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# Peace through Cooperation or Peace through Strength? How to Achieve Peace in the Very Intractable Conflict Society

*Young-Mi Kwon & Juhwa Park*\*

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**Abstract:** »Frieden durch Kooperation oder Frieden durch Stärke? Wie Frieden in einer renitenten Konfliktgesellschaft erreicht werden kann«. The Korean War, having started on June 25, 1950, has never formally ended. As the two Koreas are technically still at war, the conflict on the Korean Peninsula has become intractable. The goal of this study is to explore the attitudes of South Koreans living in the intractable conflict about how to achieve peace. To fulfill this goal, we conducted a nation-wide survey to investigate attitudes toward militant and cooperative internationalism. We also measured various variables involved with the intractable conflict. Our results indicate that the value of international harmony and equality as well as attitudes toward peace are the best predictors of cooperative internationalism, while the value of international harmony and equality as well as the attitudes toward war were the strongest predictors of militant internationalism. Our results also suggest that the tendency to regard inter-Korean relations as zero-sum relations and the attitudes toward peace mediated the relationship between international harmony and cooperative internationalism, while the zero-sum perception and attitudes toward war on the Korean Peninsula mediated the same value factor and the cooperative internationalism. Possible implications are discussed.

**Keywords:** Peace on the Korean Peninsula, intractable conflict, peace psychology.

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## 1. Introduction

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As the talks between South and North Korea and between North Korea and the United States surrounding the Korean Peninsula are taking a new turn, there is a rising interest in whether the intractable conflict between the two Koreas, which has lasted for 70 years, will finally end. Talks and negotiations among

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the South Korean, North Korean, and US governments are aimed at bringing about an agreement on, and systemic change of, such matters as the declaration of the end of the Korean War, the denuclearization of North Korea, and a peace treaty. However, even though the agreement and unification on national and system levels are necessary conditions and goals for the realization of peace on the Korean Peninsula, they cannot be considered ultimate goals from a long-term point of view. Even if systemic unification is achieved, if it is done without resolving the fundamental causes of the conflicts and disputes between the two separated Koreas, hostile feelings and attitudes toward each other are highly likely to cause new forms of social problems. In a similar vein, the peace scholar Johan Galtung (1969) argued that peace should be divided into “negative peace,” which means a state without war, and “positive peace,” which means a state in which there are positive social values such as harmony, justice, and equality. In particular, given the special circumstances on the Korean Peninsula with intractable conflicts, achieving harmony and unity between the South and North Korean residents after the system unification is necessary for the realization of true peace on the Korean Peninsula. The purpose of this study is to grasp people’s perceptions on peace from a longer-term perspective, unlike previous studies that mainly focused on South Koreans’ perceptions on unification. In other words, this study was conducted to explore people’s attitudes toward specific methods (military power or cooperation) of achieving peace as an ultimate goal and the diverse variables affecting these attitudes.

### 1.1 Intractable Conflict on the Korean Peninsula

Given the purpose of this study, it is necessary to understand the unique situation of the decades-long intractable conflicts between South and North Korea. Intractable conflicts are defined as long-term conflicts in which there is no clear victory or defeat between the conflict parties, or those in which the parties have not actively cooperated for peaceful settlement of the conflicts for a long time (Bar-Tal, 2007; Kriesberg, 1993). According to Kriesberg (1993), an intractable conflict is a protracted conflict that (1) lasts for at least one generation, (2) causes large and small violent incidents, (3) is perceived as irresolvable through peace by the conflict parties, and (4) demands that participators invest extensive physical and psychological resources. In addition, Bar-Tal considered an intractable conflict a total conflict related to the existence and survival of the communities and individuals in conflict, who perceive it as a zero-sum (“winner-takes-all”) relationship. He also argued that it is a central conflict affecting the communities and lives of their members in diverse ways.

The characteristics of intractable conflicts are well reflected in the relationship between the two Koreas. The Korean War did not end with a one-sided victory but stopped through the ceasefire agreement in 1953. Officially, how-

ever, it did not come to an end. Large and small terrorist attacks and local wars occurred between the both sides, and there have been repeated cases where the mood of reconciliation has been disrupted by sudden violent collision. The attitude toward North Korea and reunification has become an important criterion in South Korean society that distinguishes the leftists from the rightists and the liberals from the conservatives, acting as a powerful variable causing conflicts among regions and generations. In addition, as people of a nation in truce, young Korean men must fulfill their military duties, and the debate over this mandatory military service system sometimes causes conflicts between men and women as well as between various social strata (Jung 2001). By experiencing a seemingly peaceful yet 'lack of peace' situation for a long period of time, people are more likely to perceive unification as a big change that disturbs the current familiar situation rather than as a goal that must be achieved. Although considerable resources are consumed by the nation and individuals because of the "ceasefire" situation, people may perceive necessary resources and confusion that are expected in the process of stabilizing the system after the unification as a bigger burden. This is because the system unification is not the ultimate goal that can solve all current problems, and people exposed to chronic conflicts tend to perceive peace at an abstract level and may not fully understand the specific method and process to achieve it (Bar-Tal 2000). In this context, it is vital to have a discourse on how to embody people's perceptions on peace on the Korean Peninsula, the definition of practically realizable peace, and the method to achieve it.

Coleman (2012) considered sustainable peace a state where the potential of violence has been lowered and the potential of peace has been enhanced in the overall society as well as the lives of individuals. He classified the factors that can affect sustainable peace into micro-level (individual), meso-level (social community), and macro-level (national) factors. In particular, he argued that the micro-level factors consist of various individual-level psychological factors that promote the potential for peace as well as factors that prevent the potential for violence. As for the factors that can prevent the potential for violence, he suggested the following: the understanding of the causes and consequences of destructive conflicts; the values, attitudes, and behaviors that support non-violence; acceptance of uncertainties; and openness to difference. In addition, he suggested that the factors promoting the potential for peace were as follows: people's awareness of interdependent relationships; the values, attitudes, and behaviors that promote cooperation and trust; healthy harmony between openness to change and conservativeness; awareness of equality; and compassion for in-group and out-group members. Coleman (2012) also emphasized that the potential for peace and potential for violence can co-exist, arguing that psychological factors which can prevent the potential for violence while increasing the potential for peace should be strengthened. In a similar vein, this study deals with attitudes toward peace and war independently and explores the variables

affecting perceptions and attitudes toward achieving the goal of peace in “peaceful” or “violent” ways, respectively.

