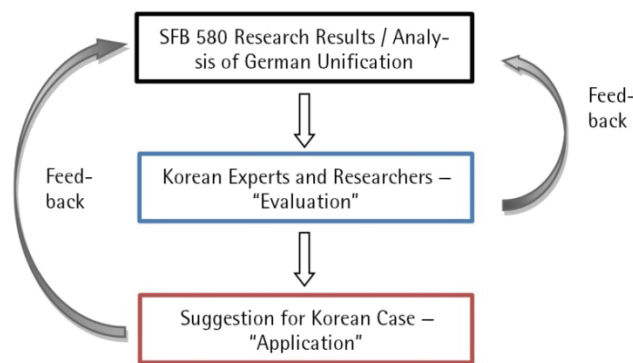
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The real challenges for policy transfer researchers are the complex issues involved in the transformation and integration of different systems. It is obvious

that policies that emerged and were formulated in specific societies at specific moments of time are bound to these conditions and cannot be transferred as such into other societies and their specific circumstances. Therefore, transfer of knowledge can only be successful when the specificities of the respective cultural, social, historical etc. conditions are fully taken into account. This means that transfer of knowledge should be considered as an act of neo-contextualization of knowledge.

For this purpose we have proceeded by taking three steps, as illustrated in figure 1. We call [labeled] this whole process “transcoding,” and it includes two methodological tools of cultural “translation” and “code switching.”

Figure 1: Mechanism of Transcoding




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### 3. Translation and Transcoding as Methodological Tools for Intercultural Policy Transfer

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The term “translation,” as it is used in our project, does not relate to the translation of words, but it is rather used in Walter Benjamin’s sense of “cultural translation” (1923). Cultural translation can be defined as an active process of interpreting and transforming other cultures within a specific historical context; it is neither an equivalent exchange of meanings between different cultural texts, nor a mediation of meanings from a transcendental position. Benjamin’s theorization of translation is productive in that it frees translation from having to be a parasite on the original, and instead allows it an autonomous position. This is because what the translator aspires to translate is not the original text but what he calls “pure language” an unrepresentable “idea” that is “potentiality,” inherent in, but not reducible to, the original.

Benjamin’s views were actively adopted in the field of cultural studies from the moment cultural translation started to become a theoretical issue. In the

theory of cultural translation, translation is defined as a particular case of intercultural communication with the purpose of bridging the gap between different cultures. The starting point of cultural translation theory is the hypothesis that cultural differences of tradition, value, thought, etc. make intercultural communication impossible (Bassnett and Refevert 1990).

Hence, the translator Benjamin refers to a very peculiar role within cultural translation. This is because, in cultural translation, the context in which the translation takes place, and the translator, depending on who it is, can either bring about an equal relationship between two cultures, or create a hierarchical relationship between them. In this sense, Lydia Liu emphasizes that

the crucial thing here is not whether translation between cultures is possible (people do it anyway), or whether the ‘other’ is knowable, or even whether an abstruse ‘text’ is decipherable, but what practical purpose or needs [...] bring an ethnographer to pursue cultural translation (Liu 1995, 2).

A policy transfer should therefore be understood as an act of “cultural translation.” In any policy transfer, the translator must always have a specific goal in mind. Through the act of translating, a new translation is created; this translation must exist within its own context and the original policy must be modified in order to adapt it to the new context and configuration of policies. Of course, just like the term “transfer,” the term “translation” also exists as a metaphor, leading to certain problems when describing cultural and social practices. Nevertheless, we can agree with Freeman that the concept of “translation” has the advantage of being able to explain the act of policy translation better than the concept of “transfer” (Freeman 2008).

The term “translation” makes uncertainties of any “sign” as an instrument of communication evident. It is in reference to this that Freeman contends:

We communicate by means of signs (words and pictures, sounds and images), that is, by choosing or making representations of what we mean. But the relationship between the sign and what it signifies is neither determined nor mechanical: what things mean or represent is a matter of convention (a social construct) and it is invariably inexact. Understanding may come to be shared, but it cannot be identical. This fundamental epistemological uncertainty, this requirement that every utterance be accompanied by some hermeneutic move on the part of the reader or listener, is a source of innovation and creativity as well as error and failure. Translation makes this uncertainty explicit (Freeman 2009, 440).

