

From Unification to Integration: A Socio-Cultural Approach to the “Unified Korea”

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Keywords: Socio-cultural approach, Unification, Integration, South-North relations.

Introduction

On 15 June 2000, Kim Dae Jung and Kim Jong Il, the leaders of the two Koreas, had a meeting unprecedented in history, agreeing that South and North Korea would

work closely together to reunify the divided nation in the foreseeable future. Within a year, however, it became clear that South and North Korea were deadlocked in making any further breakthroughs towards reconciliation and cooperation.

Importantly, a politico-economic approach has thus far dominated studies of reunification. It is certain that Korean reunification cannot be achieved without a resolution of political and economic issues. The need for a politico-economic approach cannot be overemphasized. However, if we are to learn from the case of Germany, we must grant that the problem of social and cultural integration is just as important as political and economic unification. Article 2 of the South—North Joint Declaration of June, 2000, is important in helping us anticipate how the South and the North (or the two Koreas) will be unified. Article 2 demonstrates that the two nations wish to be coexistent and co-prosperous. Therefore, we must search for a way for the two Koreas to coexist until they are reunified. This suggests that improving political and economic factors is a necessary but not sufficient condition for reunification. Reunification will be enhanced by sustained social and cultural exchange between the two Koreas.

The German experience shows that reunification may be accompanied by serious discrepancies of emotions and values in the post-unification era. Moreover, social and cultural confusion can increase political instability and economic costs, thereby adversely affecting the unified political and economic system.¹ Social and cultural integration must be anticipated assertively not only for the development of psychological and emotional homogeneity, but also to maximize the benefits of institutional reunification.

This paper discusses the steps necessary for achieving social and cultural integration in the course of Korean reunification, with a view toward developing an ideal model for such integration. Section 2 outlines the significance of a socio-cultural approach to reunification. Section 3 examines the present state of social and cultural exchange and the heterogeneity and homogeneity of the two Koreas by considering lessons from the German reunification. Section 4 searches for an ideal model of social and cultural integration with regard to the harmony of differences, the creation of a new community, and the role of civil society. In conclusion, we offer some suggestions for the future of social and cultural exchange between the two Koreas.

1. The socio-cultural conflicts stemming from the German Unification have led to the notion of 'one nation, two pasts' (Han Unseok 2003).

Why a Socio-Cultural Approach?

1. The Conceptualization of Unification and Integration

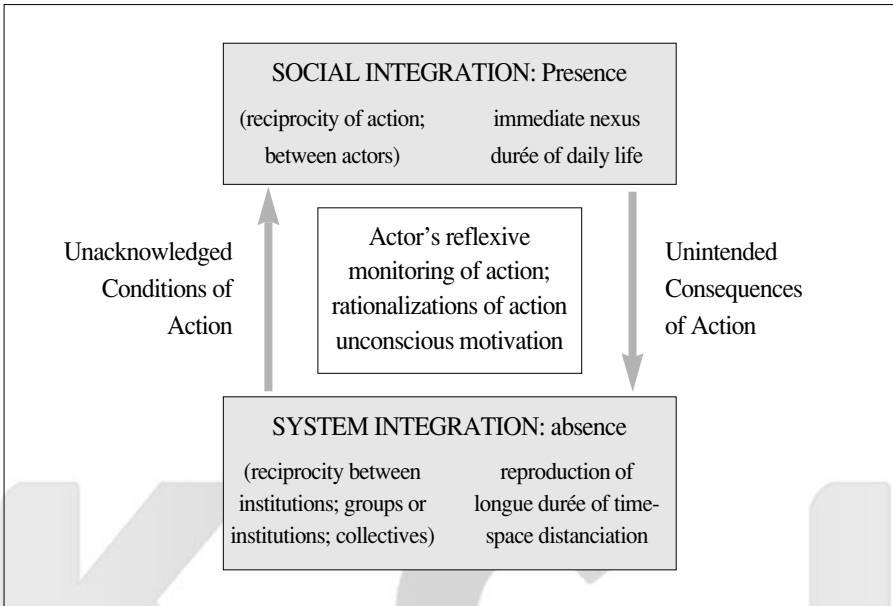
The existing literature assumes that the question of what ‘unification’ is has a simple and obvious answer. Unification is taken to mean “the reunion of things separated.” As reunification has become a matter of more general concern for the public, however, the concept of unification is corrected to include not only the simple union of territories but also the daily life of the people. In the past, in South Korea the term ‘reunification’ meant the recovery of territory. The ‘Ministry of Land Unification,’ the term which lasted until the late 1980s, reflected that the South Korean government had perceived reunification as territorial recovery. In 1990, however, the name was changed to the ‘Ministry of Unification.’ In this respect, unification for us means the formation of a national community through an effort to overcome the status of ‘broken nation-state’ (Lim 1998a: 287-316).

Integration, on the other hand, is the process whereby two or more actors come together to form a new actor. When the process is completed, the actors are said to be integrated (Galtung 1968: 377). It can be stated that integration can be classified into national and regional integration. National integration refers to one that is achieved within a single national state, while regional integration means one that occurs between two or more national states.

Important dimensions of national integration include political, economic, social, and cultural integration. Political integration is the formation of a single political sovereign body, economic integration is the establishment of economic institutions to a point where transactions on a single currency are possible, social integration is a social process that brings in equal citizenship rights, and cultural integration assumes the harmonization of social attitudes and cultural values.

National integration can be further classified into 1) social and cultural integration, and 2) political and economic integration. The former takes place mainly through a consensus on values, or “socialization,” whereas the latter is often the unintended consequence of economic relations and power structures exerting force on social foundations. To quote Giddens (see Figure 1), social and cultural integration can be summed up as social integration, while political and economic integration can be approached as system integration. According to Giddens, social integration occurs through face-to-face interaction of social actors, while system integration is produced through reciprocity among groups, collectives,

Figure 1. Social and System Integration



Source: David Jary and Julia Jary (1991: 452).

and institutions. As such, system integration is a more long-distance process, and usually takes place on a macro-level (Giddens 1984).

