

**Unification Path of North Korea's Kim Jong Un Regime**  
**- Comparative Analysis focused on East Germany and North Korea -**

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## **Statement of Independence**

I hereby declare that I have composed the presented thesis independently on my own without any other resources than the ones indicated. All thoughts taken directly or indirectly from external sources are properly denoted as such.

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# **I. Introduction**

## **1. Raising an Issue**

This study attempts to predict the North Korean Kim Jong Un regime's stance on the issue of Korean unification by extracting factors, influencing the judgment of actors or policy makers and applying them to the decision-making process of the discreet regimes of East Germany and North Korea respectively. The identification of influential variables relating to decision-making can be validated by using social science methods and empirical case studies. To evince an empirical argument, it has been necessary to examine diverse paths towards unification in several countries related chronologically by post-World War II changes to national boundaries.

Representative cases of formerly divided countries (some of which have reunified) include: Germany, Vietnam, Yemen, and China-Taiwan. However, the case of Vietnam, where unification was achieved through the armed conflict during the Vietnam War, is considered to be beyond the limits of the study, the parameters of which were determined by its primary focus on peaceful unification as a process. In respect of Yemen, unification through a federal system which fragmented again later, proved too difficult to identify the trend of a consistent unification policy. China and Taiwan were also problematic, given that China maintains the principle of 'One China', while Taiwan pursues a policy of separation. Taiwan's adoption of a liberal state system also made its inclusion problematic, given this study's concern with comparing nations advocating and implementing 'State Socialism'. Consequently, the most appropriate comparative cases are East Germany and North Korea (especially the Kim Il Sung era), given that both were politically

divided at the same time (i.e. after WWII during the commencement of the Cold War) and shared similar systemic characteristics related to the implementation of state socialism.

Since German reunification, there has been a vast amount of research conducted in Korea on this topic as well as Germany because of a belief that the division of Germany was contextually comparable to the experience of Korea. Importantly, German reunification has also been deemed to be achieved through peaceful means. While early studies of German reunification in Korea have focused on the unification process and the historical background to those processes leading reunification, the subsequent decline of the newly reunified German economy and the astronomical costs attributed to reunification have led some to argue that German reunification was contextually different from any model that could be applied to Korea. For example, Germany's economy grew rapidly after reunification in the 1990s. But by the early 2000s, it had become so-called 'Sick man of Europe', tangibly highlighting reunification's negative aspects. In Korea, many researchers have questioned whether German reunification could be used as an appropriate model for Korean unification and shifted to examine the process of integration after German unification. However, given that the Korean Peninsula remains divided 70 years later on, the German model still continues to be pertinent exemplar for unification and integration.

Despite an overwhelming amount of research on the German model of reunification, South Korea and North Korea's different approaches to the unification issue have made it difficult to reach an agreement on unification. Two Koreas have vigorously disputed unification initiatives and promoted oppositional narratives as fiercely as East and West Germany during the Cold War. Additionally, a distinct disparity is marked by a relatively consistent West German policy, credited with contributing to German reunification, whereby South Korean

unification policy has seen frequent and significant change under rival administrations holding opposing views and pursuing contrary objectives.

Another consideration is the stubborn fact of the North Korean regime's robustness, solidity and resilience. After the death of North Korean founder Kim Il Sung in 1994 and the sudden death of Kim Jong Il (son of Kim Il Sung) in 2011, many predicted a North Korean collapse, as skepticism was rife regarding Kim Jong Un's (son of Kim Jong Il) ability to maintain or bolster the regime. However, for 10 years after Kim Jong Un's 2012 inauguration, his regime has accelerated its development of asymmetric weapons (i.e. nuclear weapons and intercontinental ballistic missiles), modernized its military, and strengthened its internal system of government by forging links and promoting solidarity with neighboring socialist countries (i.e. China and Russia). In 2021, the 8th North Korean Worker's Party Congress showed the regime recognizing economic development as its one of top objectives to lay the foundation for a self-reliant economic model. Notably, Kim Jong Un's regime has remained comparatively silent on the issue of inter-Korean reconciliation and cooperation, prioritizing a strengthened national defense and regime survival, making it difficult for South Korean approaches to unification even to be discussed effectively, let alone be implemented. Given this situation, it is critical to predict the future stance of Kim Jong Un's regime regarding Korean Unification, not least because circumstances on the Korean Peninsula could be significantly altered if the regime adopts a distinct unification strategy that drives engagement in a different direction from its predecessors.

Correspondingly, this study provides an analysis and comparison of the unification policies of East Germany and North Korea; two nations, divided at a similar time, sharing a similar ideological background and similarly characterized by fierce regime competition and opposition to Western 'democratic' solutions. This study is focusing on 20th Century post war historical changes in the positions

taken by successive East German and North Korean regimes in respect of reunification, comparing and examining policy changes to create a topography of change which can infer the current stance of Kim Jong Un regime's on the unification issue, thus locating the possibility and potential for transformative change on the Korean Peninsula.

In comparing the cases of East Germany and North Korea, this study not only contributes to a 'necessary accumulation' of relatively scarce research, with regard to this aspect of the field, but also addresses 'policy implications' in terms of how the South Korean government could respond to the Kim Jong-un regime as its approach towards the unification issue evolves.

## **2. Review of Existing Research**

In analyzing the unification policy of the Kim Jong-un regime, this study firstly reviews existing studies which compared the contents of policies developed in East Germany and North Korea. Secondly, a review of recent studies on North Korean unification policy since the inauguration of Kim Jong-un's regime is conducted. Finally, this study reviews domestic studies related to divided nations, in which various approaches to overcoming division and pursuing unification are proposed.

### **2.1. A Comparative Study of East German and North Korean Policies of Unification**

Although there are few studies in South Korea that specifically analyze East

Germany (The German Democratic Republic: GDR) and its Cold War policy for reunification, a few researchers in Korea have conducted research which has contributed to this field.

Shedding light on East German foreign policy through time-series analysis from division to reunification, Yoo Ji-Hoon (2007) points out that the East German regime, when it committed to building a socialist state, approached reunification from a normative and propagandistic perspective until the 1960s. Despite an East-West approach was taken in the 1970s, East Germany publicly declared a ‘Two German States Theory (Theorie der zwei deutschen Staaten)’. He also points to the deepening economic dependence of East Germany on the West as a deciding factor in the failure of the Two States policy.

Kim Kyung-rae & Hur Joon-young (2015) have noted that external intervention was prevalent in the policy making process. East Germany, aware of West’s political and economic influence, nevertheless, was forced to accede to Western policy due to Soviet pressure. Whilst Soviet political influence waned in later years, East Germany’s West German policy directives remained under strong Soviet influence. It was also noted that the activities of the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE), acknowledged as a regional multilateral security organization further exemplified the external influence on East Germany’s decision-making process.

Kim Hyung-yul (1994) explains that the ‘Two German States Theory’ in East Germany sought clear separation from the West, while commenting that GDR assertions that the institution of socialism in the East provided the rationale for distinct ‘Socialist German Nation-state (Sozialistischer Deutscher Nationalstaat)’, was unreasonable in historical empirical terms. In contrast, the West German concept of nationalism, amalgamated nation and state to orchestrate a continuity of identity with the German nation-state founded by Bismarck in 1871 became a

basis for German Unification in 1990.

Lee Dong-ki (2009) claims that East Germany's proposal for a distinct national confederation of East and West Germany, which sought to counter the Adenauer government's policy of power superiority in the 1950s and 1960s, emerged from the notion of an alternative peace policy rather than any communist theoretical delusion or paranoia. Lee also notes that the West German government did not respond to the East German proposal for federation. Nevertheless, this proposal was considered an important stimulus for peace-oriented critical intellectuals and diverse political groups in West Germany, and therefore, competed with various disparate unification initiatives including those advocated by administrative factions. A distinctive feature of Lee's research is its reinterpretation of the East German proposal of national unity, which had been previously ignored in West Germany.

Even in South Korea, studies that directly compare the unification policies of East Germany and North Korea are extremely rare, with Choi Soo-kyung (1986), Hwang Byung-duck (1998), and Han Un-seok (2003) being representative examples. Choi Soo-kyung (1986) points to a significant difference between paths to reunification in East Germany and North Korea, exemplified in East German diplomatic relations with major Western countries such as U.S., established despite Cold War tensions. In contrast, North Korea failed to establish formal diplomatic relations with any major Western countries during this period. Especially, North Korea did not want North and South Korea to be cross-authorized by an international community, which was considered as a foreign influence on Unification.

Hwang Byung-duck (1998) argues that the East German policy of separation was effective in terms of regime maintenance, and could have been prolonged if the Cold War division of Europe had continued. Contrastingly, the North Korean

separation policy, promoted during an international collapse of socialist states, may have supported regime coherence as a short-term effect, but had questionable effectiveness in terms of system development through economic revitalization in the long-term.

