

The Issue of Mind Integration in the Unification of Divided Systems: A Case Study Focused on Germany and the Two Koreas

Lee, Woo-Young; Lee, Eun-Jeung

Veröffentlichungsversion / Published Version

Zeitschriftenartikel / journal article

Zur Verfügung gestellt in Kooperation mit / provided in cooperation with:

GESIS - Leibniz-Institut für Sozialwissenschaften

Empfohlene Zitierung / Suggested Citation:

Lee, W.-Y., & Lee, E.-J. (2019). The Issue of Mind Integration in the Unification of Divided Systems: A Case Study Focused on Germany and the Two Koreas. *Historical Social Research*, 44(4), 253-268. <https://doi.org/10.12759/hsr.44.2019.4.253-268>

Nutzungsbedingungen:

Dieser Text wird unter einer CC BY Lizenz (Namensnennung) zur Verfügung gestellt. Nähere Auskünfte zu den CC-Lizenzen finden Sie hier:

<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/deed.de>

Terms of use:

This document is made available under a CC BY Licence (Attribution). For more information see:

<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0>

The Issue of Mind Integration in the Unification of Divided Systems: A Case Study Focused on Germany and the Two Koreas

*Woo-Young Lee & Eun-Jeung Lee**

Abstract: »Die Problematik des geistigen Zusammenschlusses bei der Vereinigung von geteilten Systemen: Eine Fallstudie mit dem Fokus auf Deutschland und den zwei Koreas«. In this article, we introduce the HSR Forum on mind integration by exploring how the future integration process on the Korean Peninsula will come about, focusing on the East German regime's transition process. We conceptualize "mind" as a concept that is made up of emotions, sentiments, the will and the senses thus the mind system is the foundation that makes up the dispositions and behaviors of people from both North and South Korea. This article argues for the importance of questioning the general stereotypes that frame integration such as the unification of political systems, as well as provides an alternative approach by thickening the discussion on the social/cultural integration. On this basis, we distinguish four contextual dimensions: first, to identify the intractable conflicts on the Korean Peninsula with incongruity of national and political identities; second, to analyze the attitudes of South Koreans toward inter-Korean integration; third, to understand the differences in perception between South Korean migrants in Germany and South Koreans; and finally, to investigate North Korean defectors' view on the Workers' Party of Korea (WPK).

Keywords: social/cultural integration, unification, mind-heart, Korea, Germany

1. The Issues of German and Korean Unification

Germany and the Korean Peninsula have been important topics of comparative research due to the fact that they both experienced national division during the Cold War. The relationship between West and East Germany during their division, West Germany's Eastern Policy, and East Germany's Western Policy have all been important points of interest from an academic or policy perspective in the context of the Korean Peninsula. While commonalities in the Ger-

* Woo-Young Lee, University of North Korean Studies, 2, Bukchon-ro 15-gil, Jongno-gu, 03053 Seoul, Republic of Korea; wylee@kyungnam.ac.kr.
Eun-Jeung Lee, Freie Universität Berlin, Institute for Korean Studies, Department of History and Cultural Studies, Otto-von-Simson Straße 11, 14195 Berlin, Germany; Eun-Jeung.Lee@fu-berlin.de.

man and Korean situations began to diverge following German unification, Germany's unification process is significant to the inter-Korean relationship for several reasons.

First, given that the German unification process was the result of the transition of the East German regime, the change in East Germany's system is an important framework for analyzing changes in North Korea's system. The rise of a democracy movement in East Germany as the Cold War ended, which ultimately ended in German unification, provides many implications for change in North Korea, which is currently faced with full-fledged marketization. Second, South Korea has increased interest in German unification and West Germany's Eastern Policy as it aims to enhance reconciliation and cooperation efforts with North Korea. West Germany's Eastern Policy, and the expansion of inter-German exchanges through this policy, significantly impacted the passage of South Korea's "National Community Unification Plan," which aims to bring about unification on the basis of peace and coexistence. Moreover, the inter-German exchange experience is an important subject of research that can provide implications for inter-Korean exchanges. Third, the integration process after German unification can provide important implications for inter-Korean integration. There are many elements of regime transition in the former East Germany over the past 30 years along with the wide-ranging experience of German integration that can help improve the inter-Korean integration process. The social changes, inter-German conflict, and the ways they overcame these conflicts during the process of unification are important in the context of the Korean Peninsula.