Despite such conceptual differences, most scholars have either taken unification and integration to be the same thing, or understood integration as a post-unification issue. Integration was understood not as part of the progression to unification, but rather as a process of establishing a harmonious way of life in a unified society. Other scholars, however, argue that unification is a broader term than integration. Integration, they believe, is a sub-category of unification, and the process of unification is none other than the culmination of gradual stages of integration. On this view, unification is ultimately realized when integration is completed on a full scale. These scholars put more importance in unified single state than on federalism of states or confederation. This sort of argument seems to be advocating the primacy of political and economic integration.

We see here some differences in the usage and understanding of the concepts of unification and integration. Unification is often used in emphasizing political and economic integration and searching for various modes of reunification (e.g., confederation, federalism, a single state, etc.), while integration implies not only

these modes but also is concerned with institutional and cultural reunion. At this point, we need to pay particular heed to the distinction of the ‘unification as a process’ from the ‘unification as a target.’ In a nutshell, while the latter simply highlights the integration of the political and economic institutions, the former includes the process of a socio-cultural integration in the company of the politico-economic integration (Kim 2002).

It is our understanding that the South-North reunification demands more than a simple physical union—it is better understood as a gradual and staged process. The enormous costs of reunification aside, the degree of heterogeneity between the South and the North would make reunification a long and painstaking task.² According to some calculation, the cost of reunification may range from 90 billion to 300 billion dollars for ten years (Park Hong-Ki 1991). To view reunification as a series of stages is to understand it as a dynamic process, of which physical unity is the natural end state. A ‘preparatory reunification’ such as this leaves room for the self-contained resolution of the two sides’ problems.³ As a process, reunification includes preparation for unification/integration at the societal level. Key to this process is the efforts of South and North Koreans to bridge differences through active social and cultural interchange.

2. The Significance of a Socio-Cultural Approach

Social and cultural factors can play a significant role in South-North reunification. This is because social members’ values and attitudes, as much as politico-economic dimensions, exert crucial influence on reunification. Generally, the social and cultural elements comprise areas other than politics and economics. They include academics, literature, art, religion, sports, media, and publishing, as well as humanitarian exchange and cooperation. The social and cultural areas therefore involve all human activity other than South-North power relations and economic transactions. In particular, they refer to the different ways of living in

2. In the other hands, Chae Koo-Mook (1997) argues for quick reunification on the grounds that the cost of reunification will increase with the length of separation. He also advocates a greater focus on the profits of reunification rather than the costs.

3. There is a serious need to consider the ‘third way’ as a new ideological principle for the unified Korea. The discussion of the third way thus far has been criticized as merely a combination of the strengths of capitalism and socialism (Yang Ho-Min et al. 1992); Lim (1998b) has added to the debate a ‘democratic socialism’ as experienced by Sweden and Germany

North and South Korean in terms of daily life. The importance of the social and cultural approach is that it is the organizational and symbolic foundation upon which a social system may be built.

A socio-cultural approach is crucial to both the accommodation of various views on reunification and a consistent reunification policy. We need to replace the current political and economic approach that both sides have been using with efforts to include the demands of a varied and pluralistic society. The usefulness of a socio-cultural approach is that it is not only conducive to the preparation for reunification, but also acts as a mediator between the reunification consciousnesses of different generations, groups, and individuals.

More specifically, the usefulness of a socio-cultural approach in the current context is as follows. First, it enables a relatively open communication network, one that is free of the logic of political confrontation. In the past, the political problem has often made interchange in other areas impossible, and this in turn has driven the two sides into confrontational states. Reunification in this vicious circle was understood as the problem of which system would win out; that is, which side would live and which would die off? A socio-cultural approach that prevents excessive concentration on political issues and sets the foundation for gradual understanding and mutual cooperation is therefore very important. Second, the appearance of diverse interest groups and classes, generations, and individuals has made a single logic of reunification no longer viable. A reunification policy based on national mobilization is no longer possible. Rather than try to arrive at an awkward national consensus, it would be more effective to attempt various forms of exchange and cooperation. Third, a socio-cultural approach requires reform and change in both Koreas. Reunification is neither possible nor desirable in a culture of competition and confrontation. Social and cultural integration is made possible by concerted efforts to overcome the exclusive sentiments of the past (Jeon Hyokwan 1998: 57). Finally, both North and South Korea are in need of an approach that would provide each with an appreciation of cultural relativism and democratic education toward the recognition and understanding of each other's differences. On this point, the project for socio-cultural integration implies that a reunification that accepts the differences between the South and the North can be established, and we have to make efforts to do so, eschewing the perspective of a monolithic model—system integration.

South Korea, with its odd mixture of too much and too little nationalism, is a society that does not hesitate to show exclusive attitudes toward anything not Korean. Foreign workers, Korean emigrants to China, and Third World citizens

are often subject to disdain. It is highly likely that North Koreans share a similar emotive structure. The significance of a socio-cultural approach in this respect is that it hopes to educate not only for the sake of cultural unity between the two sides, but also for a mature democratic integration. Therefore, a socio-cultural approach is also the training process for the formation of a democratic civil society and a democratic civic culture. For the purpose of moving past a sentimental approach and the national enthusiasm for unification that has prevailed previously, a socio-cultural approach requires that learning and training processes for democracy be capable of recognizing and embracing the various societal voices and demands.

The social conflict in unified Germany—epitomized in the terms “Ossi” (eastern Germany) and “Wessi” (western Germany)—is the result of a lack of education about the other side that would have led to better social and cultural integration. The conflict was played out not only between peoples of the two German societies, but toward foreigners as well. The survey of German teenagers in unified Germany showed that East and West German teens expressed a great deal of aversion toward each other, and that some of them held excessively favorable impressions of the neo-Nazi movement (Böhm 1994).