Han Un-suk (2003) conducted a comparative analysis of East German and North Korean party leadership positions on nationhood, whereby authoritarian systems associated with distinct personalities defined the ideological orientation of the entire society. He suggests that the East German party leadership, in systemic competition with West Germany and dominated by the Soviet Union, sought to strengthen its socialist position by deferring reunification from the outset, despite its lack of popular legitimacy. In subordinating ethnicity to class, the East German regime ignored the sense of common belonging based on social and cultural commonalities that existed between East and West Germans. By contrast, North Korea's nationalist ideology, was reinforced by former members of the anti-Japanese garrison during the Japanese colonial period, who consolidated power by placing nationalism above classism.

Most studies in Korea, related to German East-West and Korean North-South relations and their reunification processes, have been focused on applying developmental notions of German East-West relations to the process of unification on the Korean Peninsula. Written from a West German/ South Korean perspective, research frameworks and comparative analyses have undoubtedly reflected a critical bias as there are relatively few studies that examine these processes from the perspective of East Germany or North Korea. Moreover, since German reunification, research into East-West relations during the Cold War period has no longer been a mainstream topic of research in Germany and Korea, hence, comparative studies of East Germany and North Korea are extremely rare.

## **2.2. Existing Research on Kim Jong Un's Unification Policy**

Most existing studies of North Korean unification policy are either regime-specific or chronological, and characterize North Korean unification strategy during the Kim Il Sung era as so-called 'One Korea Policy.' After the end of the Cold War in the 1990s, during the Kim Jong Il era, North Korea's strategy is seen to have shifted to a watered-down version of the inherited approach.

However, distinction between inherited systems and their relatedness to each of the three dynastic iterations of the North Korean regime has generally been made relatively clear. For example, in reference to the unification policy of the Kim Il Sung era, Kim Kab-chul (1988) analyzes 'Juche (Self-reliance) theory' as a justification of 'South Korean revolutionary policy.' His study focuses on the ideological foundation of Kim Il Sung's regime and explains how 'Juche theory' was used as an ideology to extol an image of resistant nationalism and invoke the concept of independent nationhood latent within the consciousness of the Korean people. Bang In-hyuk (2011), in contrast, emphasizes the changing power relations between North and South Korea, rather than ideological and systemic factors, amid the backdrop of the changing political situation in South Korea. The change of unification strategy from 'South Korean Revolutionary Policy' to the 'Foundation of the Confederal Democratic Republic of Koryo' is explained as a resultant process of the struggle for democracy in South Korea and the reversal of economic power between North Korea and South Korea.

Studies examining the reasons for the Kim Jong Il's shift to a sedentary unification strategy generally point to external environmental changes, exemplified by the impact on North Korea of the post-Cold War national realignment. Despite North Korea's previous strategy of armed unification and its

subsequent proposal of an aggressive federal system, external factors are said to have forced an abandonment of the 'One Korea policy' and ushered recognition of South Korea as a national entity (Choi Wan-kyu & Lee Su-hoon, 2001). Choi Kyung-hui (2016) argues that a South Korean-led reunification program after the end of the Cold War would have meant the collapse of a North Korean political and economic system centered on 'Su-ryong (absolute power ruler)'. Hence, North Korea chose a preventative strategy of permanent division to augment and consolidate its regime structure.

Literature on North Korea's unification policy since the inauguration of the Kim Jong Un regime is relatively recent. Given that this regime is still current, most domestic research studies in Korea are tracking the impact of the earlier or formative period of the regime (i.e. considering Kim Jong Un's ten years in power so far, 2012-2016 is generally viewed as the first half and the second half from 2017 onwards). Although the number of studies is limited, it is generally assumed that during its formative period, Kim Jong Un's unification policy was merely a continuation of his predecessors' policies. Kim Il-gi & Kim Hyeong-soo (2016), analyzing Kim Jong Un's report at the 7th North Korean Workers' Party Convention (2016), conclude that Kim Jong Un's unification plan inherited the previous unification plan proposed by Kim Il Sung and established by Kim Jong Il. Yoo Seong-ok (2020) also argues that Kim Jong Un cannot abandon this inherited unification policy because North Korea's 'Ten Principles for Establishing the Party's Unique Leadership System' are supra-legal norms containing coercive regulations that are of a higher order than the Workers' Party's statute or North Korea's socialist constitution.

Recent studies tend to consider that after North Korean completion of the nuclear weapons program (2017), the direction of inter-Korean unification policy of Kim Jong Un's regime is now taking shape. As the regime stabilizes and seeks

new policy directions centered on nuclear development, an aggressive proactivity is gradually being revealed. Kim Kyung-hee (2021) deploys the so-called ‘Porcupine Theory’ (one of the security theories of weak states) to argue that the Kim Jong Un regime’s development of a nuclear-based arsenal raises the likelihood of a nuclear-armed North Korea-led unification, the threat of which could escalate if the United States were to display a reluctance to engage politically in the region, or abandon its policy of direct intervention. Yoo Pan-duck (2019) claims that North Korea's nuclear weapons can guarantee the North Korean-led unification by force, and even if it does not use nuclear weapons, the existence of nuclear weapons is a psychological support that can deter the resistance of the ROK-US Combined Forces and unify the Korean Peninsula by force. Of course, after the completion of the nuclear weapons, the Kim Jong Un regime has made no official announcement that it will unify the Korean Peninsula by nuclear force. However, in January 2021, the North Korean 8th Workers' Party Convention significantly revised the preamble to the Party Statute, removing the term “national liberation democratic revolution” and inserting the phrase “with a strong national defense force...(middle)... advancing the unification of country.” Lee Hae-ryong (2023) concludes that this “Strong national defense force” is ultimately a reference to nuclear weapons, and argues that North Korea's true intention is the targeting of South Korea as well as the United States to strengthen the Kim Jong Un regime’s resolve and seize the initiative in addressing the unification issue.<sup>1</sup>

Chun Chae-sung (2023) insists that North Korea's nuclear weapons program has transformed the ‘Armistice system’ on the Korean Peninsula into a so-called

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<sup>1</sup> On April 5, 2022, Kim Yo-jong, vice department director at the ruling Worker’s party in North Korea, mentioned “If the situation comes that the Republic of Korea (ROK) has to choose a military confrontation with us, our nuclear combat forces will inevitably fulfill their mission, and if it comes to that, the ROK will have to bear a disastrous fate, close to annihilation.” (Rodong Sinmoon, April 6, 2022)

‘Nuclear regime,’ and that North Korea is not only seeking the basis for its own survival, but is also trying to seize and secure the political initiative by a blunt assertion of nuclear power over South Korea. Unlike his predecessors, since 2017 Kim Jong Un has tended to link nuclear weapons to its foreign and inter-Korean policies. Hence, in declaring completion of the nuclear program, he has asserted a new strategic position, signaling a possible change in unification policy, therefore, which has necessitated continued further research into this issue.

### **2.3. Existing Research on Divided Country Relations and Unification Formulas**

Part of the problem of reunification in respect of divided states remains identification and acknowledgement of the validity of the relationship between those divided states. Because acknowledgement of the other party’s existence, is coupled with state recognition under international law, this issue becomes deeply intertwined within the internal politics of the divided state, and fundamentally impacts who will take the lead in terms of state unification.

Hence, after its WWII defeat, the division of Germany engendered a variety of normative discussions about the legal status of divided jurisdictions, known as ‘German theory (Deutschlandtheorien)’.<sup>2</sup> German theory is broadly defined by the

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2 German theory can be categorized into many different theories: ‘Two-State theory (Zwei-Staaten-Theorien)’ consider East and West Germany as two separate states while ‘One-State theory (Ein-Staats-Theorien)’ considers East and West Germany as one nation country. Two-State theory is divided into ‘Dismemberment Theory (Dismembrationstheorie)’ which recognizes East and West as completely sovereign states, and ‘Succession Theory (Sukzessionstheorie)’ which sees East and West as equal successors to the rights and obligations of the Germany as a whole. One-State theory is divided into ‘Identity Theory (Identitätstheorie)’, which recognizes the continuity of Germany but that West Germany represents Germany as a whole. ‘Fraction theory (Bruchteil- Identitätstheorie)’ considers West and East equally included in Germany as a whole. (Kim, Byung-Ki 2016, pp.129-136).