## 1.2 The Ways to Achieve Peace: Through Cooperation or Strength

Among the different ways of achieving peace – including militarism, cooperationism, and isolationism – this study focuses on achieving peace through cooperation and through military strength (Cohrs et al. 2005; Grossman, Manekin, and Miodownik 2015; Johnson 1990; Vail and Motyl 2010). This study assumed that achieving peace through cooperation and achieving peace through military strength are not in opposite positions but can be treated as targets of relatively independent attitudes. While previous research has studied the perceptions and attitudes toward the way of achieving peace in the general context, this study examines attitudes toward the way of achieving peace in the context of the Korean Peninsula, expecting that South Korean people exposed to the intractable conflict for a long time would have different representations of peace than those that only experienced it in a general context.

## 1.3 Attitudes toward Peace and War

First, this study included attitudes toward peace and war as variables that can affect attitudes toward the way of achieving peace. According to attitude researchers, an individual’s attitude toward a specific object is not always entirely positive or negative. Attitudes toward one object can have both positive and negative characteristics, or in other words, ambivalent characteristics (Cacioppo, Gardner, and Berntson 1997). Likewise, attitudes toward two objects which seemingly have highly contradictory meanings can also have relatively independent relationships, not completely negative correlations that are always located at the extremes of a single dimension. In a study from Bizumic et al. (2013) that showed a negative correlation between the attitudes toward peace and the attitudes toward war, the researchers also found that attitudes toward peace and attitudes toward war were distinct concepts by showing that the leading variables predicting each attitude were not the same. In the current study, since we also regarded the two concepts as related but distinct, we constructed a scale to measure each one respectively. In particular, this study carried out the measurement with the focus on attitudes toward peace and war in the context of the Korean Peninsula, not in the general context.

## 1.4 Perceptions of North Korea and Inter-Korean Relations

Based on the assumption that South Koreans’ perceptions and emotional responses to North Korea and their perceptions of inter-Korean relations would affect their attitudes toward peace and war on the Korean Peninsula as well as

their attitudes toward the way of achieving peace on the Korean Peninsula, we included related variables in this study.

*Hostility toward North Korea.* According to previous studies on group conflicts that lasted for relatively long periods of time (e.g., the Israeli-Palestinian relationship), people show a psychological tendency to see the opposing group as responsible for the conflict and derogate the morality of that group, and this hostile attitude makes reconciliation between the two groups more difficult (Maoz and McCauley 2005; Shnabel et al. 2009). In this study, we applied the original items used in previous studies to the context of inter-Korean relations and measured South Koreans' tendency to see North Korea as responsible for the start and continuance of inter-Korean conflicts as well as the tendency to derogate the morality of North Korea. We expected that this detailed measurement of attitudes toward North Korea would show greater predictive power than the simple measurement of positivity or negativity.

*Tendency to perceive inter-Korean relations as a zero-sum game.* This study applied the variable "belief in a zero-sum game (BZSG)" to inter-Korean relations. The original variable refers to a tendency to believe that in a social relationship that shares limited resources, if one side wins, the other side will surely be defeated (Różycka-Tran, Boski, and Wojciszke 2015). According to this concept derived from the game theory of behavioral economics, the higher the tendency of people to see the relationship between the two sides as a zero-sum relationship, the less likely the two sides are to try to resolve the conflict in a peaceful way. This is because they believe that for one side to be a winner, the other side must be a loser, rather than thinking that both sides could benefit (Von Neumann and Morgenstern 1944). According to a previous study, people high in this tendency showed low trust in others and tended to choose competition instead of cooperation in a social dilemma situation (Różycka-Tran et al. 2015). Those who perceive inter-Korean relations as zero-sum relations may think that if South Korea wants to gain benefits, it has no choice but to defeat North Korea. If this is the case, they may then think that South Korea should win in this competition even by using military strength if necessary. On the contrary, those low in this tendency may think that a win-win strategy which benefits both South and North Korea is possible and prefer a method that can bring the best results to both sides through cooperation.

*Competitive victimhood.* This variable is also a concept borrowed from previous studies that dealt with intractable conflicts among groups. It refers to the tendency of each of the two groups to argue competitively that their group experienced more damage and suffering than the opposing group in conflict (Noor et al. 2008; Noor, Brown, and Prentice 2008; Shnabel, Halabi, and Noor 2013). This phenomenon occurs mainly in relationships in which the two sides have been harming each other due to a long-lasting dispute rather than in conflict relationships wherein one group apparently has harmed the other group unilaterally. According to previous studies, the more strongly group members

experience competitive victimhood, the more likely they justify in-group's violence toward the out-group and deny in-group responsibility, and the less likely they try to forgive or reconcile with the other group (Noor et al. 2008; Noor, Brown, and Prentice 2008; Shnabel et al. 2013). Applying this result to inter-Korean relations, the more strongly the South Koreans feel competitive victimhood toward North Korea, the more likely they are to think it is justifiable to return to North Korea as much suffering as it gave to South Korea. Therefore, they may regard defeating North Korea through violence or military strength as a positive method. On the other hand, those who think that both South and North Korea have suffered from the history of conflict would think that they must achieve peace through mutual cooperation because another war on the Korean Peninsula would surely bring more suffering to the people of both sides.

### 1.5 Individual Values and Attitudes

As argued by Coleman (2012), the diverse values, beliefs, and attitudes of individuals can have a significant effect on the occurrence of violence and peace at higher levels, such as in communities and countries. In this study, we included several individual characteristic variables that may influence beliefs in inter-group relationships, attitudes toward war and peace, and political attitudes.