While reunification was admittedly sudden, the fact that Germany, even with its decades of social and cultural intercourse between the East and the West, should face such problems in ‘human integration’ is instructive for people who have lived under different social systems. Without even the kind of foundations that Germany had to work with, South and North Korea need to take special care in the area of social and cultural integration. As a means of developing a nation, cultural unity plays an important role in the process of reunification. Efforts to obtain cultural unity, no matter what the actual methods of reunification, will be conducive to integration and to an ambience of national reconciliation. Furthermore, culture provides the foundations for the formation of a national community. It is for all of these reasons that we need to pay as much attention to social and cultural integration as to politico-economic unification.

The German Experience and the Two Koreas’ Situation

1. Lessons from the German Experience

In Germany, there was continuous social and cultural exchange during the many

decades of separation. While the years immediately following separation were spent establishing independent political systems, Brandt's 'Eastern Policy' and East Germany's rather open reception of it meant that the two Germanys would soon establish a 'peaceful management system of separation.'⁴ The establishment of such a system signaled the start of a positive-sum game that set the conditions for open intercourse and the affirmation of national identity.⁵ The 'Eastern Policy' had developed from 'functionalism' to 'neo-functionalism,' grounded in 'the expansive logic of sector integration,' as proposed by Prof. Mitrany. German reunification was possible largely because there was always some range of social, cultural, and economic interaction within such a positive-sum game framework. This was the historical background that led East Germans to voluntarily choose absorption into West Germany.

After 'Brandt's Eastern Policy,' a great increase in human and material exchanges between the East and the West facilitated the people of the East and the West to understand each other, and, as a result, it mitigated the human tragedies stemming from the division. Although West Germans' hopes for unification were excluded by the major political interests, this denotes not a loss of will for unification but the consideration of unification as a long-range plan for the nation. In fact, according to the 1987 survey by *Die Welt*, the percentage of West Germans with a negative attitude toward unification in the first 30-40 years afterward was more than 33 percent, but the number of people who desired unification exceeded 80 percent. The lasting awareness of unification had been reinforced by the pragmatic judgment on (and the realistic approach to) division and unification in accordance with the constant exchanges between the two.

The human dialogue between the two Germanys in 1986 was vitalized to the

4. The concept of a 'peaceful management system of separation' for Korea may be understood as a midway stage in the process of overcoming past and present conflicts to achieve reunification. The concept is also useful as a realistic means for avoiding military conflict. In this venue, the 'Sunshine policy' proclaimed by the former President Kim Dae Jung also aimed at 'peaceful coexistence' between the two Koreas in a short-range mapping. Refer to Ministry of Unification (2002).

5. Such characteristics encouraged an optimistic view of social and cultural integration in the early years of reunification. With the shared history and the fact that there was at least some contact between separated families throughout, the expectation was that cultural differences would be minimal. There was also the more pessimistic view that the 40-year experience of living in different social systems would inevitably leave its mark on unified Germany. (Peter Bauer-Kasse and Max Kasse 1996: 3).

degree that it reached about 6 million people. It is manifest that social and cultural intercourse contributed to cultivating the mutual understanding between the two Germans before unification, and they solidified the foundation of the explosive surge of enthusiasm for unification in the late 1980s. It is also noteworthy in this context that among the younger generation in West Germany, according to the 1983 survey, 41 percent of those who made three or more visits to the East felt a sense of homogeneity with East Germans. In the same survey, only 17 percent of the youth in West Germany recognized homogenous binding elements between West and East Germany. This result shows that human exchanges had a strong influence in establishing the mutual understanding and trust between the two Germans (Han UnSeok 2003: 162).

This is not, however, to say that reunified Germany has been free from societal problems. Hasty system integration did not lead to successful integration. Surveys conducted in reunified Germany show that West Germans were generally worried and dissatisfied about having to take on the economic costs of reunification, while East Germans, although happy with improving living conditions, also showed satisfaction and distrust which varied between different age groups. They often express *ostalgie* (Ost + Nostalgie), longing for their past regional identity. It could be said that this occurrence resulted from the insufficient understanding of society, culture and value which the other party had held for a long time, in spite of the exchanges buoyed up before unification. Consequently, dissatisfaction of the West with increasing economic costs and dissatisfaction of the East with ‘the second-rate people’ following unification were expressed as social discord.⁶

Der Spiegel’s series of surveys in 1990, 1991, and 1992 suggests that a ‘new wall’ is appearing between the East and the West. Ironically, while the first survey showed a striking level of homogeneity between East and West Germans, the second survey yielded increasing dissonance. The third survey revealed definite trends of divergence. A 1993 survey showed the two sides attributing blame for various societal problems to the other group of residents (Jeon Tae-Kook 1999). The task of social and cultural integration was not seriously set forth in the early days of reunified Germany, when the ambience of reunification pre-

6. The dissatisfaction of the East was largely caused by the West Elites’ formation of the governing system, along with the West’s haughty attitudes and the lack of understanding about the East’s past. Jens Reich named these complaints the ‘repulsive identity.’ *Spiegel*, March 1993, p. 56.

cluded the need for such matters. As face-to-face interaction increased and problems such as the economic burden of West Germans and the unemployment of East Germans rose, serious fissures also surfaced.

This result means that past interchange between the West and the East Germany sustained ardent wish of latent unification and helped to feel homogeneity but didn't act by force of substantial integration. This seems to be caused for following reasons. First, interchange between the West and the East leaned to formal quantitative extension rather than comprehension of social and cultural value and attitude of tolerance. Second, interchange simply remained sightseeing and confirmation of life and death rather than contributed in creation of united culture of East Germany and West Germany. Finally, It ceased with interchange and cooperation lacking of sincere reflection about the different past and history of each other. When sudden integration of system and economical strain, and prosperity expected didn't achieved, these problems attributed the cause to a fault of culture and sense of values of the partner. This implies that although interchange between East and West Germany in past acted positively in unification, it didn't arrive to prepare human's unity as integration. The experience of West and East Germany gives us the lesson that we must heighten qualitative level of interchange as well as quantitative one and consciously prepare interchange and cooperation for integration.