issue of state continuity (Kontinuität) whereby the identity of Germany as a whole (Gesamtdeutschland) is reconciled via recognition of its divided elements, i.e. West and East Germany, as constitutional entities in their own right. These theories became increasingly codified under the influence of the establishment of West and East German governments in 1949, the restoration of East and West German sovereignty in 1955, and the implementation of Eastern Policy (Ostpolitik) in 1969. Notably, the West German Adenauer government rejected GDR recognition under international law by invoking a ‘Sole Representative (Alleinvertretungsanspruch)’ stance and the ‘Hallstein Doctrine (Hallstein Doktrin)’, based on an ‘Identity Theory (Identitätstheorie)’ whereby, West Germany posited itself as the legitimate inheritor of the former German Empire (Deutsches Reich).<sup>3</sup> However, West German implementation of its Eastern Policy, later rendered the ‘Sole Representative’ stance redundant, and Identity Theory seemed to have receded to a ‘Faction Theory (Teil-identitätstheorie).’ In 1973 the West German Federal Constitutional Court correspondingly ruled that the GDR was not a foreign entity, but a state that existed within Germany as a whole. Although the GDR claimed to represent the whole Germany during its early period of existence, after restoration of German sovereignty in 1955, this seemed to be transformed into a ‘Dismemberment Theory’ which rationalized separation. However, after the signing of the ‘East-West German Basic Treaty (Grundlagenvertrag)’ in 1972, the GDR claimed full sovereignty under international law. Since then, East Germany has acted as a subject of international law, and defined East-West German relations as foreign relations by a refusal to accept any description of East-West relations (Innerdeutsche Beziehungen). Transparently, these theories have served as the

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3 The Bonner Grundgesetz, Kommentar, 3. Aufl. 1996, p.34. v. Mangoldt/Klein/Pestalozza: Das Bonner Grundgesetz, Kommentar, 3. Aufl. 1996, p.34

theoretical basis for change in the unification policies of both the West and East German governments.

Similarly, Korean scholars have attempted to theorize relationships in the context of the ongoing division between North and South Korea based on the special nature of inter-Korean relations. In particular, in the post-Cold War era of the early 1990s, studies attempted to identify the legal form of inter-Korean relations by defining them in terms of a 'Special Interim Relationship' in the 'Inter-Korean Basic Agreement(1991)'.<sup>4</sup> Paek Nak-chung (1998), for example, provided a rationale for South Korean President Kim Dae-jung's 'Sunshine Policy' by arguing that power relations between the ruling classes in North and South Korea were structured by a divisive system that was very difficult to overcome without socio-cultural exchanges. Park Myung-lim (1995) claims that both North and South uses the other's existence to maintain domestic political systems that lack legitimacy, concluding that the political benefits of hostile interdependence must be resolved to overcome the division.

Attempting to reconcile international relations while analyzing the special relationship between divided countries, Koo Gab-woo (2007) examines the advantages and disadvantages of both the international political theory and the division theory, proposing the 'peace states discourse' as an alternative to overcome both the international cooperation-centered unification plan and the

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4 The 1991 Inter-Korean Basic Agreement, stipulated the inter-Korean relations as a 'special interim relationship', was not ratified or agreed to domestically at the time, sparking over domestic debate on its legal status. The South Korean Supreme Court ruled (July 1999) that the Inter-Korean Basic Agreement was nothing more than a non-binding gentleman's agreement, not legally supporting the special interim relationship. Later, in December 2005, the "Act on the Development of Inter-Korean Relations" was enacted, clarifying that inter-Korean relations are not state relations but defines them as special relations that are provisionally formed in the process of moving toward unification (Article 3). Despite of the provisions of the Act, it was not able to fundamentally resolve the discrepancies between the state and national communities among divided countries and the difference in legal system between domestic and international law.

national cooperation-based unification plan. Park Myoung-kyu (2009) has emphasized the existence of civil society and its role, noting that although the two Koreas have practically the same status and symmetrical relationship in terms of political and national communities, they have an asymmetrical structure in terms of civil society and the economy.

In recent years, as the period of division of the two Koreas gets longer, on the premise that North and South Korea are strictly and distinctly separate countries, it has been argued that the unification issue should be addressed by recognizing North Korea as a state. Some scholars advocate normalizing the relationship between the two Koreas, according to universal international norms and principles, arguing that there is no longer a need to repeat cycles of friendship and animosity, approach and reproach, which appear mired in nationalistic perceptions of an internal, special sibling relationship.<sup>5</sup> These arguments can be categorized as ‘Peaceful Co-existence Theory’ or ‘Two-State System Theory.’ Correspondingly, neither blood, language, ethnicity, nor culture can define North and South Korean relations, but instead state, sovereignty, constitution, and system. Hence, potential unification is considered a dividend of long-term peaceful coexistence, typically characterized by trade, economic exchange and socio-political approaches and engagements. As more progressive than promoters of ‘Peaceful Coexistence Theory’, advocates of Korea’s Two-State system propose that North and South Korea should recognize each other as two sovereign states, thus creating a peaceful coexistent system whereby peacefully coexistence is enhanced by exchange and cooperation.<sup>6</sup> Some also advocate the rational management of the Korean

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5 Park Myung-lim (2020), “Peace over unification, North and South should meet nation to nation”, In: Hankyoreh Newspaper, June 22, Retrieved from [http://www.hani.co.kr/arti/politics\\_general/950509.htm](http://www.hani.co.kr/arti/politics_general/950509.htm), on January 15, 2024

6 See Kim Sang-jun (2018). Korea’s Two-State System: Peace and Coexistence of One Nation-Two State, A Path toward the Peaceful Reunification of Korea. *Korean Journal of Sociology* 52(4). pp. 39-75. However, there are arguments against this approach. For example, German scholar Manfred Wilke warns that communists have used

Peninsula in pursuance of peace as an objective rather than reunification as an end in itself.<sup>7</sup>

As has been mentioned previously, most of the existing comparative research on the topic of Korean Unification has focused on West Germany and South Korea, and tends to analyze one element or cross-section to rationalize the whole. However, East Germany's policy toward West Germany and North Korea's unification policy toward South Korea are as integral to the problem of division as the policies of their counterparts. Furthermore, these formerly neglected countries must be acknowledged as contributors to processes which determine outcomes, not as passive recipients of any negotiated settlement, but as active actor/participants. In addition, it is important to shed light on the fact that policies are not singularly determined, but are influenced dynamically by diverse military, social, economic, and cultural factors as well as political context. In analyzing existing research, this study aims to avoid a one-sided approach and suggest related alternatives from an objective perspective.

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the concept of peace as a political propaganda campaign: security activities in response to the communist threat or efforts to pursue unification are undermining peace (Yonhap News Interview, January 29, 2016).

7 See Baek, Young-Chul (2000). *Inter-Korean Relations in the 21st Century* (Seoul: Bobmunsa).

## **II. Changes in Unification Policies in East Germany and North Korea**

East/West Germany and North/South Korea established their respective governments and were partitioned at roughly the same time after World War II. Since then, the regimes of East Germany and North Korea shaped their positions on the issue of unification according to their particular circumstances. This chapter describes the development of East German and North Korean unification policies chronologically. A review of historical developments is critical to apprehending any future direction. This chapter focuses on issues characteristically shared by the common approach adopted by studies in this research field.

### **1. Changes in East German Reunification Policy**

#### **1.1. Stalin's Proposal for German Reunification**

Although the victorious nations in WWII demonstrably had divergent interests, it was the Soviet Union's expansionist policies that effectively divided Europe. Germany's defeat coupled with the division of Europe on these terms, transformed the former nation into an East and West jurisdiction, with each establishing its own distinct form of government. Despite its government being inaugurated in September 1949, however, West Germany did not fully regain diplomatic sovereignty until joining NATO in 1955. This effectively made it unable to unilaterally engage in solving any aspect of the German problem. Under these difficult circumstances, the first West German government under Konrad Adenauer, sought to restore full West Germany sovereignty through an Atlantic

policy of rapprochement, while attempting to establish the authority of West Germany's political mandate via assertions of 'sole representation.' In a speech to the Federal Assembly on March 22, 1950, Chancellor Adenauer proposed an all-German general election by stating that the way to German reunification can only be resolved by the free and unimpeded decision-making of the German people.<sup>8</sup>

In response to Adenauer's proposal for all-German elections, the Supreme Council of the Western Allied Powers on May 25, 1950, proposed holding German general elections, jointly supervised by four designated victorious nations (i.e. Britain, France, the U.S. and the Soviet Union).<sup>9</sup> This proposal was firmly rejected both by the Soviet Union and East Germany, who proposed that both the East German and West German governments negotiate directly to form an All-German Constitutional Council (Gesamtdeutscher Verfassungsrat).<sup>10</sup> Refusing this offer, the West German government stated that it could not recognize an illegally elected East German government as an equal partner in dialogue. In 1951, West Germany tried to put the issue of all-German elections onto the agenda of the victorious four-power conference, but due to strident differences between the Soviet Union and the other three Western powers, these efforts proved fruitless.<sup>11</sup> In the meantime, East Germany proposed a meeting of East and West German representatives to discuss holding free elections and to facilitate the signing of a peace treaty by 'Germans at one table (Deutsche an einem Tisch)', however, this was again rejected by West Germany.