*Right-wing authoritarianism.* The concept of right-wing authoritarianism begins with personality factors related to dominance and submission (Altemeyer 1998), and it is characterized by conventionalism (i.e., adherence to traditional norms and values), authoritarian aggression (i.e., aggressiveness toward those who violate norms), and authoritarian submission (i.e., subordination to authority and social norms) (Rattazzi, Bobbio, and Canova 2007; Zakrisson 2005). Right-wing authoritarianism can influence attitudes toward various social values and is particularly known to have a strong correlation with political orientation (Rattazzi, Bobbio, and Canova 2007). According to the study conducted by Bizumic et al. (2013), right-wing authoritarianism was negatively correlated with attitudes toward peace and positively correlated with attitudes toward war. Likewise, we also expected that right-wing authoritarianism could predict attitudes toward peace and war on the Korean Peninsula. In addition, considering that negative attitudes toward North Korea were the position of the traditional perspective as well as the politically conservative in South Korea, we expected that people with stronger right-wing authoritarianism would show more negative attitude toward North Korea and inter-Korean relations.

*Social dominance orientation.* Social dominance orientation, along with right-wing authoritarianism, has been treated as a factor that directly influences individual attitudes, perceptions, and behaviors toward political ideologies and social structures (Hong and Lee 2010). Social dominance orientation refers to

the individual attitude showing a preference for unequal relations among social groups. Those higher in such orientation believe that groups are not equal and prefer the superior group to be above the inferior group, while those lower in such orientation believe that all groups are equal and claim they should be treated equally (Pratto et al. 1994). According to previous studies mainly conducted in the United States, the higher people's social dominance orientation, the more strongly they supported political-economic conservatism, nationalism, patriotism, and anti-black racism. Those higher in social dominance orientation also supported military program policies but tended to oppose welfare policies for minority groups in society (Pratto, Sidanius, and Levin 2006; Pratto et al. 1994). If social dominance orientation can be applied to inter-Korean relations in the same way, South Koreans with higher social dominance orientation are more likely to perceive South Korea as superior to North Korea – rather than perceiving the inter-Korean relations as equal – and to justify military attacks on North Korea.

#### 1.6 Value of International Harmony and Equality vs. Value of National Strength and Order

Finally, we included Valerie Braithwaite's (1997, 1998) value of international harmony and equality as well as his value of national power in expectation that those individual values would affect attitudes toward peace and war. Braithwaite investigated 14 values that can predict people's political behavior and found the two higher-level independent factors: value of security and value of harmony. By developing a value balance model, he argued that if the value of security and the value of harmony are not balanced but a greater weight is placed on one value, people are likely to take the attitude toward a specific direction. When deciding on a political behavior, those who regard the value of security as important make their decision based on national strength and order, while those who regard the value of harmony as important make their decision based on international harmony and equality. Braithwaite (1998) found that the former prefer conservative policies, while the latter prefer progressive policies. In the current study, we also expected that those who regard international harmony and equality as important would pursue cooperation and equal relations between the two Koreas and prefer a peaceful way over war, as compared to those who regard the value of national power as important. Braithwaite (1997), meanwhile, argued that these two values are not in an "either-or" relationship. In other words, while there are people who act with greater weight in one of the two values, there are also people who consider the two values equally important and pursue balance between them. Therefore, in this study, instead of treating the two values as extreme concepts, we measured and analyzed them as independent variables.

As there are almost no previous studies on attitudes toward peace and war and attitudes toward the way of achieving peace on the Korean Peninsula, this study examined the research problems in a relatively exploratory manner. First, assuming that the individual characteristic variable, perception variable toward North Korean and inter-Korean relations, and attitude variable toward peace and war on the Korean Peninsula would predict each of the attitudes toward the way of achieving peace on the Korean Peninsula (through cooperation and through military strength), we conducted a hierarchical multiple regression analysis. Table 1<sup>1</sup> shows the effects of each of the predictor variables on the criterion variables. In addition, we tested the mediating hypothesis that perceptions of North Korea and inter-Korean relations will differ according to individual values and that attitudes toward war and peace on the Korean Peninsula, as well as attitudes toward the way of achieving peace on the Korean Peninsula will change accordingly.

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## 2. Methods

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### 2.1 Participants

This survey was conducted between May and June in 2018. A quota sampling method was used to select respondents from a population of adult men and women in South Korea with sex, age, and region as the quota controls. A sample of 1,000 adults participated in the survey. Data was collected via face-to-face interviews with the structured survey. Demographic distribution of the current study is presented in Table 2 (see online appendix).

### 2.2 Measures

In this study, we measured respondents' attitude toward achieving peace through cooperation and attitude toward achieving peace through strength as criterion variables. As predictor variables, first we included right-wing authoritarianism, social dominance orientation, value of international harmony and equality, and value of national strength and order as individual differences variables. To measure respondents' perception of North Korea, we included hostility toward North Korea, tendency to perceive inter-Korean relations as a zero-sum game, and competitive victimhood. Lastly, as predictor variables that may directly affect the criterion variables, we measured attitude toward peace and war.

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<sup>1</sup> All tables can be found in the digital appendix at HSR-Trans 30: <<https://doi.org/10.12759/hsr.trans.30.v01.2019>>.

*Achieving peace through cooperation.* To measure the respondents' attitudes toward a cooperative way of achieving peace on the Korean Peninsula, we used the following six items: "Building up inter-Korean cooperation is the way to realize peace," "For peace on the Korean Peninsula, we should strengthen the role of organizations and institutions that facilitate cooperation between two Korean governments and residents," "Inter-Korean conflicts cannot be solved in the way of guaranteeing the interest of both parties (reversed item)," "It is important to improve the quality of life of North Koreans for peace on the Korean Peninsula," "Inter-Korean conflicts cannot be resolved through improving mutual understandings of social culture and communication (reversed item)," and "To achieve an ultimate goal of peace on the Korean Peninsula, it is okay to use somewhat unpeaceful means (reversed item)." We used a 9-point Likert scale to measure the items (1 = Not agree at all, 9 = Strongly agree).