2. The Social and Cultural Exchange Between the Two Koreas and Its Problems

The social and cultural conflicts of the reunified Germany teach us the important lesson that we need to initiate social and cultural exchange much in advance.⁷ Still, the South-North social and cultural exchange thus far has been minimal at best. It was only in the 1990s, as shown in Table 1, that human and material interchange began to increase.

Table 1 and Table 2 also reveal that the human interaction has been on the rise, with the exception of a phase from 1993 to 1996. During the four-year exceptional period, the South-North relation was plunged into stalemate due to

7. P. J. Opitz and D. Herz expect South-North heterogeneity to be, as was the case in Germany, a long and difficult process. At the same time, they argue that Koreans would more easily bond in the spirit of fraternity than Germans (Peter J. Opitz and Dieter Herz 1994/5: 237).

Table 1. Visits to North Korea by years

		Unit: Number of people							
Year	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	
Number	183	237	257	18	12	536	146	1,015	
Year	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004		
Number	3,317	5,599	7,280	8,551	12,825	15,280	18,878		

Source: Ministry of Unification (2004).

* Hyundai Group’s *Kumgang* Mountain tours are excluded.

** In the case of 2004, the numbers includes only until October.

Table 2. Visits to South Korea by years

		Unit: Number of people							
Year	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	
Number	291	175	103	6	0	0	0	0	
Year	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004		
Number	0	62	706	191	1052	1023	321		

Source: Ministry of Unification (2004).

* In the case of 2004, the numbers includes only until October.

Table 3. Contacts with North Korean by years

		Unit: Number of people							
Year	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	
Accomplished	377	1173	1,015	707	691	1,222	1,003	1,191	
Year	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004		
Accomplished	1,890	1,698	2,468	1,879	1,981	1,964	4,864		

Source: Ministry of Unification (2004).

* In the case of 2004, the numbers includes only until October.

both the nuclear clashes and the hawkish unification policy for merging North Korea that the Kim Young Sam regime pursued. Concurrently, North Korea had undergone all sorts of hardships for regime maintenance aggravated by a sequent series of the advent of economic crisis, the decease of the Great Leader Kim Il Sung, and so on.

On the other hand, since 1997, South Korean visitors to North Korea have gone on increasing in number in the face of the North’s infiltration in the West Sea occurring in 1999 and 2002. Likewise, the number of North Korean visitors to South Korea has kept enlarging with the exception of 2001. The increasing

interchange implies that the summit meeting in 2000 played a significant role in diversifying the human interactions between the two Koreas and promoting them in a stable way.

However, it can be recognized that there were some vicissitudinous phases in the case of contacts between North and South Koreans. As <Table 3> shows, the number of civilians' contacts swindled in 2001, but has been gradually increasing again afterwards. Ups and downs of civilians' contacts between the two Koreas can be interpreted as a phenomenal outgrowth stemming from the following historical occasions: the West—sea border incursion of the North's military in 1999; the launch of the George W. Bush's Administration in 2001 with harsh measure against North Korea; its entailing impediment to the development of South Korea's 'Sunshine policy'; and ideological cleavages within domestic society of South Korea concerning the government's policy towards North Korea (hereafter, we call it the 'South-South confrontation').⁸

With the 2000 summit meeting as a momentum, and interchange and cooperation that leaned to economic cooperation and separated families' meeting have developed into various fields. In fact, interchange and cooperation before the summit meeting had centered on humane support by food shortage of North Korea in the 1990s and in process of this support, ones in various fields were proceeded. Particularly, recently, humane support centered on the goods has been developing into support through cooperation with North Korea, and the range of interchange and cooperation has widened into sports, academy, science, culture etc. For economic cooperation, *Gaeseong* industrial complex business has been stabilized gradually and has been developing into the new step.

As can see from Table 4, economic cooperation, sightseeing, and humane support occupy great part of interchange and cooperation. However, interchange and cooperation in the fields of transportation and communication, academy, and religion are increasing gradually. This shows that after the 2000 summit meeting, interchange and cooperation between South Korea and North Korea have solidified in social each field. Despite the increase of interchange and cooperation, it still has a lot of problems. First, human exchange is still excessively

8. In particular, the so-called 'South-South confrontation' generated severe ideological conflicts on sunshine policy of the Kim Dae Jung regime. The 'South-South confrontation' in South Korea leaves room for argument between the conservative and the progressive regarding foreign policy to North Korea and South Korean-American relations, and has negative effects on social integration (Park Chanseok 2001).

Table 4. Visit to North Korea by Fields

Unit: Number of cases (Number of people)

Fields	Applied	Approved	Rejected	Withdrawn	In Process	Accomplished
Separated Families	64 (6,000)	62 (5,996)	1 (1)	1 (1)		53 (5,918)
Economics	1,462 (14,371)	1,353 (13,840)	12 (66)	89 (452)	6 (18)	1,228 (12,128)
Academics	98 (1,517)	90 (1,439)	3 (4)	5 (74)		80 (1,347)
Culture, Art	98 (1,943)	91 (1,894)	4 (31)	3 (18)		68 (1,698)
Athletics	193 (2,908)	188 (2,869)	1 (3)	4 (36)		168 (2,627)
Religion	141 (1,797)	128 (1,476)	8 (33)	11 (288)		105 (1,327)
Media, Publication	111 (1,015)	96 (754)	3 (8)	12 (252)		86 (712)
Tourism, Project	1,573 (16,575)	1,561 (15,673)		13 (903)		1,520 (14,951)
Transportation	477	472	1	4		464
Telecomm	(3,076)	(3,064)	(3)	(9)		(3,021)
Science, Environment	54 (376)	50 (348)		4 (27)		43 (280)
Light Water Reactor	1,083 (15,925)	1,077 (15,742)		6 (183)		1,066 (15,568)
Humanitarian Aid	855 (8,307)	805 (8,050)	1 (2)	41 (231)	4 (20)	768 (7,876)
Others	153 (7,208)	138 (6,786)	9 (228)	5 (194)		129 (6,682)
Total	6,362 (81,018)	6,111 (77,931)	43 (379)	198 (2,670)	10 (38)	5,778 (74,135)

Source: Ministry of Unification (2004).