There has been a wide-range of research focused on the German unification process within the context of the Korean Peninsula. The most notable example of this area of research is the project conducted by Eun-Jeung Lee and Everhard Holtman entitled "Knowledge Transfer as Intercultural Translation. The German Reunification as a 'Lesson' for Korea."¹ The results of this project, which was submitted as an essay to an HSR Forum (41.3), improve our understanding of the differences in division between the Korean Peninsula and Germany and focuses on the German unification process through a historical context with a view to provide scholarly implications that can be used for unification on the Korean Peninsula. Past research has been limited by its focus on the status quo-based or the macro-level perspective; this research, however, distinguishes itself by having conducted wide-ranging and in-depth research into Germany's regime transition and unification process from a specific, historical perspective. The research analyzes issues involving different generations (Hoffmann and Martens 2016), elite groups (Vogel and Best 2016), businesses (Fritsch and Wywich 2016), and labor (Ketsmerick 2016) – all topics

¹ This research project was a part of the collaborative research project 580 (SFB 580) which was financed by the German Research Council.

outside the focus of most research – and focuses on the structural changes (Holtmann and Rademacher 2016) that occurred from the period stretching from East Germany’s regime transition to post-unification.

The implications for the Korean Peninsula’s situation drawn from this research are as follows.

First, when considering the changes in status by group (laborers, farmers, businesspeople, and elites) in East Germany, there is a need to specifically study the changes in each social group during the course of regime transition in North Korea. In other words, it is essential to deeply examine perceptions toward the old system and toward changes in the system held by each social group (Hofmann and Martens 2016). There is also an imperative to continue research on the current North Korean generation growing up in the country’s new environment in the context of the relationship between social groups and social change.

Second, there is a need to deeply study the changes in North Korea’s social structure. Here, research on the country’s industrial system, political structure, and the “system of daily life” of North Koreans, including their everyday lifestyles, is important. It must also be taken into account that changes in the country’s society, particularly in daily life, are conspicuously taking place as the country’s economy continues to experience marketization and the spread of “external culture” accelerates (Martens 2016).

Third, there is a need to study change in North Korea from a historical context. When examining the process of change in East Germany or the German unification process, it is clear that these processes are not separate from East Germany’s historical developmental process from a social or economic perspective. Change into North Korea will not start completely anew and is highly likely to occur as an extension of the country’s historical experience (Fritsch and Wywich 2016). This means that a historical contextual understanding is important to properly comprehend both the North Korea of today and the future.

Fourth, there is a need for sophisticated and meticulous research on the wide-range of issues that could occur in the process of unification and social integration. Research by Rainer K. Silbereisen examines the cultural adaptation and psychological issues involved in Germany’s situation by comparing it to migration and shows what kind of impact unification has had on the members of German society (Silbereisen 2016). There is the potential for various kinds of social conflict, like that which transpired in Germany during the unification process, to reoccur between the two Koreas – even if the specifics are different – and there are many implications that such research can provide for how to prepare for this conflict.

The Inter-Korean Mind Integration Research Project is connected to the critical awareness present in past research focused on Germany’s regime transition process and the situation on the Korean Peninsula. This project focuses on the

changes in North Korea – particularly in the lives of North Koreans, through an examination of East Germany’s regime change process – and helps to shed light on how the future integration process on the Korean Peninsula will come about.

2. Inter-Korean Mind Integration Research

The Inter-Korean Mind Integration Research Project originated from an interest in the social and cultural integration of the two Koreas. Such integration is just as important as the integration of political systems in the process of unification of the two Koreas, and this project starts with an awareness that the integration of the mind system of both Koreas is the micro-level foundation of overcoming division instead of traditional areas of interest such as ideology or thought. The mind is a concept that is made up of emotions, sentiments, the will, and the senses (S. Kim 2017, 319), and the mind system is the foundation that makes up the dispositions and behaviors of people from both North and South Korea.²

Studies on inter-Korean mind integration have researched the interaction of the mind system between people from both Koreas in contact zones in Korea and abroad.³ These contact zones can be formed on the basis of the existence of two factors: the “geographical and spatial place” and the “institutionalization of space.” The first factor, “place,” can be classified as the “borders” between the two Koreas and the “territory” determined by those borders. Territory can be the space inside the territories of the two Koreas or a place outside of the two Koreas. Inter-Korean contact points can be classified in accordance with whether they conform to the “rules of the game” or, in other words, the criteria of “institutionalization versus non-institutionalization (Lee and Koo 2016, 18).

Research on contact points has found the following. First, there is a “spatial effect” on the interaction of the mind and meetings between people from the two Koreas. In other words, the relationships between people from the two Koreas and the interaction of their minds change depending on the nature of the contact point. Second, the research confirms that within the relationship between people from the two Koreas, North Korean defectors are characterized by being a “social minority” that must inevitably adapt to South Korean society.

² Kim Hong-Jung states that the fundamental energy that creates the various phenomena in a society is a society’s “mind” (H. Kim 2009, 7).

³ Pratt states that “Contact zones are the social spaces where cultures meet, collide and fight within the context of the highly asymmetrical nature of the system of power.” Contact points can be formed when contrasting cultures meet and can include areas with legacies of colonialism or slavery as well as spaces such as classrooms in schools (Pratt 1991).