*Achieving peace through strength.* To measure the respondents' attitudes toward a way to achieve peace through military strength and force on the Korean Peninsula, we used the following six items: "The most effective way to realize peace on the Korean Peninsula is to maintain a strong military strength," "Keeping a balance between two Koreas' military power does not guarantee peace (reversed item)," "It is unfortunate to apply military power on the Korean Peninsula, but sometimes it is the only way to maintain peace on the Korean Peninsula," "Collective security based on military alliance does not guarantee peace on the Korean Peninsula (reversed item)," "Balance of terror through military threats can be the best way to maintain a peaceful relationship with North Korea," and "Peace on the Korean Peninsula cannot be realized by reducing two Koreas' military strength and installing joint organization to regulate military power (reversed item)." We used a 9-point Likert scale to measure the items (1 = Not agree at all, 9 = Strongly agree).

*Right-wing authoritarianism.* We used the translated Korean version (Nam, 2014) of the Zakrisson's (2005) short scale after minor revisions and included the following 15 items: "Our country needs a powerful leader, in order to destroy the radical and immoral currents prevailing in society today," "Our country needs free thinkers, who will have the courage to stand up against traditional ways, even if this upsets many people (reversed item)," "The 'old-fashioned ways' and 'old-fashioned values' still show the best way to live." "Our society would be better off if we showed tolerance and understanding for untraditional values and opinions (reversed item)," "Our society should guard closely sacred norms about abortion, pornography and marriage and punish those who violate them before it is too late, violations must be punished," "It would be best if newspapers were censored so that people would not be able to get hold of destructive and disgusting material," "Our society needs people who challenge and criticize the government and ignore 'the normal way of living' (reversed item)," "Our forefathers ought to be honored more for the way they have built our society, at the same time we ought to put an end to those forces destroying

it,” “People should develop their own moral standards rather than relying on social norms (reversed item),” “There are many radical, immoral people trying to ruin things; the society ought to stop them,” “It is better to accept bad literature than to censor it (reversed item),” “Facts show that we have to be harder against crime and sexual immorality, in order to uphold law and order,” “The situation in the society of today would be improved if troublemakers were treated with reason and humanity (reversed item),” and “If the society so wants, it is the duty of every true citizen to help eliminate the evil that poisons our country from within.” We used a 7-point Likert scale to measure the items (1 = Not agree at all, 7 = Strongly agree).

*Social dominance orientation.* To measure the respondents’ social dominance orientation, we used the scale created by Ho and his colleagues (Ho et al., 2015) and included the following 16 items: “Some groups of people must be kept in their place,” “It’s probably a good thing that certain groups are at the top and other groups are at the bottom,” “An ideal society requires some groups to be on top and others to be on the bottom,” “Some groups of people are simply inferior to other groups,” “Groups at the bottom are just as deserving as groups at the top (reversed item),” “No one group should dominate in society (reversed item),” “Groups at the bottom should not have to stay in their place (reversed item),” “Group dominance is a poor principle (reversed item),” “We should not push for group equality,” “We should not try to guarantee that every group has the same quality of life,” “It is unjust to try to make groups equal,” “Group equality should not be our primary goal,” “We should work to give all groups an equal chance to succeed (reversed item),” “We should do what we can to equalize conditions for different groups (reversed item),” “No matter how much effort it takes, we ought to strive to ensure that all groups have the same chance in life (reversed item),” and “Group equality should be our ideal (reversed item).” We used a 7-point Likert scale to measure the items (1 = Not agree at all, 7 = Strongly agree).

*Two values that determine political behaviors: International harmony and equality versus national strength and order.* Among the original 14 items created by Braithwaite (1998), we selected and used 10 items that were not overlapped with other individual differences measures. We included items such as “a good life for others,” “international cooperation,” “social progress and social reform,” “equal opportunity for all,” “greater economic equality,” and “preserving the natural environment” to measure value of international harmony and equality, and items such as “national greatness,” “national economic development,” “the rule of law,” and “national security” to measure value of national strength and order. We asked the respondents to report how important they consider each of the 10 values as criteria when they decide political behaviors on a 7-point Likert scale (1 = Not important at all, 7 = I almost entirely rely on this criterion).

*Hostility toward North Korea.* We measured the respondents' hostility toward North Korea by asking their tendency to attribute the cause of inter-Korean conflict to North Korea and their tendency to disparage the morality of North Korea. We measured the following four questions on a 7-point Likert scale (1 = Not agree at all, 7 = Strongly agree): "North Korea is mostly responsible for inter-Korean conflict," "The reason for the prolonged inter-Korean conflict is North Korea's act of provocation," "North Korea does not seem to feel shame about its past actions," and "North Korea mean to harm South Korea."

*Tendency to perceive inter-Korean relations as a zero-sum game.* We selected four items from the original scale developed by Różycka-Tran et al. (2015) and revised them in the context of inter-Korean relations. The respondents answered the following four items on a 7-point Likert scale (1 = Not agree at all, 7 = Strongly agree): "In the inter-Korean relations, gain of North Korea is usually loss of South Korea," "The inter-Korean relationship is like a tennis game – One side wins only when the other side loses," and "In the inter-Korean relations, when one side does much for the other side, it loses," "In most situations in the inter-Korean relations, interests of two Koreas are inconsistent."

*Competitive victimhood.* By applying the contents of the original scale developed by Noor et al. (2008) to the inter-Korean relations, we created the following four items: "In the history of war and division, South Korea has suffered more than North Korea," "In the history of war and division, both South Korea and North Korea are victims (reversed item)," "Inter-Korean conflict is painful for both South Korea and North Korea (reversed item)," and "The proportion of trauma due to the war and division has been more severe in South Korea than North Korea." The respondents answered the items on a 7-point Likert scale (1 = Not agree at all, 7 = Strongly agree). Higher scores on these measures can be interpreted as a perception that South Korea has suffered more than North Korea, while a lower score means that the respondent's perception is that both South and North Korea have suffered.