* The numbers includes only until October, 2004.

concentrated in the reunions of separated families and economic investments. This is because there is yet to be formed an ambiance of peace and cooperation between the two governments. Forward, if construction of interview-room in *Kumgang* Mountain is completed, separated families meeting is expected to develop into stable meeting institutionally. Current problem is that separated families' meeting is limited to meaning as meeting itself. Social meaning of dispersed families meeting, that is, the reality of division, diffusion of ardent wish to unification, and mutual understanding and permeation through the meeting will be suggested more importantly. Second, the system crisis of the North in the 1990s has created a condition in which the North has no choice but to be rather careful about intercourse with the South. Despite South Korea's assertiveness, therefore, social and cultural interaction is limited. This tendency is confirmed that interchange and cooperation have hesitated as inter-Korean relations is strained entering in 2004. Also, it is truth that interchange and cooperation themselves as well as North Korea's cautiousness can not but be influenced sensitively by political conflict between South and North Korea. Third, interaction led by civil organizations is relatively weak. Most civic interaction thus far has taken the form either of individuals searching for separated family members or corporations making economic ventures. It should be mentioned that an ideal social and cultural integration would be led by active interactions among social groups and civic organizations. At the present day, civil groups' interchange and cooperation centering on humane support is increasing, but some problems are here. The problems are that the interchange is not escaping a small-scale work, and there is being cooperation through support partially but is still concentrated overly on only material support. This implies that interchange and cooperation of civil groups in the present should develop into new high step. In connection with, it can be said that we reach the step to move from humane support until now to common development and cooperation (Chung Young Chul 2004). Finally, the legal barriers required by the South Korean government must be noted. As an example, for separated families, the arbitrary legal hassles in sending money and arranging meetings must be addressed. Retooling legal procedures is necessary to prevent arbitrary, political manipulation of social and cultural exchange. Especially, we must urgently revise current law and system that properly don't reflect problems to happen in process of interchange and cooperation between South and North Korea. 'Fundamental law' that prescribes inter-Korean relations is not readied yet, and the law of interchange and cooperation between South and North Korea is excessively restrictive as backing up the pre-

sent inter-Korean relations. Also, the National Security Law still remains by the most important legal obstacle.

3. Comparative Analysis of Culture between the South and the North

Despite a long shared history, the 50-odd years of separation have created a number of divergent values and practices between the South and the North. Such heterogeneous cultures become obstacles to social integration. In a situation where the confrontational attitudes of both sides are not yet relinquished, partial differences may be blown out of proportion as general divergences. Moreover, the fact that more than 70 percent of the Korean population consists of members of post-Korean-war generations suggests that South-North heterogeneity would show characteristics of ‘system-gebunderheit’ (system-restriction). Worry over ‘system-gebunderheit’ is growing more in terms of that North Korean post-war generation dominates more than 85% of population (Eberstadt and Banister, 1992: 117). At the present, both South and North Korean post-war generation occupy more than 70% of whole population, and this proves that population’s weight who is internalized perfectly on capitalist and socialist systems is absolute majority. In this situation, ‘system-gebunderheit’ will not be able to avoid. Some of the aspects of South-North heterogeneity are revealed in Table 5.

Table 5. The Aspects of South-North Heterogeneity

	South	North
Ideological System	Liberal democracy/ Market economy, Individual competition-ism and Collectivism	Juche ideology/ Socialist economy, Collectivism
Value System	Civil rights Individual morality Rationalism	Collective rights Collective morality Revolution-ism
Life-style	Western-oriented	Socialist-oriented
Preferred Values	1. Freedom 2. Convenient life 3. Happy family 4. Recognition of others 5. Social Stability	1. National development 2. Equality 3. Convenient life 4. Happy family 5. Freedom

* The above table is made referring to survey on the South and North Korean novels, Jo, Hanbum (1997).

Table 5 indicates that the different experiences and value orientations of South and North Koreans are already heavily internalized. The more important point here, however, is that when we speak of heterogeneity, we often think of it only as a problem of the North and unrelated to the South. There is indeed a tendency to discuss only the 'divergence of the North,' when in fact divergence has occurred on both sides.⁹

Meanwhile, the two sides also share homogeneous aspects. South-North homogeneity can be summarized in two dimensions: one is that Confucian lifestyles and values are still largely present, and the other is that both sides share a strong national consciousness. As North Korean traditional culture studies show, North Korea is utilizing the formalities of tradition as an important resource for controlling its people (Lee Woo-Young 1993). National consciousness is also strongly expressed through socialist patriotism. Traces of Confucian values are widespread in South Korea as well, and Confucian principles of social organization are still firmly present despite the onset of Western ideals of rationality. Despite exposure to international society, national sentiments like 'patriotism' and 'anti-Japan-ism' strongly pervade.¹⁰ Such homogeneous aspects would be conducive to social integration. At this point, it is worthwhile to note that long historical memories and the Confucian tradition would help to advance the mutual understanding and the possibility of reunification (Song Dooyul 1995).

As described in Table 6, it seems that South and North Koreans still feel a strong sense of national unity and share common cultural heritages. But despite the commonalities, there are also a number of differences in inter-generational outlooks on reunification according to different value orientations. Some studies

9. While the South criticizes the North's heterogeneity in comparison to their 'liberal democratic system,' the North does the same with the South in comparison to the North's 'national tradition.' Ignoring the changes themselves, both countries try to condemn the heterogeneities of the other. These critics deny the common sense that both have to change themselves simultaneously, to be tailored for reunification as well as to enhance the mutual understanding of historical trajectories where the two sides have taken different paths.