Third, the research has confirmed that level and frequency of contact between people from the two Koreas can determine the interaction of the mind between people from both Koreas. Fourth, while there have been many limitations in place through inter-Korean economic cooperation projects such as the Kaesong Industrial Complex, the research shows that there have been changes in the attitudes shown by North Koreans. Finally, the research shows that when people from the two Koreas meet as representatives, such as through inter-Korean dialogue, the characteristics of system competition and of superiority complexes appear.

The next stage of the Inter-Korean Mind Integration Research Project was to examine the process of forming the inter-Korean mind system and conducting a comparison. This was aimed at creating a real foundation to move inter-Korean integration forward and analyzed the characteristics of North Korea's mind system and compared them with the South Korean mind system (Lee et al. 2017). The "geology of the mind" was the focal point of these efforts to draw out the characteristics of the mind systems of the two Koreas and compare them.

North Korea's mind system has its foundations on the geographic conditions of the Korean Peninsula – in other words, the geo-political, boundary-related, and physiographical conditions – that form the basis of the Korean people's mind: the mind of division and socialism that holds the separate historical origins on top of that, the mind of post-division and system transition, the mind of individual events and of human beings that compose a multi-layered state to create a single system.⁴ For example, the mind system of the North Koreans who experienced the "Arduous March" due to the mass famine in the 1990s is based on the characteristics of the Korean people, while the characteristics of the mind that formed in the process of the construction of a national socialist country after division became more prominent, and was newly formed from the traumatic impact of the historic famine (Lee et al. 2017, 40-1).

In tandem with efforts to comparatively examine the characteristics of the mind system of the two Koreas, the Inter-Korean Mind Integration Research Project went beyond the context of the Korean Peninsula to shed light on the universal issue of integration and states that have experienced socialist system transition. These efforts included research focused on Ireland, which is faced with social conflict and the problem of integration (Lee 2016) and a study on the issue of North Korean defectors who migrated to the United Kingdom (Lee and Lee 2014). These efforts also include studies that focused on the German issue, specifically the implications internal integration in unified Germany

⁴ This layered structure is similar to the concept of *mentqlité*, which is both the structure and order of the collective mind conceptualized on the basis of three concepts of time in historical study presented by *Annales - longue durée*, conjuncture, and individual events. (Lee et al., 2016, 37).

provide for inter-Korean mind integration and Germany's historical experience and socio-economic gap (Yoon 2014).

The Inter-Korean Mind Integration Research Project began with a critical awareness of the situation on the Korean Peninsula, but also aims to obtain a new theoretical perspective toward social conflict and integration given that the fundamental concern of modern society is social integration. This is the primary reason for conducting research not only on Ireland, as mentioned earlier, but also on the integration processes in South Africa and other places that have experienced racial conflict. From this context, the implications that East Germany's system transition and Germany's integration process can provide are significant; however, it is inevitable that these implications will be combined with research on German unification as a means to develop the Inter-Korean Mind Integration Research Project. With this background of the project in hand, some of the results of the research conducted so far will be introduced in the following pages.

3. Peace through Cooperation or Peace through Strength? How to Achieve Peace in a Society Faced with Intractable Conflict

The article from *Young-Mi Kwon* and *Juhwa Park* (2019, in this issue) discusses the resolution of the North Korean nuclear issue and the establishment of a peace system on the Korean Peninsula as it faced changes in the midst of inter-Korean summits and the US-North Korean Summit in 2018. They defined the situation on the Korean Peninsula over the last 70 years since division as an "intractable conflict" and understood the inter-Korean and US-North Korean summits aimed at resolving this conflict as focused on bring about bilateral agreements and systemic change. However, the researchers argue that agreements and unification at the state and system levels are the required conditions and goals to achieve peace on the Korean Peninsula. This is because they think that, even if unification is achieved, the long-held inter-Korean conflict and disputes may lead to the confrontational emotions and attitudes the two Koreas have toward each other bringing about new types of social problems. In other words, the researchers argue that reconciliation and integration is required among the peoples of the two Koreas to establish genuine peace on the Korean Peninsula after unification. As a first-step to accomplishing this, they conducted an in-depth study to understand the perceptions that peoples of the two Koreas have toward peace.

The researchers conducted a survey of 1,000 adult males and females living in South Korea and measured attitudes on the following: right-wing authoritarianism reflecting individual level values; tendencies toward the rule of society;

values toward international harmony and equality; values concerning national strength; feelings of hostility toward North Korea which showed perceptions toward North Korea and inter-Korean relations; tendencies toward viewing the inter-Korean relationship as a zero-sum relationship; feelings of competitive victimhood toward North Korea; attitudes toward war and peace on the Korean Peninsula; and attitudes toward ways to achieve peace on the Korean Peninsula through either cooperation or military power.

The hierarchical regression analysis found that in terms of positive attitudes toward ways to achieve peace on the Korean Peninsula through inter-Korean cooperation, the older the respondents were, and the more important they thought the values of international harmony and equality, the lower their feelings of hostility toward North Korea. This distinction was even clearer among those who tended to avoid viewing the inter-Korean relationship as a zero-sum relationship. As predicted, the more positive the respondent's attitude toward peace on the Korean Peninsula, the more they preferred cooperation to bring about peace, while the more positive the respondent's attitude toward war, the more negative they were toward cooperation to bring about peace.