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8 Regierungserklärung Adenauers vom 21. Oktober 1949, in: Stenographische Berichte, 1. Wahlperiode, Bd. 1, p308 ff.

9 Der Vorschlag an AHK (Alliierten Hohen Kommission), in: Archiv der Gegenwart (AdG), 1950, p.2404

10 The proposal was made by Otto Grotewohl, General Secretary of the Communist Party of East Germany, in a letter dated November 30, 1950. (Neues Deutschland, Berlin (Ost), 5. Dezember 1950, Nr. 284)

11 On September 27, 1951, the Adenauer government sought to legitimize West Germany's reunification policy, including a proposal to establish an UN-controlled international commission of inquiry for general elections in all of Germany, but this was met with opposition from East Germany and the Soviet Union.

In March of 1952, with German reunification discussions stalled, the Soviet Union issued the ‘Stalin Note’ to the three designated Western powers. This proposed the formation of a single, neutralized German government and offered to conclude a Peace Treaty (Friedesvertrag) with this new government. This ‘neutralized’ reunification proposal mandated: a withdrawal of foreign troops from the territory of Germany as defined at the Potsdam Conference, the prohibition of any undemocratic organizations, guarantees of democratic rights of man and basic freedoms, including freedom of speech, press, religious persuasion, political conviction, free activity of democratic parties and organizations, and acceptance of the Oder and Neisse rivers as the German-Polish border. Given their concerns about Stalin’s expansionist post war policies in Europe, witnessing the Soviet Union’s involvement in Korean War, the three Western powers rejected Stalin’s proposal and insisted that free general elections be held under UN supervision and that Germany be united in a free camp and then reunified within the boundaries of Europe.<sup>12</sup> Stalin subsequently sent the same letter on several separate occasions, but it was rejected each time. Western powers believed the Stalin’s proposals to German reunification were intended to withdraw Western military forces from Germany. A divided Germany along East/ West lines was manifestly a foregone conclusion at this point, as Cold War confrontation intensified with West Germany joining NATO (May 5, 1955) and East Germany joining the Warsaw Pact (January 28, 1956).

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12 On the other hand, politicians such as Jacob Kaiser of the CDU and Kurt Schumacher of the SPD criticized Adenauer's unilateral attitude, saying that the Soviet proposal for neutralization should be examined positively under all possible circumstances, and a unified Germany as a neutral state might be a better option for Germany than West Germany alone being in a divided nation (See Kwon O-joong (2004). The Soviet Proposal for the Neutralization of Germany (the Soviet Note of March 10, 1952): The Attitude of the Federal Republic Government and the Western Powers about the Soviet Intentions. *The Western History Review* 81, pp. 205-206.)

## 1.2. Proposal for Creating a German Confederation by Ulbricht

After West Germany joined NATO, the version of reunification via free general elections for all Germans, advocated by the Western camp, was rejected by the Soviet Union. With Soviet support, Walter Ulbricht, the First Secretary of the Socialist Unity Party of Germany (SED: Sozialistische Einheitspartei Deutschlands), then laid foundations for an East German socialist regime modelled on the Marxist-Leninist Communist Party of the Soviet Union.<sup>13</sup> In an attempt to normalize diplomatic relations, the Soviet Union signed a peace treaty (Staatsvertrag) with the Adenauer government, who visited Moscow from September 8 to 14, 1955. A week later (September 20, 1955), a peace treaty was also signed, restoring GDR sovereignty. Formal separation of the GDR from the Soviet Union, thus supported efforts to establish the GDR as a legal, internationally recognized independent East German state.<sup>14</sup>

In a December 1956 newspaper article published by the Communist Party organ 'Neues Deutschland', Ulbricht proposed a form of Confederation (Konföderation) as an interim solution to German reunification.<sup>15</sup> At the 30<sup>th</sup> Central Committee of the Four Parties in the GDR held on January 30, 1957, he envisioned a proposed federal system of East and West Germany as a treaty

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13 At the Second Party Congress in July 1952, when the discussion of the Stalin Notes reached its peak, Ulbricht declared that the phase of anti-fascist democracy was over and the stage arrived for the planned construction of the foundations of East German Socialism. In addition, the SED's Fourth National Congress, held from March 30 to April 6, 1954, was called for the intensification of the policy of unification through socialism. (Yoo, Ji-hoon (2007). German Policy in East Germany during the division," *Journal of Social Science* 24(1), Chungbuk National University. pp. 67.)

14 After the failure of the discussion on neutralization of Germany proposed in Stalin-Note, East Germany gave up the theory of continuity and identity (Kontinuität-und Identitätsthese) of the German state, maintained until the mid-1950s, and officially turned to Two-State-theory (Zwei-Staaten-These) in 1955.

15 Neues Deutschland, Berlin (Ost), 20. December 1950, Nr. 302

arrangement between equal status. According to the proposal, East and West Germany form a 'transitional body (Gesamtdeutscher Rat)' to promote integration across the whole of Germany, with the goal of eventually establishing a unified parliament, achieving reunification through comprehensive free elections. This plan, officially proposed to West Germany on July 27, 1957, via the East German Council of Ministers, was characterized by the absence of a centralized authority. Hence, body members could only make recommendations via their respective parliaments and governments. This condition was intended to emphasize the independent status of the East Germany as a nation state while also securing autonomy for its representatives.<sup>16</sup> Since negotiations between the governments of East and West Germany were essential to the formation of this Confederation structure, East Germany confirmed its political objective of gaining national recognition through the negotiation process, based on the principle of 'one Nation, two States', by stating that it was not for one state to oppress or coerce the other, but for two states which recognized each other's legitimacy. Although this proposal was understood as an interim solution to German reunification, conceding that West Germany would not be required to convert to socialism, subsequent preconditional clauses, in the eyes of the Western democracies, made it clear that the unified authority would concomitantly institute a communist system of government (ein Kommunistisches Regierungssystem).

In response to the 1953 East German uprising, the Ulbricht regime attempted

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16 In a government statement on July 27, 1957, East Germany proposed to the West: German Problem(Die deutsche Frage) should be solved by German people; An international treaty(Ein Völkerrechtlicher Vertrag) should be signed in which West Germany recognizes East Germany as a state; An agreement must be reached between East and West on the prohibition of nuclear weapons on German territory, the withdrawal of both Germanys from NATO and Warsaw Pact, and the withdrawal of Allied troops: A Confederation between the two German states should be understood as an intermediate solution (Zwischenlösung) to unification: East Germany would not seek to socialize West Germany, and reunification should take place without undermining the socialist achievements already made in East Germany. (Kim, Hyung-yul 1994, p. 286)

to consolidate power and quell domestic tensions by establishing itself as an independent state via confederation plan. In 1961, as numbers of East German migrants to the West continued to rise, it began the building of the Berlin Wall. Although in 1963 and 1966, four passport agreements (Passierscheinabkommen) were signed between the West Berlin administration and the GDR to allow East/West Germans to visit their relatives, the GDR's imposition of de facto restrictions, further deepened physical and political divisions between jurisdiction.<sup>17</sup>

Responding Soviet leader Khrushchev's resignation transformed the Soviet Union into a collective system in October 1964, which undermined the exercise of its post-war hegemonic power, Walter Ulbricht, seeking to prevent any 'de-Stalinization' impetus that might work against his regime, consolidated the party's plenipotentiary power. Consequently, at the 6th SED Party Congress in January 1963, East German policy was changed dramatically. East Germany began to argue that the beginning and development of East Germany had historical justification that inevitably appeared and was inextricably linked to the transition period from capitalism to socialism (Yoo, Ji-Hoon 2007, p.75). Accordingly, Ulbricht sought to build a distinctive 'DDR-Sozialismus' or 'Modell DDR', on which the GDR could stand independently. However, as the ideologically sympathetic West German Social Democratic Party (SPD) took West Germany on a new political turn and instituted an accelerated détente policy towards the East, Ulbricht effectively abandoned his confederation plan at the 7th Party Congress

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17 Another example of the GDR's separation policies was unacceptance of a Nationality Law and created an independent Nationality Law (Gesetz über die Staatsbürgerschaft der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik) for East Germans. West Germany refuted that there are no two ethnic groups in Germany, only one German nation. German people residing abroad, having single German citizenship under the 1913 Act (Das Reichs- und Staatsangehörigkeitsgesetz). See Yoo, Ji-Hoon (2007). p.77.

in April 1967.<sup>18</sup> Clinging to socialist ideology, entrenched opposition to engagement with the West, and clashing of attitudes inimical to the Soviet Union's policy of peaceful coexistence and East/ West reconciliation during the détente period, ultimately led to Ulbricht's resignation in 1971, which left the position of party secretary to Erich Honecker.<sup>19</sup>

### **1.3. Honecker's Theory of Two-Nation and Two-State**

Unlike his predecessor, Honecker, the new General Secretary of the SED, was highly supportive of the Soviet Union's European policy and sought to normalize relations between East and West Germany, acting to reconcile the West Berlin problem while promoting GDR recognition in the international community via the United Nations. Finally admitted in September 1973, simultaneously with West Germany, the United Nations afforded East Germany international validation of its status as an independent state, enabling diplomatic relations with other UN member states. In August 1975, East Germany was a full member of the Council for Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) and was granted equal diplomatic status with West Germany.