10. Anti-Japanese sentiments can be unearthed in both South and North Korea. At the South-North Conference of Historical Study in 2003, representative of both sides reached the consensus that the contemporary English expression of 'Korea' should be changed to 'Corea' in that the term 'Corea' was perversely disused by the Japanese empire. Another obvious evidence of the synchronous anti-Japanese feelings can be found in the fact that the central themes set in motion by the current academic interchange between the two Koreas concentrate on the critical review for the 'Rule of Japanese Imperialism.' *Chungang ilbo*, 22 August 2003.

Table 6. The Aspects of South-North Homogeneity

	South	North
Social Value System	Comparatively strong Collectivism Confucian values	Strong collectivism Confucian values
Nationalism	Strong nationalism	Strong nationalism (Socialist Patriotism)

* The above table relates the attitudes of social values and nationalism between South and North Korea.

show that while the younger generations are more open toward North Korea, they are also more concerned about the expected divergences after reunification (Chung Sunki 1998). The growth of popular reunification movements since the 1980s and the weakening of anti-Communist ideologies in the post-Cold War era, as well as the gradual democratization of South Korean society, contributed to this new outlook. Yet these younger generations, especially those in their teens and twenties, also feel considerably less need for reunification than their elders. According to the latest survey on the younger generation’s unification consciousness in South Korea conducted by the Department of Young Men, the YMCA, 39 percent of all high-school respondents was found to be the most inclined to vote against the reunification, 52 percent said that they would be willing to support national unification, but this ratio is considered much lower numerical value in comparison with the proportion shown in the previous surveys.¹¹ On the other hand, another poll results show, of the younger generation surveyed, about 33 percent responded negatively to the indispensability of unification, but 53 percent of all respondents has favorable impression on North Korea. This survey reveals two different interpretations of the changing teenager’s perception on unification with North Korea: on the one hand, the younger generation does not regard North Korea as the South’s enemy just like the past apprehension; on the other, it does not treat North Korea as the subject of unification.¹²

The trend is echoed in the fact that younger generations were more con-

11. *Yonhapnews*, 2 January 2004.

12. Survey on the unification consciousness by the Advisory Council on Democratic and Peaceful Unification, June 2003.

cerned about South-North differences in a reunified society. Recent skeptical views toward reunification or arguments for its futility have their roots in similar inter-generational discrepancies, which in turn may be understood to reflect the degree to which South and North Korean societies have diverged. Unless the divergence is overcome, therefore, both the actual task of reunification and the ensuing process of social integration will be difficult.

Differences and Co-Existence—‘The New’

1. A ‘Symphony’ of Differences and the Development of a Civil Consciousness

South-North social integration cannot be discussed simply in terms of a post-reunification project. It would be impossible to arrive at a ‘culture of reunification,’ without dealing with the ‘culture of separation.’ Since the division of the nation, both the South and the North have tried only to criticize each other’s differences: there have been no serious efforts to understand and accept each other. In this respect, the South and the North may be said to be sharing the same logical constraint (Cho Hye-Jung 1998). They showed identical patterns of action as if they were mirror reflections of each other.¹³ These patterns followed the logic of a crude and twisted sort of ethnocentrism.

But if reunification is to be accomplished by not only understanding but also embracing the differences between the sides, then we will need to establish a new outlook of ‘a reunification that acknowledges differences.’¹⁴ It is also time to realize the simple historical fact that it is through a symphony of differences that a ‘society’ is formed. Even within the same nation, there are in fact numerous ‘differences’ in the form of subcultures, the mixture of which contributes to the development of society. This is because the general norms and value systems of a community are not given *a priori*, but rather as part of an ongoing historical process. The acceptance and harmonization of differences may be the most ideal

13. Lee Jong-Seok called this the “mirror image effect,” i.e., the two sides criticized yet were identical to each other (Lee Jong-Seok 1998: 35).

14. Cho Hye-Jung calls attention to the fact that social integration requires the acknowledgment and acceptance of differences and the “organization of diversity,” rather than the “cloning of uniformity” (Cho Hye-Jung 1996: 51).

way to overcome the problem of heterogeneity between the South and the North. But this requires an outlook transformation, and this in turn is possible with the development of a sophisticated communitarian civil consciousness.

South Korea is the plausible place to begin the latter project.¹⁵ One reason for this is that there currently is no realistic channel through which to initiate change in the North. Another reason is that it would be better to establish a sound ‘culture of reunification’ in the South before changing the North. The development of South Korea up to now has been a process of compressed social change, best described as ‘rushing modernization.’ Separation in this process has been an excuse for the ultra-right, anti-communist ideology that the past authoritarian regimes employed at their leaders’ convenience. South Korean society during this time was deeply permeated by confrontational values under the strong influence of politics over other areas. Combined with the socialization of ‘military culture,’ such values resulted in a phobia tendency toward anything other than ‘me/us.’ Unless such values are corrected, there is a danger that we may end up in a ‘one nation-two societies’ predicament.

The key aim of the development of civil consciousness, therefore, lies in eliminating the ideology of ultra-right anti-communism, and in establishing communitarian values. Anti-communist ideology has been so widespread for the past 50 years that, even with gradual democratization since the late 1980s, there is a sense in which there already seems to be established an ‘anti-communist circuit’ that can be switched on whenever the conditions are right, like Pavlov’s dog (Kwon Hyuk-Bum 1998). There is also the problem of a weakened anti-communism leading not to an appreciation of the North as a part of a larger community, but rather patronizing forms of sympathy. While this is also a reflection of the power balance of South-North relations in the 1990s, it is underscored by a deep anti-communism: the feelings of sympathy and superiority are in fact transformations of anti-communist sentiments. Anti-communism is not being deconstructed, but merely mutated.