For respondents that had a positive attitude toward bringing about peace on the Korean Peninsula through military power, the more they supported right-wing authoritarianism and the rule of society, and the less they thought of the values of international harmony and equality, the higher their levels of hostility toward North Korea and the more they viewed the inter-Korean relationship as a zero-sum relationship. Moreover, these attitudes were even stronger when respondents had higher levels of competitive victimhood. In addition, the more positive their attitude toward war on the Korean Peninsula, the more positively they viewed ways to use military power to achieve peace on the Korean Peninsula.

Similar to the perspective of Boris et al. (2013), attitudes toward the two ways of bringing peace to the Korean Peninsula were correlated, but the relationship with the predictive factors were found to be different so the two attitudes contrasted with each other. The attitude that supported cooperation to bring peace on the Korean Peninsula was, overall, positive, but the attitude that supported using military power to achieve peace on the Korean Peninsula was negative. What is interesting is that the attitude toward war on the Korean Peninsula was slightly negative compared to the median; however, it appears to have been based on the justification for military power to be used for the cause of bringing peace to the Korean Peninsula.

Among the factors relevant to the value systems of individuals, the two values of international harmony and equality were both good at predicting what kind of method respondents would have toward bringing peace to the Korean Peninsula. Right-wing authoritarianism reflected the acceptance of authority and tradition within the social system and a tendency toward social rule reflected as the support for a hierarchical relationship between different groups in the

society, while the values of international harmony and equality were values concerning the cooperation and peaceful relationship among countries. Given this, there was the possibility that the values of international harmony and equality were predictive factors more sensitive to predicting respondents' perceptions and attitudes toward the inter-Korean relationship. Significant results were not found in terms of the value of national power; there is the possibility that a specific attitude was unable to be formed because the value of national power was measured by the importance of "the greatness of the state," the "economic development of the state," "the rule of law," and "national security." This would lead to the consideration of the positive and negative outcomes that achieving either Korean unification or peace would have on the state being mixed within the survey responses.

As expected, the negative perception toward North Korea and the inter-Korean relationship led to a reduction in positive attitudes toward achieving Korean peace through cooperation while increasing attitudes for the achievement of Korean peace through military power. Attitudes toward Korean peace were unable to meaningfully predict attitudes toward ways of bringing about peace on the Korean Peninsula through military power; this may be because the factor of achieving peace through military power itself requires somewhat of a basis of support peace on the peninsula. In other words, respondents may have thought more negatively about the use of violent military power or war the more positive they felt toward peace on the Korean Peninsula, but they may have also believed that any method available must be used to achieve peace because it is such an important goal.

Finally, the results of the analysis found that the more respondents thought the values of international harmony and equality were important, the less tendency they had to think that the inter-Korean relationship is zero-sum, and this meant they had more positive attitudes toward peace on the Korean Peninsula. As a result, they more favorably supported the achievement of peace on the Korean Peninsula through cooperation. Similar to the "model" that predicts attitudes toward the use of military means to achieve peace on the peninsula, the values of international harmony and peace were found to be important predictive factors, and the degree in which respondents thought the inter-Korean relationship was a zero-sum relationship – or the degree in which they felt competitive victimhood toward North Korea – predicted their support of war on the Korean Peninsula. As a result, they were more supportive of using military means to achieve peace on the Korean Peninsula.

The results of the study found that individual value systems were the basis of how respondents interpreted North Korea and the inter-Korean relationship and impacted their perceptions. Their perceptions toward the inter-Korean relationship determined their attitudes about how to deal with it going forward. From a theoretical perspective, this study is significant for having expanded research on intractable conflict to the new context of the Korean Peninsula.

In contrast to the background of other research currently being undertaken, this study was able to present new understanding and insight into intractable conflict because conflict on the Korean Peninsula involves a group of people who share the same national identity but have different state identities along with unique characteristics that are derived from continuous exchanges and “conflict” over the past 70 years.

4. Stereotypes toward North and South Koreans: The Content of the Stereotypes, its Predictors and the Effect on the Support for Korean Reunification

Hayeon Lee and *Woo-Young Lee* aimed to understand the general perceptions toward inter-Korean integration and to prove that these perceptions and attitudes are determined by demographic statistical factors such as age group, gender, and political views. Their study conducted a survey on 500 adult males and females residing in South Korea that asked about their attitudes toward “Korean unification” and their views toward types of unification (preferences, opposition, and practicability), the reasons they supported or opposed Korean unification, and the prerequisites for unification. The study’s survey provided several examples and had respondents choose from among them so that the researchers could view perceptions toward Korean integration through multiple perspectives.