It is in this sense that structural linguists like Saussure understand translation to be “a sign which stands for a sign, a representation of a representation or a representation” (Freeman 2008, 5). In actual fact, the concept of translation not only means “the replacing of terms in one language with those in another,” but above all “a substitution of one set of relationships or associations with another.” Translation is a performative “articulation,” and the concept is used as such by Stuart Hall and Ernesto Laclau. It is “the work of bringing two (or more)



things into relation with one another. For such relationships are not essential or given: they have to be made and maintained, or ‘performed’” (Law 1999). Such relationships can be agonistic and differential but also antagonistic. In this sense the notion of translation is a “dual movement of (re)presentation and (re)association,” which “draws attention to the change, adaptation, mutation and transformation which takes place in all instances of communication or transfer” (Freeman 2008, 12).

Naturally, the decisive role in policy transfer as cultural translation is played by the translator. We have been able to observe several historical cases of intercultural policy transfer. This has been possible because the respective translators had linked the policy decision process that led to the creation of the original language text with the policy decision process under which the target language text was then created. However, the act of translation for policy transfers and other cultural translations are clearly different, since the act of translation for policy transfers can be understood as a process of *transcoding*, rather than translation.

“Transcoding” is not an established term within cultural studies and the social sciences. However, it is an established concept in the field of communication technics where it refers to the act of converting something to a different format of similar or like quality in order to gain compatibility with another program or application, such as transferring a video from a camcorder to a hard drive.

Using the method of “transcoding” has (several) advantages since the re-contextualization can be made in both social and cultural processes. The term transcoding points to the change of “codes,” i.e. sets of rules of signification which are part of every transposition of knowledge contents from one context to another, thereby calling attention to these contexts.

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#### 4. Seven Domains of Transformation as Selected Fields for the Transfer of Knowledge

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On the basis of this theoretical framework, knowledge transfer has been focused on selected contents (policies) on the sub-systemic level. The connecting factors are seven “signatures” of the German reunification: elite change (cf. Best and Vogel 2016, in this HSR Forum), private entrepreneurship (cf. Fritsch and Wyrwich 2016), labor market (cf. Ketzmerick 2016), management of factories of small and medium, range (cf. Martens 2016), decentralization (cf. Holtmann and Rademacher 2016), generational experiences engraved in life stories (cf. Hofmann and Martens 2016), and psychosocial coping with system change (cf. Silbereisen 2016). For these domains of transfer we compiled practical manuals in cooperation with our South Korean cooperation partners so as to prepare for incremental processes of systemic change on a small scale. The knowledge transfer followed a multi-stage relay principle. The researchers of

SFB 580 functioned as transferees and passed on their knowledge to the Korean cooperation partners. The cooperation partners then processed this knowledge in the role of translators in such a way that South Korean actors who will be concerned with cross-border or cross-systemic collaboration in the future are able to reduce uncertainties of doing well when dealing with North Korean individuals or problem situations.

The assignment of the German transferees to the different domains of transfer naturally followed the disciplinary issues and the boundaries of the researchers involved and their respective scientific specializations: Labor market research, economics, political sciences, psychology and sociology. The inclusion of the Korean translators and their work followed the same principle. Yet, a fundamental result of the interdisciplinary designed SFB 580 was that the comprehensive and abrupt social change that accompanied the German reunification developed a complex and holistic dynamic that could neither be comprehended by individual disciplines nor handled by means of stand-alone political interventions. Once the “political floodgates” have been breached, there is little benefit in turning the individual “social adjusting screws.” Rather, particularly far-reaching coordinated decisions of general principle have to be made in a very short time although with a long-term vision in mind. This procedure also bears great risks for faulty decisions. However, in our opinion there are hardly any alternatives to this procedure, because the swiftness of transformational processes does not allow ample time for planned, structured reactions or incremental procedures.