So an ideal reunification would be preceded by the development of a civil consciousness and a sound value system that could harmonize differences. It is important to note at this point that social integration is not simply a post-reunifi-

15. Such is the reality of the Korean peninsula. Even if we were to say that there is a civil society in North Korea, it is not one that is actually led by civilians; it is more plausible to say that there is no civil society there. Also, it is likely that the development of civil consciousness in the South will in turn influence the North.

cation project, but a process that runs through the periods before, during, and after reunification.

2. Social and Cultural Integration as a Creative Process

It is hard to deny that the two Koreas have become seriously divergent during the five decades of separation. From language to customs, to values and lifestyles, heterogeneity abounds.¹⁶ Social and cultural integration is impossible without an understanding of these basic facets of community-formation.

Despite trends of divergence, the South and the North still share common historical roots, strong national consciousness, and the same Confucian values. Such homogeneous resources may be utilized in the process of social integration. However, it is important to note that these resources in themselves do not make possible or lead to ideal social integration. First, despite apparent similarities in cultural resources, there may be differences in meanings and orientations. For example, Confucian cultural value of South and North Korea is similar, but North Korea has expressed it as socialist patriarchal Confucian culture combined with socialist contents, while influence of Confucian culture in South Korea has dwindled gradually. In fact, patriarchal Confucian culture in North Korea is connected with loyalty and filial piety for Kim Il Sung and Kim Jong Il. Also, there are confusion and difficulties caused by the difference of the words and context used by each other. To one example, at the time of the 2002 summit meeting, Kim Jong Il, a chairman of National Defense Committee, confessed that had understood only 80 percent of President Kim Dae Jung's speech (Olga, 2004). Second, without a fundamental change in the current South-North values, homogeneous aspects may bring forth nothing more than an acknowledgment of past commonalities. Third, the contemporary context in which the two Koreas are located requires the creation of a new cultural tradition.¹⁷ Finally, homogeneous

16. According to the Rep. Lee Mi Kyung's report at the inspection session of the government conducted by the National Assembly, she reveals that the degree of linguistic heterogeneity between the two Koreas reached an aggravated phase, and still worse, some parts of communication are unable to be made without translations. Refer to the Rep. Lee Mi Kyung's report at the 2003 inspection of the Ministry of Education & Human Resources Development conducted by the National Assembly.

17. 'Traditional culture' and 'cultural tradition' are different concepts. The former refers to the culture of past traditional society, while the latter is a term for the cultural styles accumulated from the past to the present. While cultural tradition cannot be discussed without reference to

values, far from contributing to social integration, may trigger internal conflict and division. It is because authoritative and patriarchal cultural structure which is same in both South and North Korea may work negatively on extension and development of democratic consciousness. In this light, the argument that the South and the North must discover touching points within contemporary normative settings gains credibility.

A new model through which the different merits both sides have can be synthesized is called ‘the third way’ for the integration of South and North Korea (Jeon Sungwoo 1995). The creation of ‘New Culture’ should be pursued beyond the current cultural interchanges between the two Koreas. For this purpose, both the South and the North have to make something ‘new’ which they all can enjoy through vigorous support by the government as well as exchange and cooperation by civic organizations. Good examples include cooperative historical research, exchange of textbooks, single-team organization in sports, cooperative movie production etc. In the same context, we can understand other instances such as co-hosts of the Forum of Tangun (the founding father of the Korean nation), and the joint entrance in the 2000 Sydney Olympic Games, the 2002 Pusan Asian Games, and the 2003 Daegu Universiade Games. In addition, since 2003, an animation movie “pporong pporong ppororong” jointly produced by the two Koreas has been telecasted through the Educational Broadcasting System (EBS) in South Korea. This case will be able to not only make us feel homogeneity between the South and the North but also act as a base which both will create new culture on.

A minimum of homogeneity is a *sine qua non* for the socio-cultural integration of the two Koreas. The construction of homogeneity can be therefore assumed as the premise that should be newly prepared for the integration, but the preparation of homogenous foundation cannot be necessarily equalized with the restoration of homogeneity (Lee Hunkyung 2001: 232). It is mainly because South and North have been already experiencing the severe heterogeneity in the cultural dimension. One of appropriate examples showing the cultural divergence can be found in deeds demonstrated the North’s cheering squad during the 2003 Summer Universiade Games in Daegu.¹⁸

traditional culture, not all traditional culture is objects of inheritance. To inherit tradition is to creatively reorganize and develop aspects of the past that seem appropriate in contemporary contexts (Lim Hee-Sup 1985: 19).

18. North Korean cheerleaders pulled down placards with a picture of their leader Kim Jong Il in a

The creation of the new can only rely on what is in the present. As such, Korean unification must take a 'new road' that is neither German, nor Vietnamese, nor Yemenite. The creation of the new does not necessarily mean an abandonment of the old. As Hobsbawm shows, we must arrive at a new community through the 'invention of tradition' (Hobsbawm & Range 1983). In Korea, this process would also have the significance of completing the project of constructing a modern nation-state. An 'invention of tradition' that relies on common cultural tradition would be possible.

3. The Making of 'New' Citizenship

The central agents of the social integration process are the governments of the North and the South. If we consider the ways in which social and cultural values are expressed and developed via the everyday interaction between people, however, the importance of a dynamic civil society must also be noted. The government and civil society must cooperate while still maintaining their autonomy in a joint effort toward social and cultural integration. The government should support social and cultural interchange through official South-North communication, while the role of civil society would be to not only cooperate with the government but also expand direct South-North contact, as well as develop a mature civil consciousness.

Given the characteristics of the relationships between the South and the North, the government and NGOs will be driving forces for unification. Specifically, the government is the agent in charge of formulating the structures of peace, reconciliation and cooperation between the two sides in the field of politics, military etc., while NGOs play an important role in reducing the heterogeneity between the two Koreas through social and cultural exchanges which the government has difficulty pursuing. In fact, before and after the summit meeting in 2000, Hyundai's Northern projects—in particular the Mt. Kungang tour project—had a strong influence on the political reconciliation and cooperation between the South and the North. In this context, it is evident that exchanges between NGOs are not filtered only by functionalist lenses.

tearful protest that they were hung in rain to the disgrace of Kim. The violent and erratic reactions of the North's cheerleaders made the South Korean's hopes for peacemaking turn into bitter disappointment with the deep feeling of heterogeneity.