However, Honecker's new openness exposed GDR to external pressures, as diplomatic relations widened and East-West exchanges increased. Inevitably, the

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18 In 1969, the SPD Brandt government did not recognize East Germany as a foreign country. In his first State of the Congress address, October 28, 1969, Brandt stressed that West German policy is to preserve the unity of the nation-state (Einheit der Nation) and West Germany is not considering international legal recognition of East Germany. (AdG vom 30.10. 1969, S.15004f.). In response, Ulbricht announced, at a press conference on January 19, 1970, that East Germany was newly defined as "A Socialist German Nation-state (Ein Sozialistischer Deutscher Nationalstaat), turning to the two-nation-state theory. (Neues Deutschland vom 20. 1. 1970)

19 Prior to his retirement, Ulbricht had apparently become reluctant to support Soviet efforts to achieve détente in Germany. The Soviet Union decided to replace him with Politburo member Erich Honecker, regarded as much more pliant and flexible than the aging Ulbricht. (Bowers 1976, p. 309)

regime had to deal with expressions of dissidence among its own populace. The Honecker regime reacted by banning all party cadres and prohibiting state and business leaders from contacting West Germans directly. Moreover, in 1973 and 1980, the GDR drastically increased the foreign currency exchange rates imposed on all visiting non-socialist countries, including West Germany. Furthermore, in April 1979, a new press law was enacted to control the activities of the West German press in East Germany.<sup>20</sup> In October 1980, at a party conference in Gera, Honecker issued a set of four stipulations which became known as the ‘Gera Demands (Geraer Forderungen)’: West German recognition of East German citizenship, the dismantling of the West German Salzgitter Archive, the replacement of East German Permanent Representation (Ständige Vertretung) with embassy, and the establishment of the middle of the Elbe River as the border between East and West Germany.

At the SED's 8th congress on June 16, 1971, Honecker further underlined his separation policy by asserting the existence not only of two German states, but of ‘two German nation-states’ within Germany. Moreover, the 1974 amendments to the East German Socialist Constitution deleted all articles recognizing the existence of ‘one Nation-two States’, including constitutional acknowledgment that the German nation (Bekanntnis zur deutschen Nation) was the legal basis for recognition of a common German nationality, and any article stating that reunification was possible on the basis of socialism and democracy (Article 8, paragraph 2). Article 6 was also amended to make it clear that the GDR and the USSR were to remain in a permanent alliance. At the 9th Party Congress in 1976,

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<sup>20</sup> Since September 1973, following the signing of the East-West German Basic Treaty, East and West German journalists have been stationed in Berlin and Bonn. According to the Press Regulation Act of 1973 in GDR, West German journalists were required to report to the East German Foreign Office within 24 hours of departure if they traveled outside of East Berlin. Journalists had to obtain permission from the East German authorities to cover the residents and social facilities in East Germany.

the party removed its reunification clause, ordaining that an East German ‘Socialist Nation’ (Die sozialistische Nation) and a West German ‘Capitalist nation’ (Die buergerliche Nation), known as a ‘Two-nation, Two-state’ policy, which acknowledged the separateness of German peoples. Thus, revision of GDR German policies effectively ethnicized political groupings in response to the international political situation at the time driven by need to establish domestic stability as a priority above relations with the West.

When this separation policy failed to gain traction both within the GDR and among its socialist allies, in the late-1970s the regime promoted a technical modification of German history to create a sense of evolving continuity which endorsed the existence of the GDR as the inevitable expression of both a distinct German national consciousness and a German socialist collective consciousness. This attempt to secure national authenticity through the creation of an official historical narrative, can transparently be regarded as part of the GDR communist party's strategy of defensive separation.

#### **1.4. Plan of Treaty Community before Reunification**

In the early 1980s, Honecker’s belief that despite international turmoil, the GDR system remained strong, was mediated by assertions that the two-state system could be firmly maintained. However, by the late 1980s, as Gorbachev's Soviet reforms diffused European divisions, Honecker's regime demonstrated an incapacity for preserving the status quo. While the East German populace revolted and peaceful protests spread across the GDR, Honecker was ousted. In October 1989, the West German Chancellor Helmut Kohl proposed a ‘10-Point Plan for German Unity’. The first step was the resolution of urgent issues through the

forming of the East-West Treaty Community to be followed by free general elections in the GDR as soon as possible, and finally the realization of a democratically legitimate government in the GDR and with resultant confederative structures (Konföderative Strukturen) across both German states. A plan for gradual and phased reunification promoted joint committees of government in each as treaty community and completing federal reunification through a joint council of ministers and a joint parliament. On November 17, 1989, East German Chancellor Hans Modrow also proposed the creation of a bilateral treaty community, and at the Dresden summit with Chancellor Helmut Kohl on December 19, 1989, the two countries agreed to form a treaty community before holding free elections in East Germany, with the prospect of forming a confederative structure afterwards.

However, as Modrow's promised political and economic reforms stalled, and migration continued to escalate, weakening the situation within the GDR, the idea of setting up a treaty community faltered. In a government statement, in January 1990, the Kohl administration announced that it would no longer adhere to its commitment to constitute a treaty community before elections and would negotiate terms with the newly elected government after free elections in the GDR.<sup>21</sup> In February 1990, Modrow, seeking time to extend reform within the GDR, proposed 'Four-stage Reunification Plan (Konzeption für den Weg zur Deutschen Einheit: Vier-Phasen-Wiedervereinigungsplan)' as a conduit for realizing a federalized neutral state.<sup>22</sup> However, this proposal could not stem the tide of events, which

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21 Yang, Chang-seok (2008). A Three-Dimensional Approach to the Unification Process of Germany. Ph.D. dissertation. Dankook University. pp. 106-110.

22 The four-stage reunification plan calls for (1) East and West Germany to withdraw from NATO and Warsaw Pact organizations and achieve military neutrality; (2) the formation of a federation that integrates economic sectors, including currency, as well as transportation and legal systems; (3) the formation of joint policy bodies that unite central and regional parliaments and government agencies; and (4) the ultimate reunification of the two countries by transferring sovereignty to these joint bodies, at which time elections will be held on both sides under the federal

was in favor of early reunification. Moreover, Modrow's proposal for a neutral federal state, predicted on West German withdrawal from NATO, was patently unacceptable to the West German government. Given that it was published shortly after Modrow's visit to the Soviet Union in January 1990, it is likely that this proposal bore a heavy Soviet influence.

## **2. Changes in North Korea's Unification Policy**

### **2.1. General Election Proposals and Democratic Bases in North and South Korea**

The Korean Peninsula, like Germany, was divided at the end of World War II. As a result of the Yalta Conference, the United States agreed to divide and occupy the Korean Peninsula south of the 38th parallel. On August 9, 1945, before Japanese surrender on September 2, Soviet troops entered the Northern demarcation, while American troops entered the South immediately afterwards on September 8. A resolution to establish a unified provisional government and trusteeship on the Korean Peninsula following the Moscow Three-Party Conference on December 1945, agreed that a joint U.S.-Soviet commission should be convened to oversee following developments. However, notions of Korean independence began to drift apart due to disagreements on the composition of any new provisional government. Hence, the commission was terminated on August 12, 1947. As the Soviet strategy of communizing the North became transparent, the United States, on November 14, 1947 in accordance with a UN resolution,

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system.

sought to hold a general election. However, the Soviet Union refused to allow the ‘UN Provisional Commission’ for Korea to enter the area north of the 38th parallel on the Peninsula, while also raising questions about guarantees of fairness in relation to a UN-organized election. Consequently, on February 26, 1948, the Little Assembly of the UN resolved to hold general elections only in the South area. These were subsequently held on May 10, 1948, and on August 15, the first elected government of the Republic of Korea was proclaimed.