The major conclusions of this article are as follows. In regards to respondents’ general feelings toward Korean unification, the most prominent response regardless of age group, gender, and political leaning was “The end of geographical division on the Korean Peninsula.” Respondents in their 30s to 50s generally believed that the end of division would bring about “the recovery of the common national identity of the two Koreas” and the “firm establishment of an economically cooperative or economic community”; however, respondents in their 20s shared these perceptions to a lesser degree. This phenomenon was also seen in the positive responses toward Korean unification. Respondents in their 20s tended to be less likely to answer that one of the reasons the two Koreas should unite is “because the two Koreas are the same people” compared to respondents in their 30s to 50s. This suggests that South Koreans in their 20s adhere less to the idea of a common national identity between the two Koreas than those in their 30s to 50s.

South Koreans predominantly prefer that unification come about on the basis of the South Korean system. Many respondents in their 20s responded this way, while around half of the respondents in their 30s to 50s gave this response. The remaining respondents in their 30s to 50s expressed support for the establishment of a Korean federation, national union, or another type of unifi-

cation. These results showed that the type of unification and the distribution of opinion varies by age group. On the other hand, South Koreans expressed the most opposition to unification based on the North Korean system. While female respondents and those with more progressive leanings responded more positively to unification based on the North Korean system, many respondents expressed disapproval toward this kind of unification. What is noteworthy here is that in contrast to the unification type that respondents most preferred or disapproved of, the most practical way for the two Koreas to unify includes federal unification, a national union, or unification based on the South Korean system, and respondents chose each of these options evenly, supporting each. Moreover, there were no differences in response rates by age group, gender, or political leaning toward the question of the most practical way for the two Koreas to unify. Respondents' thinking about particular types of practical unification may change due to situations and social contexts removed from their own demographic-based statistical factors, or may differ due to how the respondents receive information (through media outlets, frequency, depth of this information, and how the information is processed).

Finally, in regards to the reasons why respondents support or oppose Korean unification, most respondents answered that they supported unification to "lower the threat of war between the two Koreas," while respondents who opposed unification predominantly answered that they "could not accept the North Korean regime." What is noteworthy here is that the second most predominant reason respondents supported unification was "because the two Koreas are the same people" while the third most predominant answer among those who opposed unification was "the different experiences [the two Koreas] had over many decades." This suggests that even though South Koreans believe that the people of the two Koreas are the same people, they also simultaneously believe that the historical experience of the two Koreas creates heterogeneity and a sense of denial between the two Koreas. This suggests there is a need to emphasize national identity when discussing the reason (need) for Korean unification in the future along with reducing the ambiguous sense of rejection South Koreans feel toward North Korea by allowing them to accurately understand the historical and cultural differences experienced by people from the two Koreas. Finally, there is a need to create an integrated social culture and common identity that allows understanding of each other and acceptance of differences between the two Koreas.

In summary, this study confirmed that the general perceptions South Koreans have toward Korean unification is determined by age group, gender, and political leanings. This starts with how South Koreans think about Korean unification on a daily basis and extends to the reasons they support or oppose Korean unification and the requisites for Korean unification.

By showing that South Koreans have a wide-range of perceptions toward the most practical types of Korean unification, the study also reconfirmed that

when discussing the need for unification, and attitudes and perceptions toward unification, there is a need to consider the differences in a variety of unification types and the perceptions between the different groups that exist in South Korean society. This study will be used as a basis for reducing the conflict surrounding unification between different communities in North and South Korean society and to form a common discourse.

5. The Meaning of Division and Unification for Korean Immigrants in Germany

Jin-Heon Jung and Eun-Jeung Lee's survey of first-generation South Korean migrants living in Germany starts with the question of how South Koreans who directly experienced German unification accept division and unification. This study aimed to understand the differences in perception present between South Koreans who had learned about German unification indirectly through media reports and academic studies in South Korea and South Koreans who experienced unification themselves in Germany.

Koreans living in South Korea had both hopes that unification could occur on the Korean Peninsula – because of the many news reports and academic studies regarding German unification – as well as apprehension about whether unification could really happen on the peninsula (Lee and Mosler 2015). German unification caused a flurry of activity from 2010 to 2015 in South Korea aimed at learning more about Germany. The South Korean Ministry of Unification became cooperative transfer project institution. of the SFB 580 and participated in an experiment to transfer the results of academic studies into the field and this provided evidence that South Koreans consider the German unification experience as very important. Even after 2015, South Korean media continues to publish feature articles on Germany (for examples, see *Sisajournal*, 2018, June 4; *Moneytoday*, 2019, Aug. 9).

South Korean politicians, scholars, and journalists emphasize that South Korea must learn from Germany's experience to prepare for unification on the Korean Peninsula, and they continue to visit Germany to learn about Germany's experience and ask German experts about German unification. The information about German unification acquired from these activities is, of course, based on the personal perspectives of the German experts they meet. It is not difficult for various groups in South Korean society to find German experts who hold similar views to themselves.