Strengthening the role of civil society, more than simply facilitating exchange, would contribute to an egalitarian distribution of social citizenship. Social citizenship is yet to be legally and institutionally established in both the North and the South. When the state’s protection of civil rights, through an excessive technocratic rationality, actually runs the risk of reducing citizens to subjects, autonomous interaction in civil society becomes even more important for social integration. South Korean civil society, therefore, needs to become an autonomous agent, i.e., be free from the government, and increase independent interaction and cooperation with the North. Although there is no civil society to speak of in the North, there are many possible areas of exchange with relevant organizations.

With regard to the modes of exchange mentioned above, we should pay attention to the two predicaments salient during the current stage. One is the legal and institutional obstacles in South Korea; and the other is that there are no NGOs in North Korea.¹⁹ The former cannot be solved unless government employs a more flexible stance toward NGOs and supports NGOs’ self-governing activities for social and cultural exchanges with the North. For these legal and institutional obstacles, there are the National Security Law and pre-censorship. The latter, however, is not feasible regardless of the South’s efforts for change. Thus, at this stage, there are fundamental and inherent limitations in exchange and cooperation in civil society between the two Koreas. Nevertheless, the constant and vigorous exchanges between NGOs in South Korea and relevant groups in North Korea generate great contributions to the overall relationships and social integration of the South and the North. It is a promising sign that interchanges and cooperation between relevant organizations of the two Koreas, in particular, since the 2000 summit meeting, have been expanded and intensified. By way of typical evidences for the South-North civil exchanges, we can take such instances as cooperative interchanges between the South’s labor organizations and the North’s General Confederation of Labor, the South’s teachers and the North’s teacher associations, and the South’s peasant groups and the North’s Confederation of Peasants and Workers. The rest of

19. Some researchers point out an emerging ‘second society’ in North Korea driven by a progressive change in values and consciousness, and call it a potential ‘civil society’. However, this seems an excessive application of the East European lessons to the North Korean case (Seo Jaejin 1995).

interchanges in progress include academic exchanges, broadcasting interchanges, and provincial interactions at the local authoritative level.²⁰

The establishment of citizenship is made possible by the active input of civil society. The concept of citizenship today needs to include not only the economic rights that Marshall outlined, but also social rights such as cultural rights and ecological rights in the broad sense. Social citizenship is urgently needed in a society that has achieved rapid industrialization without proper democratization. Because the development of social citizenship in the West may be understood as a realistic application of socialist ideals, it would be able to accommodate much of the socialist human ideals put forth by the North. Social citizenship, then, is important not only as a reunification strategy but also as a resource to social integration, especially as a way to achieve an integration that is neither too nationalistic nor oriented toward the past.

Concluding Remarks

Reflecting upon the reunification experiences of divided countries, Galtung summed up the difficulty of reunification in terms of the proposition T+40 (trauma+40). It takes at least one or two generations, he argued, for the scars of separation to heal (Galtung 1989). Interestingly, both Germany and Yemen were reunified roughly 40 years after separation. In the Korean peninsula, however, the walls of antagonistic ideologies and different political systems have remained for more than half a century. Far from being healed, the wounds of war seem to be deepening. Moreover, the German case shows that it also takes a long time to deal with the side effects of integration. It usually takes the span of more than two or three generations to achieve a stable state of unification/integration. The Galtung's arithmetic as applied to Korea means that, unless we initiate the process of social and cultural integration now, the dual task of overcoming separation and gaining social integration will not be achieved until midway into the 21st century.

We argue that reunification cannot be approached simply from a politico-

20. A right example can be taken from the sister-city affiliation between Cheju Island in South Korea and *Yangang* Province in North Korea through which the provincials in Cheju Island have made a large-scale visit to North Korea for the purpose of mutual exchange.

economic approach. While this is certainly an important dimension of reunification, the advantage of the socio-cultural approach has doubtless become increasingly clear in recent years. This paper is a modest attempt to present a model of how we should go about taking a socio-cultural approach.

The June 2000 South-North summit meeting was a new milestone in the reunification process. There has since been active intercourse between the South and the North. Social and cultural exchange, in particular, is showing greater progress than political and economic interchange. Representatives from key civil organizations in the South attended the Labor Party’s anniversary celebration in the North, and various social groups from the South and North have been pursuing joint projects.

At present, the South-North human interchanges enter upon ‘the era of ten-thousand people’ indicating that the number of human exchanges annually goes beyond ten thousand. Furthermore, South Korea became the second trade partner with North Korea to the extent that the amount of economic trade between the two Koreas is yearly in excess of seven-hundred-million dollars. Granting it to be true that the current situation if the two Korea still remains at the incipient stage in comparison with the annual interchanges of six million people in the German case, the peculiarity of the South-North relations enables us to believe that the growth of human interactions between the two Koreas must be considered a tremendous improvement. The unflagging increase of human interactions since 2000 summit meeting regardless of various side-effects stemming from the rapid growth of interchanges connotes that the socio-cultural exchanges are now heading toward a stabilized stage.²¹ Even in 2003, the first festive celebration for peaceful unification was jointly held by the two Koreas in Cheju Island, and the demilitarized zone was open to the public in South Korea for a large-scale visit to North Korea. The extended interactions hold up a true mirror to the existing state of the South-North relations that the socio-cultural interchanges contribute to the gradual collapse of the dividing line laying down between South and North Korea. Such a rich variety of exchange and cooperation will take us a step closer to ideal reunification.

21. On the account of the outbreak of the so-called ‘Mankyungdae’ incident in 2001, the then incumbent Minister of National Unification in South Korea hanged up his boots.

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