Meanwhile, North Korea held the first ‘National Conference of Representatives of Political Parties and Social Organizations’ in Pyongyang in April 1948, to pre-empt and prevent the establishment of a sole government of Korea, south of the 38th Parallel. Participants resolved to convene the ‘National Committee of All Korea’, and after the withdrawal of foreign troops, to establish a provisional democratic government. This interim government would form a legislative body via general elections in North and South Korea under the supervision of designated neutral countries, which would in turn verify the enactment of a constitutionally appointed, unified government. South Korea rejected the North Korean proposal for a general election after foreign troop withdrawal. Notwithstanding the establishment of respective governments representing the divided Korean Peninsula, North Korea re-proposed this proposal several times, with the South Korean government rejecting it on each occasion.

With Soviet support, Kim Il Sung's North Korean regime branded South Korea an unliberated zone and a U.S. imperialist vassal state. Founded upon the strengthened revolutionary capacities of an already liberated North, a ‘Democratic Base theory’ advocated transforming North Korea into a democratic base<sup>23</sup>, by

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23 The Democratic Base theory originated from Stalin's global revolutionary strategy of securing a region, strengthening its political, economic, and military capabilities in a communist manner, and then exporting these revolutionary capabilities to other regions. (See ‘North Korea Information Portal’, Ministry of Unification, ROK

which the South could be liberated and the entire Korean peninsula unified. This was vocalized as a ‘North Korea’s South Korean Revolution Strategy’:

*“[to] achieve the democratic unification and complete national independence of the homeland by overthrowing the U.S. imperialist invading forces and the landlords, vassal capitalists, pro-Japanese and pro-American factions and national traitors in the southern half of the country and liberating the people of the southern area from imperialist and feudal oppression and exploitation.”<sup>24</sup>*

Following the withdrawal of Soviet troops from North Korea in December 1948 and the withdrawal of U.S. troops from South Korea in June 1949, North Korea invaded the South in 1950, justifying on the principles of its democratic base strategy. Despite the ensuing Korean War, North Korea continued to emphasize the importance of building a democratic base and proposed general elections in North and South Korea under neutral observation. On September 1957, at the first session of the second Supreme People's Assembly in North Korea, Kim Il Sung delivered a speech, in which he proposed a specific method of conducting a national election:

*“[to] reunify our country divided into North and South by holding a general, equal, direct and secret ballot election without external pressure and restraint under conditions that guarantee*

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(<http://nkinfo.unikorea.go.kr/nkp/main/portalMain.do>)

24 Kim Il Sung (1967). *About the South Korean Revolution and the Unification of the Homeland* (Pyongyang: Workers' Party of Korea Publishing House). p.137.

*the free activity of all political parties.*"<sup>25</sup>

In February 1958, following the withdrawal of the Chinese People's Liberation Army, who intervened in the Korean War in October 1950, North Korea issued a "Proposal for the Peaceful Reunification of the Fatherland," which called for the withdrawal of U.S. troops stationed after the Korean War from South Korea.

## **2.2. Federation Formula**

By the 1960s, Kim Il Sung's regime had abandoned the idea of national elections, and instead proposed a federal system.<sup>26</sup> This proposal advocated leaving the current (political) system in place for the time being, but promoted the creation of a unified 'Supreme National Committee' composed of representatives of both governments, tasked with regulating the economic and cultural development of Korea as a whole, while also reiterating demands for immediate U.S. troop withdrawal from South Korea and reduction of armed forces to 100,000 or less in each jurisdiction (Jang, Seok 2002, p. 61). The 1960 North Korean federalization proposal was not conceived of as a system that would immediately integrate the two jurisdictions. Instead, the federation system would maintain the current political systems of North and South Korea and expand exchanges between the two countries through a Supreme National Committee. Therefore, this proposal is in fact close to confederation. Even in the event of disagreement, the proposal

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25 Chung, Yong-wook (2009), pp.379-384

26 On August 1960, congratulatory speech in Liberation Day, Kim Il Sung declared that "free national elections on a democratic basis, without any foreign interference, are the most reasonable and realistic way of peaceful reunification of the Fatherland, but if the South Korean authorities cannot accept free national elections, we propose the federal system of North and South Korea as a transitional stage." (Rodong Shinmoon, August 15, 1960)

suggested that a ‘North-South Economic Commission’ be formed regardless. Based on the self-held assumption that North Korea was politically and economically superior to South Korea, this proposal was presented with the expectation that demonstrable proof of this superiority through economic and cultural exchanges, enabling North Korea to win free general elections. However, when an anti-communist military coup seized power in South Korea on May 16, 1961, with proclamations of ‘Construction first, Unification later’, North Korea’s federation proposal was effectively choked. In the mid-1960s, North Korea developed insecurities about South Korea’s establishment of diplomatic relations with Japan, while increased troop deployment and pursuance of a ‘Four Military Line (Self-reliance Doctrine in military defense)’ and reflected its increasingly rigid and defensive attitude. This inevitably fed military adventurism and obsessions with unification by force, resulting in an escalation of tensions on the Korean Peninsula.

Getting in the mood of the *détente* in the 1970s, North Korea attempted to bypass the existing offensive attitude. Following the withdrawal of U.S. troops from Vietnam, North Korea sought to capitalize on international concern, to push for withdrawal of U.S. forces from the Korean Peninsula, by addressing self-sustaining revolutionary forces in South Korea and promoting the necessary conditions for unification on its own terms. In this context, Kim Il Sung’s proposed new unification plan in June 1973. The ‘Koryo Federal System’ abandoned petitions for free general elections in the North and South as well as the transitional federal system, and instead pushed for the formation of a fully unified state under the name of the ‘Democratic Confederal Republic of Koryo’.<sup>27</sup> In contrast to the

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27 In a speech to welcome the Czech Republic delegation to North Korea in 1973, Kim Il Sung announced the ‘Five Points for the Reunification of the Fatherland’ as a new unification plan: (1) the elimination of military confrontation between the two Koreas, (2) the promotion of inter-Korean exchanges, (3) the convention of a ‘Supreme National

transitional federal proposals of the 1960s, the highest federal body of the Koryo Federal System, the ‘Supreme National Assembly’, was conceived of as a sovereign institution representing the people.<sup>28</sup> However, clauses guaranteeing local government’s autonomy, including diplomatic and military power, remained opaque.<sup>29</sup>

In October 1980, Kim Il Sung, in his report on the 6th Congress of the Workers' Party of Korea, announced the ‘Plan for the Establishment of Democratic Confederal Republic of Koryo’. This was a comprehensive systematization of the previously presented transitional federal system(1960s) and the Koryo federal system proposal(1970s). This formula is notable because of its objective, which aimed at a completed federal state rather than a transitional one. Hence, two regional autonomous governments with equal powers would leave the differing ideologies and systems of the North and the South intact, while establishing a Supreme National Assembly, as the unified federal government. This was to be composed of equal numbers of representatives from the North and the South and an appropriate number of representatives of overseas Koreans. Meanwhile, its permanent organ, the ‘Federal Permanent Committee’ would act as a standing body to guide the separate regional governments of the North and the South, while

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Assembly’ composed of representatives of all organizations, political parties from the two Koreas, (4) the implementation of Koryo federal system in the name of the Democratic Confederal Republic of Koryo, (5) the opposition to joining the United Nations alone and joining the United Nations under the single state name of the Democratic Confederal Republic of Koryo. (Rodong Newspaper, June 24, 1973)

28 In contrast to the federal plan in 1960, which suggested the organization of the Supreme National committee composed of government representatives, the Koryo federal plan called for the Supreme National Assembly, which composed of all representatives of all people, political parties and social organizations.

29 On June 1973, the South Korean President Park Chung-hee called for the simultaneous membership of North and South Korea to the United Nations through the June 23 Special Declaration, while North Korea criticized the June 23 Declaration as designed to create the two Koreas. When U.S. Secretary of State Henry Kissinger formally proposed inter-Korean simultaneous recognition at the 30th session of the UN General Assembly on September 1975, the North Korea reacted strongly, arguing that it would mean the permanent division of two states, and on October 1975, Kim Il Sung reiterated the Koryo federal system as the most reasonable way to advance the unification in a speech at the 30th anniversary of the foundation of the Workers' Party.

overseeing the overall business of the federal state. Full statehood was to be accompanied by a reduction of armed forces both North and South, and the creation of a national unified army, with the stipulation that a neutral state policy would eschew participation in any political or military alliance or bloc. As a further precondition for the establishment of a federal republic, North Korea reiterated their demands for the removal of the South Korean military regime, the abolition of anti-communist and national security laws, the guarantee of freedom for activities of social organizations and individuals, the withdrawal of U.S. troops from South Korea, and the signing of a peace agreement between the U.S. and DPRK. This plan is characterized by adhering to the principle of ‘one state, two systems.’