*Attitude toward peace on the Korean Peninsula.* To measure the respondents' attitudes toward peace in the context of the Korean Peninsula, we created the following six items on a 9-point Likert scale (1 = Not agree at all, 9 = Strongly agree): "The top priority of South Korea should be attaining peace on the Korean Peninsula," "Efforts for peace on the Korean Peninsula sometimes obstruct social development (reversed item)," "People who advocate war on the Korean Peninsula are more courageous than those who support peace on the Korean Peninsula (revised item)," "Inter-Korean conflict should be resolved in a peaceful way," "Peace on the Korean Peninsula brings the best quality of life to our society," and "There are many other things that are more important than peace on the Korean Peninsula (reversed item)." Higher scores on these measures indicate that respondents consider peace on the Korean Peninsula important and support it.

*Attitude toward war on the Korean Peninsula.* In the same way, we created the following six items to measure the respondents' attitudes toward war on the Korean Peninsula: "There is a time when a war is the best way to resolve inter-Korean conflict," "We have not given adequate attention to the positive results of inter-Korean war," "War on the Korean Peninsula cannot be justified under any circumstance (reversed item)," "War on the Korean Peninsula is a self-destructive, meaningless fight (reversed item)," "Any benefit of inter-Korean war cannot surpass a catastrophe of the war (reversed item)," and "There is a time when a war is necessary on the Korean Peninsula to realize justice." We used a 9-point Likert scale (1 = Not agree at all, 9 = Strongly agree). Higher scores on these measures mean that respondents consider war on the Korean Peninsula necessary and support it.

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### 3. Data Analysis

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SPSS 25 and SPSS PROCESS macro ver. 3.2 (Hayes 2013) were used to analyze the data. After conducting a factor analysis for each variable, we found that for the variables including reversed items, there was a structural difference between the reverse-coded questions and ordinarily coded questions. Also, compared to the variables without reversed items, those with reversed items had noticeably lower Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficients. This result may be due to response errors caused by the employment of reverse coding. Many researchers have argued that unlike the original aim to reduce response bias, reverse coding rather affects respondents' reactions. More specifically, it was found that using reversely coded items changed factor structures (Cordery and Sevastos 1993; Marsh 1996), mean of scale (Schriesheim and Hill 1981), and reliability and validity of result (Hughes 2009). In this study, to reduce potential response errors due to reverse coding, we excluded reversely coded items and only used ordinarily coded items to calculate a mean score of each variable.

For the 10 items used to measure value of international harmony and quality as well as value of national strength and order, the "preserving the natural environment" item was, incongruously with a theory, loaded to the value of national strength and order factor. A factor analysis of the other nine items produced two factors (55.08% of variance explained), supporting the theorized structure. Therefore, we aggregated the remaining five items to calculate a mean score of value of international harmony and equality factor and the four items to calculate a mean score of value of national strength and order, respectively. Means, standard deviations, and Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficients for each variable are presented in Table 3 (see online appendix). Correlations between variables are presented in Table 4 (see online appendix).

To examine the relative effect of predictor variables on attitudes toward achieving peace through cooperation and attitudes toward achieving peace through strength respectively, we conducted hierarchical multiple regression analysis. In addition to the predictor variables, we included demographic variables such as sex, age, and the average monthly income of households. Also, to investigate whether individuals' values affect perceptions of North Korea and attitudes toward peace and war on the Korean Peninsula – and eventually influence preference for a specific way to achieve peace on the Korean Peninsula – we conducted serial multiple mediation analysis on the structure of “values → perceptions of North Korea → Attitudes toward peace/war on the Korean Peninsula → Attitudes toward achieving peace on the Korean Peninsula through cooperation/strength.” For serial multiple mediation analysis, we used the model 6 provided by PROCESS macro, and used bootstrapping to assess indirect effects. 5,000 bootstrap samples were generated. If zero was not included between the lower and upper bound of confidence intervals, we interpreted the result as statistically significant. Lastly, since there is very little research on the serial multiple mediation model concerning the current research problem, we selected highly predictable variables (i.e., high  $R^2$ ) based on the results of hierarchical multiple regression analysis and created exploratory mediation models.

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## 4. Results

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### 4.1 Hierarchical Multiple Regression Analysis

Before conducting hierarchical multiple regression analysis, we checked tolerance and VIF to examine multi-collinearity among variables. The test for multi-collinearity showed that tolerance for all variables was higher than 0.01 and VIF was lower than 10, indicating no serious issue of multi-collinearity.

*Achieving Peace on the Korean Peninsula through Cooperation.* A four stage hierarchical multiple regression was conducted with attitudes toward achieving peace on the Korean Peninsula through cooperation, the dependent variable. Demographic variables (sex, age, and average monthly income of households) were entered at stage 1. Value variables (right-wing authoritarianism, social dominance orientation, value of international harmony and equality, and value of national strength and order) were entered at stage 2, and the variables to measure perceptions of North Korea (hostility toward North Korea, tendency to perceive inter-Korean relations as a zero-sum game, and competitive victimhood) were entered at stage 3. Lastly, attitudes toward peace/war on the Korean Peninsula were entered at stage 4.

As presented in Table 5 (see online appendix), demographic variables in step 1 did not predict the criterion variable (accounted for 0.4% of the variance). Among the demographic variables, only the effect of age was signifi-

cant, implying that the older the respondents were, the more supportive attitudes toward a cooperative way of achieving peace on the Korean Peninsula. Introducing value variables explained an additional 15% of the variance and this change in  $R^2$  was significant,  $F(4, 990) = 42.37, p < .001$ . Among the value variables included in step 2, value of international harmony and equality was the only significant predictor, indicating that the more important the respondents thought the value of international harmony and equality, the more supportive their attitude toward a cooperative way of achieving peace on the Korean Peninsula. The addition of variables that measure perception of North Korea to the regression model explained an additional 2% of the variation and the change in  $R^2$  was significant,  $F(3, 987) = 7.63, p < .001$ . More specifically, the stronger hostility toward North Korea the respondents felt and the more likely they perceived inter-Korean relations as a zero-sum game, the less likely they supported the way of achieving peace through cooperation. Finally, adding attitudes toward peace/war on the Korean Peninsula to the regression model explained an additional 22.5% of the variation,  $F(2, 985) = 182.50, p < .001$ . Attitude toward peace on the Korean Peninsula significantly predicted the criterion variable,  $\beta = .49, t = 17.98, p < .001$ , while attitude toward war on the Korean Peninsula marginally predicted the criterion variable in a negative way,  $\beta = -.06, t = -1.82, p = .068$ . In other words, the more positive the attitude toward peace and the more negative the attitude toward war on the Korean Peninsula, the more likely the respondent supported the cooperative way to achieve peace on the Korean Peninsula.