With this in mind we also view the future Korean reunification and the transformation of North Korea that is necessary for reunification as holistic processes. This is also the reason why the manuals of individual domains are intertwined, even though they appear as statements that stand on their own. For example, the integration of former North Korean functional elites is viewed as a key precondition for a successful and non-violent “inner unity.” Decentralized structures can be a sociopolitical advantage in unification-transformations because loyalty of these elites is more strongly tied to their local and regional affiliation than to their role in the demised authoritarian regime. Furthermore, international comparison of systems assigns democracy-promoting and efficiency-increasing effects to decentralized structures. The latter aspect is related to the everyday experience that individuals who are familiar with certain societal problems are better at solving them. However, this argument presumes that the democratically elected elites have regional ties in order to fulfill these conditions. In this way elite integration and political and administrative decentralization are mutually interdependent.

This interdependency can easily be expanded onto the other domains as well. A political and economic opening of North Korea will inevitably lead to economic distortions, risks, and dramatic changes in the labor market. To alleviate growing social inequality, an expansion of social transfer systems within

South Korea and the expansion of this system to North Korea during the unification process will be unavoidable. *Prima facie*, the less transfer payments are required the higher the employment rate turns out or respectively the more labor force can be integrated into the labor market. During the economic transformation from a quasi-military organized plan and command economy to an open market economy, two aspects are especially important: enterprise privatization and business creation. However, the population will only be able to find employment in companies that are able to survive during the times of dramatic change, even if North Korea is unified with South Korea. Although the German experience shows that privatization can happen through external acquisitions, companies which are successful in the long run rely on regional business elites, at least in middle management.

Business creation on the other hand, is an almost entirely regional and decentralized process. Moreover, regions with a higher level of business creation in the period of transition can cope better at a later point in time with the consequences of economic transformation. It is proven that a “regional culture of entrepreneurial independence” persisted in Germany. Regions that showed a high level of entrepreneurial independence in the mid-1920s had more business creations after 1989/1990. The proverbial “merchants of Kaesong” might become similar “pioneers” of market economy, so that the “hidden mercantilism” of North Korea’s kitchen gardens and private markets evolves into similar regional entrepreneurial traditions.

However, not only do regional differences determine these political, social and economic processes, but also autobiographical experiences and social ties which differ between generations. The radical social change during the transitional phase devaluates prior experiences and shatters social capital, yet it does not destroy the self-efficacy that is acquired throughout a lifetime. Self-efficacy alleviates the consequences of current hardships in future life. The more self-efficacy is supported – particularly for adolescents through schools and education – the higher the chance for the people to assert themselves later on (resilience), and the lesser the social costs of transformation. From the perspective of developmental psychology, unification planning should consider how useful self-efficacy experiences can be provided for young people. Personal success in education, occupation, and entrepreneurial independence will become invaluable psychological, economic and socio-political resources for a successful reunification.

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## 5. Gaming Simulation as a Kind of Evaluation

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In order to evaluate the results of the aforementioned three-step process of problematization, translation and transcoding experiences of the German reuni-

fication in a realistic setting, a simulation game on challenges of a contingent Korean reunification was conducted with South Korean public servants. The simulation game was an additional element of the program of the Academy of Unification of the Institute of Korean Studies at the Freie Universität Berlin in 2015. Although this HSR Forum does not dedicate a chapter to the simulation game we shall outline its “philosophy” in short terms here, so appreciating its utilization value for simulating scenarios of unification.

A strong evaluation of the guidelines, which are based on our findings, could be proven regarding to their usefulness of direct, corresponding or *mutatis mutandis* application in a real unification process. This creates three issues: Firstly, a reunification on the Korean peninsula is not accomplished yet – and some would argue that it can never happen. Secondly, if unification does happen, it is apparent that it will not happen as rapidly as was the case in Germany (Lee 2001, 322). Thirdly, we are not willing or able to make statements on the Korean reunification with the aim of evaluating our own results and findings. Therefore, we are compelled to simulate a kind of incremental unification process.