### **2.3. Low-level of Federation**

In the late 1980s, South Korean Roh Tae-woo government pursued a ‘Northern Policy’ and sought improved relations with socialist countries such as the Soviet Union and China in the wake of Post-Cold War realignments. This, however, antagonized North Korea, who feared Soviet and Chinese acceptance and approval of South Korea, and denounced the Northern Policy as a ‘two Koreas’ manipulation scheme. With the establishment of diplomatic relations between South Korea and China on September 30, 1990, and between China and Japan on August 24, 1992, the situational tide on the Korean Peninsula appeared to have turned against North Korea. In the face of a regime crisis, Kim Il Sung called for gradual completion of federal unification by giving more powers to local autonomous governments and gradually increasing the functions of the central government. This stood in contrast to the previous federal plan, in its attempt to

make national consensus on the Democratic Federal Republic of Koryo an achievable aim by not setting out explicit preconditional stages. Hence, Kim Il Sung's new proposal, nominatively 'Loose Federal System', emphasized the unification of the federal system based on 'one nation, one state, two systems, and two governments.'

*"Let's leave the institutional unification to later generations, because the principle of national unification is not who eats whom or who is eaten by whom, and the institutional unification, based on one nation and one system, will constantly cause division and eventually lead to no unification."* <sup>30</sup>

Historical similarity to the 1980's proposal for the establishment of the Democratic Confederal Republic of Koryo, can be seen in the acknowledgement of two systems and two governments, and a focus on complete unification by emphasizing recognition of the South Korean government and system. The loose federal system is characterized by a strong defensive character that has retreated from the complete federal system to ensure its socialist system and regime.

On September 17, 1991, North Korea accepted simultaneous membership in the United Nations with South Korea, which it had formerly opposed, and on December 13, 1991, both jurisdictions signed an 'Inter-Korean Basic Agreement', made possible by North Korea's shift to embrace a two Koreas approach. In 1992, North Korea abandoned references to its 'One Korea' principle, which had been maintained in opposition to South Korea's June 23, 1973 special statement and adhered to for over half a century.

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30 Kim Il Sung, *The Collected Works of Kim Il Sung* 43 (Pyongyang: Workers' Party Publishing House, 1996). p. 13.

Notably, throughout the Kim Jong Il era, North Korea emphasized continuity in terms that regarded unification as an ancestral inheritance, presenting a unified front through the ‘Three Charters for the Unification of the Fatherland and the Great Unity of the People.’ However, it was only a matter of time before a phased unification theory again appeared on the table.<sup>31</sup> On June 15, 2000, North Korea reaffirmed the ‘Low-level Federal’ system via the ‘June 15 South-North Joint Declaration’. On October 6, 2000, at the 20th anniversary of the presentation of the proposal for the establishment of the Democratic Confederal Republic of Koryo, Ahn Kyung-ho, Secretary-General of the North Korean Committee for the Peaceful Unification of the Fatherland, stated: “the low-level federal system would guarantee broader regional autonomy by letting the current governments of the North and South retain their current functions and powers, including political, military, and diplomatic powers, under the one nation, one state, two systems, two governments.”<sup>32</sup>

During the June 2000, Inter-Korean summit, both countries agreed to recognize that a federation of lower stage advanced by the North and a proposal for confederation put forth by the South for the unification of the country have elements in common, agreeing to work for the unification in this direction in the future.<sup>33</sup> Moreover, Kim Jong Il’s regime introduced a new discursive framework

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31 “Three-Point Charter of National Reunification” were presented on August 4, 1997 and include: the Three Principles of National Reunification of Independence, Peace, and National unity as stated in the July 4, 1974, Joint Communique; Plan for the Establishment of Democratic Confederal Republic of Koryo presented at the 6th Congress of the North Korean Workers' Party in October 1980; Ten Points for National Unity presented at the 5th Session of the 9th Supreme People's Assembly in April 1993. “Three-Point Charter of National Reunification was proposed by Kim Il Sung and named by Kim Jong Il, who claimed that this Charter, fundamental principles and methods of reunification of the Fatherland as immortal unification principles and guidelines, must be adhered to regardless of changes in the situation and environment. (See Kim Jong Il, *Thoroughly Implement the Great Leader Kim Il Sung's dying instruction on the Reunification of the Fatherland* (Pyongyang: Workers' Party Publishing House, 1997))

32 Rodong Shinmoon, October 7, 2000

33 June 15<sup>th</sup> South-North Joint Declaration, Paragraph 2, June 15, 2000

based on notion of mutual ‘national collaboration’ and ‘peaceful coexistence’.<sup>34</sup> Its logical assumption was that all Korean people, in ethnic conflict with the United States, were aligned in an active historic struggle against the anti-unification policies of traitors colluding with foreign powers to foment national division.<sup>35</sup>

Hence, both the ‘Low-level Federal Proposal’ and the ‘National Collaboration Theory’ indicate that prerequisites, expressly identified via North Korean federalization proposals, which sought to remove political and physical obstacles to unification, are still relevant. Moreover, expression of these prerequisites through the assertion of negotiating conditions, such as abolition of the National Security Law and withdrawal of U.S. troops from South Korea, can be determined as strengthening attitudes towards national cooperation confluent with an anti-foreign power stance, so that anti-American and anti-national struggles could be maintained by North Korea after the 2000 inter-Korean summit.

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34 This concept is based on Paragraph 1 of the June 15 South-North Joint Declaration, in which both parties agreed to solve the question of the country’s unification independently by the concerted efforts of the Korean nation responsible for it.

35 The Anthology of Kim Jong Il, vol. 14 (Pyongyang: Workers' Party Publishing House), 1992-2000. p. 355-425.

### III. Comparison of Unification Policies in East Germany and North Korea

#### 1. Theoretical Framework Review: Constellation Analysis

The emergence of 'Neorealism' in international politics throughout the 1970s, corresponded to challenges faced by a number of political actors, including international organizations and non-governmental organizations. Neorealist scholars attempted to overcome the limitations of classical realism by providing a critique of international politics beyond a sole focus on state politics. Although in agreement with the fundamental tenets of a 'realist' assumption that the state inhabits a functioning position as the main actors in international politics, expressing its pursuit of rational self-interest through force, 'neorealism' demurs that in the lack of a common inter-government structure, only anarchy prevails. Hence, power becomes divisible by the number of individual states striving against each other for survival in terms of national security. Kenneth N. Waltz, founder of Neorealism, has argued that the cause of war could not be located in the behavior of individual states, but the structure of international political system.<sup>36</sup> In other words, 'realism' seeks to explain state behavior in terms of selfish human interests, while 'neorealism' perceives the anarchical structure of international relations as a primary behavioral determinant. A structure is defined by its political infrastructure, which directs principles of behavior and the functions of diverse units, whereby the allocation of powers beyond these units becomes manifest in the policies and activities of each individually. Neorealism contends that fear of the ambitions of other states inhabiting this anarchic structure, directs states towards vigilance and competitiveness. Hence, neorealism cites anarchy as the gravest

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36 See Kenneth N. Waltz. *Man, the State, and War: A Theoretical Analysis* (Columbia University Press, 1959).

threat to the state's security and survival, as the ultimate determinant of state action rather than abstract power differentials, and advocates that foreign policy should be based upon this apprehension.<sup>37</sup>

Getting to the heart of the matter, a sophisticated analytical tool becomes necessary if an analysis of the unique perspectives of the differing states such as East Germany and North Korea is to be conducted. Pertinently, Gottfried-Karl Kindermann, who developed the neorealist school of thought in the 1970s at the University of Munich, also established a framework of 'Constellation Analysis (Konstellationsanalyse)' specifically to analyze the behavior of individual states on the international political stage.<sup>38</sup> Neorealism's central argument, that the systemic structure of international relations determines international political phenomena, whereby state power struggles are symptoms, warrants the development of analytical tools that can effectively draw correlations between the structure of a relational system and individual state policy-making. Referring to a specific set of bilateral or multilateral relationships between units of action, aligned during a particular period of time, this analysis is conducted by drawing conclusions from looking at phenomena in constellation.<sup>39</sup> In international politics, these units of action encompass state, supra-state, and sub-state actors that influence interactions within the overarching international political system. Utilizing constellation analysis across a differentiated spectrum of international

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37 It should be duly noted, that as this study seeks neither to analyze the behavior of East Germany and North Korea from realist or neo-realist's theoretical base, nor liberalism and constructivism perspective. Therefore, in this research, specific descriptions of classic theoretical debates in international politics were resolutely omitted.

38 The Munich school of Neorealism is centered on Gottfried-Karl Kindermann and includes Carlo Masala, Werner Link, Christian Hacke, Alexander Siedschlag, and Christoph Rohde (see Knud Erik Joergensen & Feride Asli Ergul Jorgensen. Realist Theories in search of Realists: The Failure in Europe to advance Realist theory, *International Relations* Vol. 35(1). 2021).