*Achieving Peace on the Korean Peninsula through Strength.* In the same way, we included demographic variables, value variables, the perception of North Korea, and attitudes toward peace/war on the Korean Peninsula in the regression model and examined which variables predicted respondent's attitude toward achieving peace on the Korean Peninsula through strength. The results are presented in Table 6 (see online appendix).

First, demographic variables included in step 1 did not predict the criterion variable (accounted for 0.2% of the variance). Value variables added in step 2 explained an additional 19% of the variance and the change in  $R^2$  was significant,  $F(4, 990) = 59.70, p < .001$ . Among the value variables, three variables (except for value of national strength and order) significantly predicted attitude toward achieving peace through strength,  $\beta_s = .23, .20, -.31, t_s = 7.47, 6.72, -8.91, p_s < .001$ . More specifically, the higher right-wing authoritarianism and social dominance orientation the respondents had, and the less important they thought about value of international harmony and equality, the more likely they supported the way of achieving peace on Korean Peninsula through strength. In step 2, the only significant predictor was the value of international harmony and equality, indicating that the more important the respondents thought the value of international harmony and equality, the more supportive their reported attitude toward cooperative way of achieving peace on the Korean Peninsula

was. Adding the variables that measure perception of North Korea to the regression model explained an additional 14% of the variation,  $F(3, 987) = 70.46, p < .001$ . All three variables significantly predicted the criterion variable,  $\beta_s = .23, .13, .14, t_s = 6.81, 3.35, 4.38, p_s < .01$ . In other words, the stronger the hostility toward North Korea the respondents felt, the more likely they perceived inter-Korean relations as a zero-sum game, and the stronger their competitive victimhood was, the more positive their attitude toward the way of achieving peace through strength. Lastly, an addition of attitudes toward peace/war on the Korean Peninsula to the regression model explained an additional 10% of the variation,  $F(2, 985) = 88.53, p < .001$ . The respondent's attitude toward war on the Korean Peninsula significantly predicted the criterion variable,  $\beta = .39, t = 13.09, p < .001$ , while attitude toward peace on the Korean Peninsula did not,  $p = .367$ . The result indicated that positive attitudes toward war on the Korean Peninsula positively predicted supportive attitudes toward using military strength to achieve peace on the Korean Peninsula.

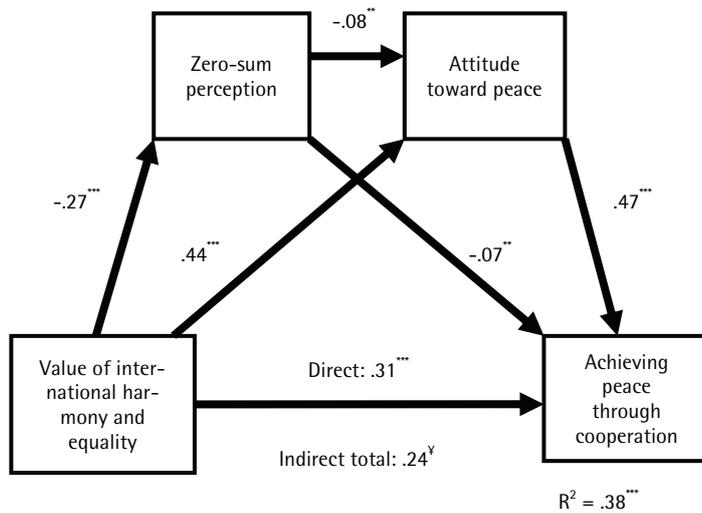
#### 4.2 Serial Multiple Mediation Analysis

We created serial multiple mediation models including “respondents’ values → perception of North Korea → Attitude toward peace/war on the Korean Peninsula → Attitude toward achieving peace on the Korean Peninsula through cooperation/strength” paths. Based on the assumption that attitudes toward both the cooperative way and military way to achieve peace are relatively independent, we examine each model independently. While creating mediation models, we put priority on the variables that significantly predicted the criterion variables in the regression analysis and examined multiple models.

*Serial multiple mediation analysis on achieving peace through cooperation.* According to the results of hierarchical multiple regression analysis, value of international harmony and equality was the only significant predictor among the value variables, hostility toward North Korea and zero-sum perception were significant among the variables measuring perception of North Korea, and attitude toward peace on the Korean Peninsula was also a significant predictor.

*Serial multiple mediation analysis on achieving peace through strength.* In the same way, based on the result of regression analysis, we selected three individual value variables (right-wing authoritarianism, social dominance orientation, and value of international harmony and equality), three variables measuring perception of North Korea (hostility toward North Korea, zero-sum perception, competitive victimhood), and attitude toward war on the Korean Peninsula. By including each of the value variables and perception of North Korea variables, we created and examined nine serial multiple mediation models.

**Figure 1:** Serial Multiple Mediation: Attitude toward Achieving Peace on the Korean Peninsula through Cooperation (Model 2)

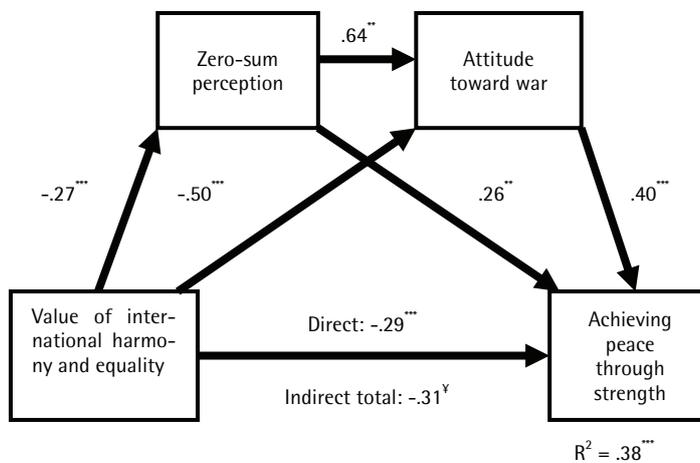


\*\*  $p < .01$ , \*\*\*  $p < .001$ ; ^ indicates that the indirect effect of significant within 95% confidence interval.