As a result, there has been an increase in biases toward German unification held by various groups in South Korea. These biases, however, are considered "truths" handed down by German experts. This "mechanism" is similar to the act of taking a photograph. Photographers first find the thing they want to photograph, take the photograph, and then "edit" the photograph before printing it.

A similar phenomenon is occurring in South Korea which is creating its own unique discourse on German unification.

The question asked by many South Koreans who have tried to learn about German unification is “When the Korean Peninsula will be unified?” Behind this question is the reality that no one knows when the two Koreas will be unified; and even if the two Koreas do unify, the conditions on the Korean Peninsula will be completely different than those present in Germany in 1990. This then begs the question about what can actually be learned from German unification. Even if Korean unification occurs under completely different conditions, however, the German unification experience is the only model available to show what kind of issues can arise when two completely different systems integrate peacefully. This has formed the basis for why South Koreans continue to research German unification.

Given all of this, the perception of South Korean migrants who experienced German unification and lived in a united Germany carries special significance when regarding division and unification. Having migrated to West Germany and then experiencing a unified Germany, their perception that unification is a broad historical process differs from South Koreans who experienced the deeply-rooted “results-focused” period of South Korea in the 1960s and 1970s during the country’s developmental authoritarian rule. South Korean migrants to West Germany learned through their daily lives that unification is not a question of one side winning and other side losing, or who takes over the other, but rather the “search for a way for both sides to live together.” The migrants are now sharing their experience with South Korean society and they can be considered the “vanguard” of sharing knowledge from their unification experience between Korea and Germany.

6. The Elephant in the Unification Room: How North Koreans Think about the Workers Party

Bong-Ki Lee and Hannes Mosler conducted a survey on how North Korean defectors view the Workers’ Party of Korea (WPK), and the origins of this survey were the results of an analysis of shifts in the elite during the German unification process. The study by the SFB 580 team on Germany’s regime transition process confirmed that the Socialist Unity Party of Germany (*Sozialistische Einheitspartei Deutschlands*; SED) played a positive role in unification and the process of bringing about integration during the regime transition process as it successfully entered the democratic political system. The SED became active in democratic politics through internal changes during the transitions in 1989 and 1990. The successors to the SED in the 1990s, the Party of Democratic Socialism and The Left, established themselves as groups that could speak to the special experiences and interests of people in the former

East German region. In the 2000s, The Left transformed itself into a party that represented Germans who had flexible attitudes toward representative democracy. The Party of Democratic Socialism and The Left played an important role in integrating their supporters into the political system of the Federal Republic of Germany after unification. The SFB 580 research team concluded that there is a need for local representatives who speak for the interests of localities to be present when Korea unifies and for the creation of an integrated class of elites on a national level appropriately.

Heinrich Best believed that national unification can occur only when North Korea's elite take part in the integration process, and that the elite affiliated with the "second class" and the functional elite should take a leading role. To accomplish this, the study explained that material incentives need to be given to the elites to encourage them to "quietly" retreat from their positions in society and that this needs to be based on the classification of the North Korean elite (Vogel and Best 2016).

North Korea has developed into a unique Communist system ruled by the party and the state. Following the establishment of its socialist system, and in contrast with the Soviet Union and China, North Korea tried to respond to the various contradictions created within it by strengthening the country's various state socialist characteristics. Scholars have characterized North Korea's ruling system as a guerilla state, a Suryong System, socialist corporatism, and a monolithic leadership system.

The question then is whether the classification of the elite proposed by Best is possible under such a system. Mosler and Lee ask the question of how North Koreans accept the rule of the WPK on the basis of regime transformation. They tried to find an answer to this question through a survey of North Korean defectors who had not yet experienced South Korean society; in other words, North Koreans who had just arrived in South Korea after leaving North Korea.

Of course, there are limits to understanding the thoughts of North Koreans based on the survey results of North Korean defectors. North Korean defectors will not view North Korea's ruling institutions in a favorable light. Mosler and Lee tried to overcome this limitation by making the survey questions as specific as possible. They were able to confirm that there is some evidence that North Koreans generally have confidence in the WPK. This allows us to predict that the ruling elites of the WPK will play important roles in North Korea's process of reformation. These results also make it clearer that Germany's experience plays an important role in understanding the regime change process on the Korean Peninsula.

7. The German Unification Experience and Inter-Korean Mind Integration

The Inter-Korean Mind Integration Project's focus on Germany's unification process was not on the relationship between East and West Germany, the international political context, or the level in which the two systems integrated. Rather, the project's focus was on the behaviors and level of awareness among the German people. Mosler and Lee's article is very closely related to the changes in attitude or awareness East Germans had toward the old system, particularly the ruling class, during the course of unification and can thus be said to have analyzed the changes in attitude of North Koreans toward the WPK. The monolithic ruling system centered on Kim Il Sung has been in force for over half a century and the question of whether attitudes toward the WPK will change or stay the same is primarily connected to regime transition in the country. Moreover, it will allow scholars to gauge the characteristics of the "mind" that North Koreans will put on display during the unification process.