Furthermore, political changes are fundamentally driven by political considerations and decisions. Following along the lines of the “Actor-centered Institutionalism” by Scharpf (1997), our evaluation also had to take the political elites into consideration as well as they would probably bear the responsibility for a future Korean reunification. This leads to two other problems: On the one hand, our capabilities to acquire high-ranking political deciders that have been in office recently for being a part of a gaming simulation are very limited in both Koreas. On the other hand, no one knows at this time who will possibly be in charge of implementing the contingent reunification process there. Therefore we decided to ask participants of the last Academy program to evaluate our guidelines. Public servants of several boards of the South Korean public service were selected and sent by the Ministry of Unification (*Tong-il-bu*) in order to be taught about the German unification process at the Academy of Unification in Berlin. This probably makes them the most likely future experts on reunification issues in South Korea. Nevertheless, in our simulation they would simply play the roles of such experts.

We decided to conduct a simulation game, because “prototype gaming simulation combines role-play and simulation” by representing “dynamic models of [possible] real situations” (Kriz 2003, 496). Gaming simulation usually consists of three phases: (1) the briefing, (2) the game, and (3) the debriefing (*ibid.*, 497).

1) During the “briefing,” a goal was first defined: The president of the Republic of South Korea orders an expert’s concept for the administrative structure of a unified Korea. Furthermore, our guideline materials, which are summarized in the following chapters, were briefly presented. The roles of the Academy participants were determined according to their recent positions and the different policies; they were responsible for economy, jurisdiction,

national or public security, etc. In this way, we were able to perform a five-day simulation game in an “open (free form)” mode, rather than a “closed (rigid rule)” mode (ibid.).

- 2) The game participants were separated into two different workgroups. During the simulation their work was interrupted by several critical interventions, which took the form of real newspaper articles about the German reunification and “faked” but nevertheless lifelike articles about the impacts of a Korean unification. The aim of those interventions was to implement a more realistic experience of uncertainty into the simulation, since such interventions would be most likely to occur during political transition processes as well.
- 3) Additionally, we employed two different modes of debriefing: Firstly, daily reflections of the participant’s experiences, thus allowing them “to apply the knowledge acquired during the simulation to the real world” (ibid.). Secondly, on the last day a “meta-debriefing” (a debriefing of the debriefing) was conducted in order to reflect on the facilitation and debriefing of the game, the design process and the model of the game” (ibid.).

Although a detailed analysis of the gaming simulation is still outstanding, three kinds of initial impressions have emerged throughout: Firstly, the rather inexperienced Academy of Unification’s participants were able to develop a ten-point plan for the complex transformation process of a Korean reunification. This plan however, coincided significantly with the ten-point program that Federal Chancellor Helmut Kohl presented in the German Bundestag on 21st November 1989 in order to overcome the separation of Germany and Europe. Secondly, the impression is emerging that South Korean public servants that did not take part in a comparable educational program are able to successfully handle the guidelines that emerged on the basis of the research that is presented in the following chapters. Finally, the gaming simulation proves that intercultural knowledge transfer on a future Korean reunification cannot be carried out by taking over the German experiences; rather it is necessary to employ smart-copying strategies.

Since such smart-copying strategies have been discussed in the context of the technical advances of South Korea or Japan for a long time (e.g. Amsden 1989, 20; Cox 2008), this is a significant conventional result for further enhancing the Academy of Unification’s educational program. In addition, smart-copying may also be useful for coping with the complex processes that will accompany a national reunification on the Korean peninsula.

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## 6. Final Remark

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Summarizing our won knowledge about the transfer of knowledge concerning the topic of unification we can make a final remark. Though German experi-

ences with unification since 1990 cannot be transferred to contemporary Korea simply like a blueprint, one can get some helpful “lessons” of the case of Germany: In general, the biographical-formative experiences of the older generation do not break abruptly at the momentum of unification and system change; they are continuing on both sides of the fallen border, and they serve as a personal guide to coping with the challenges of new times. In times of transition, different and conflictive expectations are emerging: There are fears (*and* demands) of loss and punishment as well as hopes of more welfare and freedom (*and* growing resistance against reallocation of public goods), a moral desire for justice arouses as well as an opportunistic pragmatism of ‘muddling through.’ All these expectations and mental reservations are belonging to the “legacies” of the two halves of a formerly divided country. A conciliative policy of unification should bear these legacies in mind for to promote a controlled institutional change towards market economy and democracy, in a way that helps elites and the man in the street to respond to tremendous risks and uncertainties.

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