The total effect, direct effect, total indirect effect, and insignificant paths of nine models are presented in Table 8 (see online appendix). For Models 1, 4, and 7, the direct path from right-wing authoritarianism to achieving peace through strength was not significant. Also, For Model 2 and Model 3, both social dominance orientation and value of international harmony and equality did not predict hostility toward North Korea, respectively. In the remaining four models (Model 5, Model 6, Model 8, and Model 9), all paths including direct and indirect effects were significant. In particular, Model 6 and Model 9 – which included the value of international harmony and equality – produced the biggest direct effect ( $B_s = -.60$ ). Therefore, we decided to focus on these two models and interpret the mediation effects. The result of Model 6 is presented in Figure 2 and Table 9 (see online appendix for the table), and the result of Model 9 is presented in Figure 3 and Table 10 (see online appendix for the table). In Model 6 (value of international harmony and equality → zero-sum perception → attitude toward war on the Korean Peninsula → achieving peace through strength on the Korean Peninsula), the direct effect was  $B = -.29$ , and the total indirect effect was  $B = -.31$ . It indicated that the more importance the respondents put on the value of international harmony and equality, the less likely they perceived inter-Korean relations as a zero-sum game. The weaker zero-sum perception then predicted the respondents' negative attitude toward

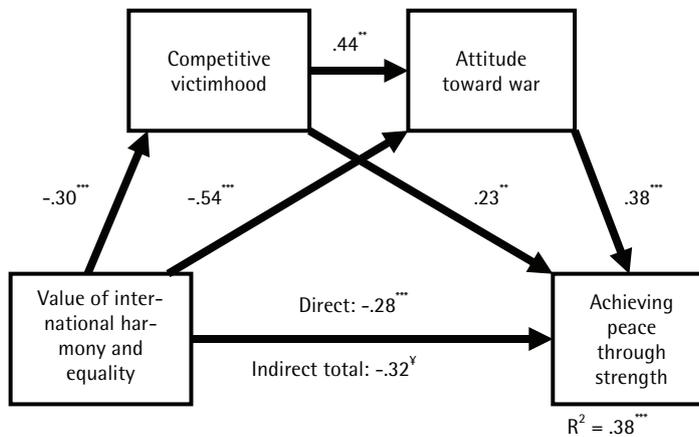
war on the Korean Peninsula, leading to negative attitudes toward achieving peace on the Korean Peninsula through strength. In Model 9 (value of international harmony and equality → competitive victimhood → attitude toward war on the Korean Peninsula → achieving peace through strength on the Korean Peninsula), the direct effect was  $B = -.28$ , and the total indirect effect was  $B = -.32$ . According to this model, the more important the respondents considered the value of international harmony and equality, the more likely they thought that both the South and the North are victims of the intractable conflicts. This perception then led to more negative attitudes toward war on the Korean Peninsula, resulting in negative attitudes toward achieving peace through strength.

**Figure 2:** Serial Multiple Mediation: Attitude toward Achieving Peace on the Korean Peninsula through Cooperation (Model 6)



\*\*  $p < .01$ , \*\*\*  $p < .001$ ; ¥ indicates that the indirect effect of significant within 95% confidence interval.

**Figure 3:** Serial Multiple Mediation: Attitude toward Achieving Peace on the Korean Peninsula through Cooperation (Model 9)



\*\* $p < .01$ , \*\*\* $p < .001$ ; ¥ indicates that the indirect effect of significant within 95% confidence interval

## 5. Discussion

In this study, we tried to understand the perceptions and attitudes of the South Korean people toward peace on the Korean Peninsula and explore the variables that can predict attitudes toward ways of achieving peace on the Korean Peninsula. For this purpose, targeting 1,000 adult men and women living in South Korea, we measured individual value variables including right-wing authoritarianism, social dominance orientation, values of international harmony and equality, value of national power, variables to measure perception of North Korea (e.g., hostility toward North Korea) hostility toward North Korea, tendency to perceive inter-Korean relations as a zero-sum game, competitive victimhood toward North Korea, and attitudes toward peace and war on the Korean Peninsula and toward the way of achieving peace on the Korean Peninsula.

According to the results of hierarchical multiple regression analysis, a stronger positive attitude toward achieving peace on the Korean Peninsula through cooperation was found when the respondents were older, regarded the value of international harmony and equality as more important, had less hostility toward North Korea, and were less likely to perceive inter-Korean relations as a zero-sum relationship. As expected, those with positive attitudes toward

peace on the Korean Peninsula preferred achieving peace through cooperation, while those with positive attitudes toward war showed negative evaluations of this approach. The positive attitude toward achieving peace on the Korean Peninsula through military force was stronger when right-wing authoritarianism and social dominance orientation were higher, the value of international harmony and equality was seen as less important, hostility toward North Korea was higher, inter-Korean relations were perceived as a zero-sum relationship, and competitive victimhood toward North Korea was higher. In addition, respondents with more positive attitudes toward war on the Korean Peninsula evaluated achieving peace through military power more positively.

As Bizumic et al. (2013) found, attitudes toward the two ways of achieving peace on the Korean Peninsula were negatively correlated ( $r = -.262$ ; see Table 4 in the online appendix). However, as the relations between predictive variables were different, they seem to be distinct concepts. Attitudes toward achieving peace on the Korean Peninsula through cooperation were generally positive with an average of 6.45 (standard deviation 1.05), while attitudes toward achieving peace on the Korean Peninsula through military force averaged 5.12, close to the midpoint of the scale (standard deviation 1.44). Interestingly, attitudes toward war on the Korean Peninsula averaged 4.39 (standard deviation 1.76), which is somewhat negative compared to the midpoint, but there seems to be a kind of justification mechanism that even military force may be used to achieve peace on the Korean Peninsula if necessary.