Lee and Jung's article uses migrants who experienced German unification to analyze the perceptions toward unification by the Korean diaspora and the distorted views inherent in South Korean society that has turned the issue of German unification into "the other." Moreover, this article analyzes the mind of a group that is unable to think of German and Korean unification as separate to show that German and Korean unification are intertwined with each other in the minds of Koreans who have experienced division. This article will become the basis for future research given that the Inter-Korean Mind Integration Research Project is not just applicable to the inter-Korean relationship but also the integration of members of the Korean diaspora.

The articles from both Kwon and Park and Lee and Lee involve the changing mind-set of South Koreans toward unification. Kwon and Park analyse perceptions toward peace, while Lee and Lee analyse the perception of concepts relating to unification. Unification between the two Koreas has always been considered the "natural" course after their division. However, perceptions toward unification are changing given that division has continued for a long period of time and the appearance of new generations in both Koreas. Kwon and Park's article emphasizes that Koreans must place importance on peace for unification to come about and for the long-running, intractable conflict to end between the two Koreas. These two experiential pieces of research by scholars in South Korea are extensions of the critical awareness present in research focused on changes in awareness and generational issues.

In the future, there is a need to broaden the connection of these pieces of research, which focus on individual issues, to improve their relevance. There is meaning to comparatively analyzing the changes in perceptions of East Germans toward the SED, and research on perceptions by South Koreans living in Germany toward unification can be combined with research on the perceptions

of Chinese-Koreans in China or other members of the Korean diaspora. Connecting the research focused on the perceptions toward peace and unification among South Koreans with research on North Koreans will help create a roadmap for future research on mind integration.

Special References

Contributions within this HSR Forum
"Social Intergration or Mind Integration?
An Alternative Approach for the Unification of Divided Systems"

- Jung, Jin-Heon, and Eun-Jeung Lee. 2019. Division and Unification: Seen through the Eyes of Korean Migrants in Berlin. *Historical Social Research* 44 (4): 308-24. doi: [10.12759/hsr.44.2019.4.308-324](https://doi.org/10.12759/hsr.44.2019.4.308-324).
- Kwon, Young-Mi, and Juhwa Park. 2019. Peace through Cooperation or Peace through Strength? How to Achieve Peace in the Very Intractable Conflict Society. *Historical Social Research* 44 (4): 269-92. doi: [10.12759/hsr.44.2019.4.269-292](https://doi.org/10.12759/hsr.44.2019.4.269-292).
- Lee, Woo-Young, and Hayeon Lee. 2019. The Perception of the Integration of North and South Korea. *Historical Social Research* 44 (4): 293-307. doi: [10.12759/hsr.44.2019.4.293-307](https://doi.org/10.12759/hsr.44.2019.4.293-307).
- Lee, Bong-Ki, and Hannes B. Mosler. 2019. The Elephant in the Unification Room: How North Koreans think about the Workers' Party. *Historical Social Research* 44 (4): 325-49. doi: [10.12759/hsr.44.2019.4.325-349](https://doi.org/10.12759/hsr.44.2019.4.325-349).

References

- Fritsch, Michael and Michael Wyrwich. 2016. Entrepreneurship in the East German Transition Process: Lessons for the Korean Peninsula. *Historical Social Research* 41 (3): 256-280. doi: [10.12759/hsr.41.2016.3.256-280](https://doi.org/10.12759/hsr.41.2016.3.256-280).
- Hofmann, Michael and Bernd Martens. 2016. Generations and Social Structures in Socialist Countries: the German Democratic Republic and East Germany in Comparison with North Korea. *Historical Social Research* 41 (3): 318-335. doi: [10.12759/hsr.41.2016.3.318-335](https://doi.org/10.12759/hsr.41.2016.3.318-335).
- Holtmann, Everhard and Christian Rademacher. 2016. Decentralization of Power and of Decision-Making - an Institutional Driver for Systems Change to Democracy. *Historical Social Research* 41 (3): 281-298. doi: [10.12759/hsr.41.2016.3.281-298](https://doi.org/10.12759/hsr.41.2016.3.281-298).
- Holtmann, Everhard, Eun-Jeung Lee and Christian Rademacher. 2016. Knowledge Transfer as Intercultural Translation in the German-Korean Context - Facing Possible Future Challenges within the Triangle of Unification, System Transformation and Societal Integration. *Historical Social Research* 41 (3): 197-210. doi: [10.12759/hsr.41.2016.3.197-210](https://doi.org/10.12759/hsr.41.2016.3.197-210).