Among the variables that measured individual values, the value of international harmony and equality seems to be the best predictor of both ways of achieving peace. Right-wing authoritarianism reflects the acceptance of authority and tradition within a social system, social dominance orientation reflects the preference for hierarchical relationships among groups within a society, and the value of international harmony and equality reflects the value of international cooperation and peaceful relations. Therefore, there is a possibility that the value of international harmony and equality was a more sensitive predictor for perceptions and attitudes toward inter-Korean relations. On the other hand, the value of national strength and order did not show any meaningful result. Since the value of national strength and order was measured as importance of “greatness of nation,” “economic development of nation,” “rule of law,” and “national security,” it was possible that the respondents’ understandings of the potential positive and negative consequences of South–North unification or achievement of peace between the South and North was mixed when they responded to this variable and did not form an attitude in a particular direction.

As expected, negative perceptions of North Korea and inter-Korean relations reduced positive attitudes toward the achievement of peace on the Korean Peninsula through cooperation but supported the achievement of peace through strength. Attitudes toward peace did not significantly predict the respondents’ attitudes toward achieving peace on the Korean Peninsula through strength,

maybe because the dependent variable itself requires support for peace on the Korean Peninsula to some extent. In other words, the more positive attitudes the respondents had toward peace on the Korean Peninsula, the more likely they were to regard creating war or violence using military power as negative. However, at the same time, they were also likely to think that peace should be achieved by any means because they regarded peace on the Korean Peninsula as an important goal. In actuality, attitudes toward peace on the Korean Peninsula and attitudes toward achieving peace on the Korean Peninsula through strength showed a significant but weak negative correlation of  $r = -.187$ , implying the possibility that the conflicting forces of positive and negative relationships between the two variables are commingled.

Finally, according to the results of the serial multiple mediating analysis, the more the respondents regarded the value of the international harmony and equality as important, the less they tended to perceive inter-Korean relations as a zero-sum relationship and the more positive their attitudes were toward peace on the Korean Peninsula, resulting in more positive attitudes toward achieving peace through cooperation. Similarly, in the mediating model that predicted attitudes toward achieving peace on the Korean Peninsula through strength, the value of international peace and equality was an important predictive variable. The degree to which respondents perceived inter-Korean relations as a zero-sum relationship and showed competitive victimhood toward North Korea predicted their attitudes of supporting war on the Korean Peninsula with similar effect size, leading positive attitudes toward achieving peace through strength.

As predicted, individual values affected interpretations and perceptions of North Korea and inter-Korean relations, and their attitudes toward how to create inter-Korean relations in the future changed depending on their perceptions of inter-Korean relations. From a theoretical perspective, this study has significance in that it extended the study of the phenomenon of intractable conflicts to the new context of the Korean Peninsula. In particular, this study can suggest new understanding and insight into intractable conflicts by dealing with the case of the conflicts on the Korean Peninsula because, unlike other ongoing studies, the members of both sides share the same ethnic identity but have different national identities with the unique characteristic of having had repeated exchanges and battles for 70 years. Future studies should verify the effect of respondent's understanding of the world (value) as well as their understanding of themselves (identity) on inter-Korean relations and attitudes toward achieving peace by examining whether perceptions of North Korea and inter-Korean relations differ according to the level of ethnic identity and national identity.

As argued by Coleman (2010), this study assumed that peace is a complex concept and used various variables (individual values, perceptions of North Korea and inter-Korean relations, and attitudes toward peace and war) to grasp people's perceptions and attitudes toward achieving peace through seemingly incompatible means. Considering the fact that the members of groups who have

experienced intractable conflicts have relatively abstract and sometimes inaccurate perceptions of peace, these attempts can contribute to better understanding and predicting attitudes toward peace not only currently but also in the future by reconfiguring the abstract and complex concept of peace into a concrete one. However, we included many variables in this study for exploratory purposes due to the limitations of related previous studies. Future studies will need to focus on the variables that can best reflect the research phenomenon and supplement the mechanism that can strongly predict and explain the relationship between them.

The variables examined in this study were individuals' psychological variables that exhibit higher variability according to time or context changes than demographic variables or personal difference variables. In other words, the values and perceptions of North Korea and inter-Korean relations have been shaped in a specific direction by individual inborn tendencies and experiences, but these characteristics are likely to change through education and new experiences. Therefore, the results of this study have a practical implication in that they could lead to educational programs, intervention programs, or campaigns that could change individual values and perceptions of North Korea and inter-Korean relations as a way to promote peace and cooperation between the two Koreas. However, because this study found that the variables have a strong impact on attitudes toward achieving peace on the Korean Peninsula at the most general level targeting whole respondents, additional analysis is needed to examine whether the most influential variables can change depending on individual characteristics such as gender, age, and socioeconomic status. If we can identify the differences among groups by dividing them into various subgroups (clusters), it will help us to identify the most effective elements of "peace education" for each group and contribute to forming an integrated social discourse among the groups.

The interest in the unification of the Korean Peninsula is now shifting to a discourse on peace and interest in peace education from a longer-term perspective. In this context, this study aimed to explore the attitudes toward peace and toward the way of achieving peace on the Korean Peninsula, considering the characteristics of the intractable conflicts between the two Koreas as well as their historical characteristics. The results of the study showed that individual values – especially values concerning international cooperation - influence present and future perceptions of inter-Korean relations, resulting in a change in attitudes toward peace and war on the Korean Peninsula, and eventually change in attitudes toward the way of achieving peace between South and North Korea. This implies the complexity of peace that requires a comprehensive study of various variables to increase our understanding at the same time. In the future, the effect of psychological variables, including the variables used in this study, on the multidimensional perceptions and attitudes toward inter-Korean relations and peace needs to be continuously studied, and the mecha-

nism that predicts people's attitudes and behaviors needs to be accurately verified by clearly identifying the relationship between those variables. Even though this study focused particularly on individual psychological factors that affect attitudes toward peace and attitudes toward the way of achieving peace, in order to fully understand the complex concept of peace, a comprehensive study needs to be conducted at various levels (e.g., individual, group and community, national) from various perspectives (e.g., social, political, cultural, economic, psychological).

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