- Ketzmerick, Thomas. 2016. The Transformation of the East German Labour Market: From short-term Responses to long-term Consequences. *Historical Social Research* 41 (3): 229-255. doi: [10.12759/hsr.41.2016.3.229-255](https://doi.org/10.12759/hsr.41.2016.3.229-255).
- Kim, Hong-Joong. 2009. *The sociology of the heart*. Seoul: Munhakdongne Publishing.
- Kim, Sung-Kyung. 2017. *North Korean's Everyday life and Mind as Method: Mapping the divided minds*. Seoul: Sapyoung Academy.
- Lee, Eun-Jung, and Hannes Mosler, eds. 2015. *Lost and Found in Translation: Circulating Ideas of Policy and Legal Decisions Processes in Korea and Germany*. *Research on Korea*, vol. 2. Frankfurt: Peter Lang GmbH.
- Lee, Soo-Jung, and Woo-Young Lee. 2014. Social Relations and Attitudes between South Korean Migrants and North Korean Refugees in the Korea Town, New Malden, U.K. *North Korean Studies Review* 18 (1): 137-174.
- Lee, Woo-Young. 2016. The Integration of North and South Korea : Implications Drawn from South Africa and Northern Ireland. *The Journal of the Humanities for Unification* 67: 5-39.
- Lee, Woo-Young, and Kab-Woo Koo. 2016. North-South Contact Zone and Integration Theory of Minds: A Theory Proposal for "Geology of Mind." *Review of North Korean Studies* 19 (1): 269-310.
- Lee, Woo-Young, Kab-Woo Koo, Moon-Soo Yang, Cheol-gee Yoon, and Soo-Jung Lee. 2016. *Connecting the divided minds*. Seoul: Sapyoung Academy.
- Lee, Woo-Young, Kab-Woo Koo, Soo-Jung Lee, Keum Sang Kwon, Cheo-gee Yoon, Moon-Soo Yang, Kyemin Yang, and Sung Kyung Kim. 2017. *Mapping the divided minds*. Seoul: Sapyoung Academy.
- Martens, Bernd. 2016. Some Results of the Economic Transformation in East Germany and their Possible Relevance for Korea. *Historical Social Research* 41 (3): 211-228. doi: [10.12759/hsr.41.2016.3.211-228](https://doi.org/10.12759/hsr.41.2016.3.211-228).
- Moneytoday. (2019, Aug. 9). The expansion of the German constitution-guaranteed parliament "Democracy costs money." <<https://news.mt.co.kr/mtview.php?no=2019080813207668712>> (Accessed October 21, 2019).
- Pratt, Mary Louise. 1991. Arts of the Contact Zone. *Profession* 91: 33-40.
- Silbereisen, Rainer. 2016. Psychological Challenges of Unification - Selected Results and Thoughts on Korea. *Historical Social Research* 41 (3): 299-317. doi: [10.12759/hsr.41.2016.3.299-317](https://doi.org/10.12759/hsr.41.2016.3.299-317).
- Sisajournal. (2018, June 4). Reportage. Visiting Germany, the scene of "overcoming division." <<http://www.sisajournal.com/news/articleView.html?idxno=175722>> (Accessed October 21, 2019).
- Vogel, Lars, and Heinrich Best. 2016. Political Elites in Transition and Unification: German Lessons for the Korean Peninsula? *Historical Social Research* 41 (3): 336-367. doi: [10.12759/hsr.41.2016.3.336-367](https://doi.org/10.12759/hsr.41.2016.3.336-367).
- Yoon, Cheol-Gee. 2014. The Lesson for the Mind Integration between North-South Korea of 'die Innere Einheit' of Germany. *North Korean Studies Review* 17 (2): 9-43.
- Yoon, Cheol-Gee. 2016. The Current Issues of Inter-Korean Social Integration and the New Direction of Unification Education: Focusing on the Education of Mutual Understanding between North and South Korea. *The Korean association of political science & communication* 19 (1): 414-454.

Historical Social Research

Historische Sozialforschung

All articles published in this Forum:

Woo-Young Lee & Eun-Jeung Lee

The Issue of Mind Integration in the Unification of Divided Systems: A Case Study Focused on Germany and the Two Koreas.

doi: [10.12759/hsr.44.2019.4.253-268](https://doi.org/10.12759/hsr.44.2019.4.253-268)

Young-Mi Kwon & Juhwa Park

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

doi: [10.12759/hsr.44.2019.4.269-292](https://doi.org/10.12759/hsr.44.2019.4.269-292)

Woo-Young Lee & Hayeon Lee

The Perception of the Integration of North and South Korea.

doi: [10.12759/hsr.44.2019.4.293-307](https://doi.org/10.12759/hsr.44.2019.4.293-307)

Jin-Heon Jung & Eun-Jeung Lee

Division and Unification: Seen through the Eyes of Korean Migrants in Berlin.

doi: [10.12759/hsr.44.2019.4.308-324](https://doi.org/10.12759/hsr.44.2019.4.308-324)

Bong-Ki Lee & Hannes B. Mosler

The Elephant in the Room: Problems and Potentials of the Workers' Party of Korea in a Korean Unification Scenario.

doi: [10.12759/hsr.44.2019.4.325-349](https://doi.org/10.12759/hsr.44.2019.4.325-349)