39 Reinhard C. Meier-Walser. Methodik der Neorealistischen Konstellationsanalyse. *Handbook der Internationalen Politik* (Wiesbaden: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 2010). pp. 227-228.

political relations, with a system of diagnostic questions corresponding to that spectrum, the Neorealist Munich School departs from a classical realist position which appraise international political phenomena from the single perspective of power exerted in the national interest.

In addition, Constellation Analysis also proposes a synoptic, incremental approach that refuses to assume that trans-historical or omnipresent macro-factors essentially define foreign policy behavior and determine the processes of the international system. In its attempts to raise the discovery of individual phenomena to a higher level, it proffers a step by step approach that invites holistic description and explanation in terms of concrete observable situations.<sup>40</sup> An assumption that any actor's policy-making processes are based on a range of various interests, marks out its consideration of different levels and diverse factors affecting decision-making, while interconnectedness, correlation, and the effect of one action on another, dynamically impacting the overall context, makes analysis advantageous in apprehending conditions affecting actor's behavior in a given situation and timeframe. Moreover, the Munich School believed that Constellation Analysis could be usefully applied to political sociology, conflict and decision theory and foreign policy as well as international politics, to go beyond neorealist perspectives and hypotheses altogether.

### **1.1 Kindermann and Munich School: Seven Analytical Categories**

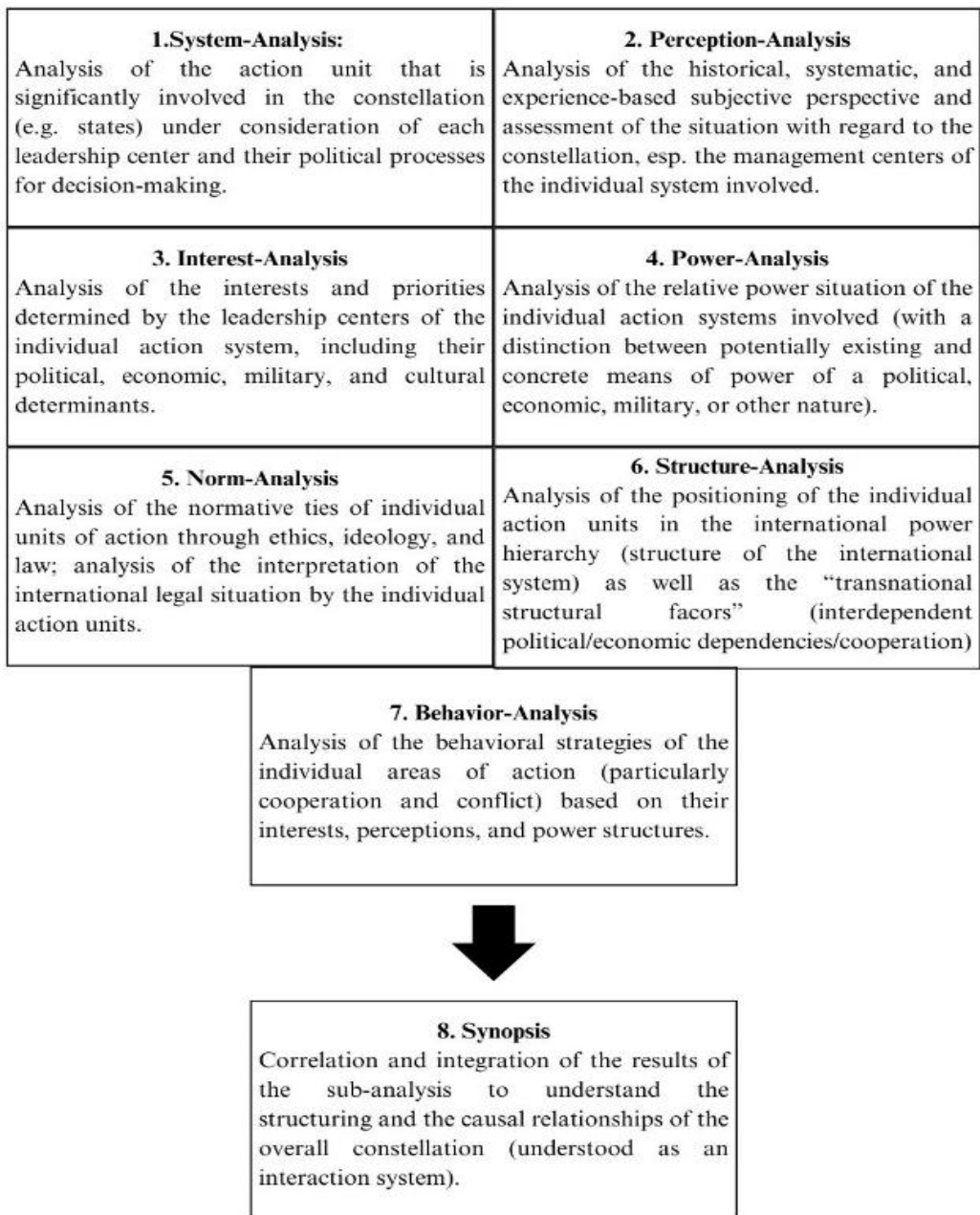
Specifically, the Kindermann and Munich schools analyzed the

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40 Alexander Siedschlag. Einführung-Internationalale Politik als Skeptische Gegenwartswissenschaft und die Müncher Schule des Neorealismus. *Realistische Perspektiven Internationaler Politik* (Oplanden: Leske+Budrich 2001). pp. 40-45.

motivations, actions, and interactions of individual actors based on the following seven categories: Structure, System, Interests, Norms, Perception, Power, Behavior. Key points of each category are summarized in the figure below:

< **Figure 1: Key Categories of Constellation Analysis** >



(Source: Reinhard C. Meier-Walser 2004, p.17)

- **Analysis of Structure:** It addresses the structural context in which a state or actor is situated and the positioning of individual units in the international hierarchy, whether states are interdependent or independent in their relations with other states. It also addresses how the structural conditions of conflict and/or cooperation affect the decision-making processes of individual states.
  
- **Analysis of System:** It focuses on the system itself, which includes the analysis of the socioeconomic, international and political system affecting each unit's situation.<sup>41</sup> This aims to identify the system's characteristics affected by the international environment, neighboring countries, international organizations, internal/external political forces, domestic and foreign interest groups, and the media, given that policy-making in any single country is largely made through various factors' interactions.
  
- **Analysis of Interests:** The Munich School's so-called synoptic realism considers the subjective interests of foreign policy makers in their specific situations rather than the objective interests (Staatsräson oder Objektive Interessen) of classical realism. Siedschlag (2001) further distinguishes between primary and secondary interests (e.g., in the case of a divided country, if unification is the primary policy goal in divided nation, other interests of each country or regime are secondary). Furthermore, analysis of these interests determines the origin, content, and purpose of foreign

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41 Siedschlag, *op. cit.*, p.17

policy, while highlighting the importance of analyzing how an actor's interests are affected by other actors and domestic and/or international political processes.<sup>42</sup> The structure of the international community and state interconnectedness warrants consideration, as deepening interdependence can limit the policy-making process of individual actors, who attempt to attain as much as possible through policies driven by the realistic environment which they inhabit.

- Analysis of Norms: It focuses on the influence of ideology, international law, ethics, values, national characteristics, etc. on the policymaking process of actors (e.g., the basic legal systems of East and West Germany and the agreements made under the international legal system, influencing the attitudes of the four victorious powers regarding the reunification of Germany). The Munich School's belief that there is a conflict between the existence of norms and their value-validity, reflects the idea that actors tend to prioritize their interest consideration in policymaking. This is often asserted over norms. It means that different choices and actions can be determined by political power relationships and the intertwined economic interests of individual states, even though norms and values are rational (e.g., the United States was positive about German reunification, but Britain and France tried to delay the process as much as possible, regardless of agreements, treaties and accords between the victorious powers). Hence, historical experience shows that the analysis of norms may not be considered an absolute factor.<sup>43</sup>

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42 Kim, Kyung-Rae & and Hur, Joon-young. A Study on the East German Policy toward West Germany during their Divided Period Focusing on the Perspective of Constellation Analysis. *Academic Journal* 33 (3). 2015. p. 170.

43 *Ibid.*, p.171

- **Analysis of Perception:** It refers to subjective views or assessments of a situation shaped by history, experience, systems, etc. Policy makers are considered to be interpreters of information from various fields, responsible for linking this to potential solutions. Analysis of situational and evaluative perceptions with respect to policymakers, considers subjectivity in terms of bounded rational or non-logical attitudes, acknowledging that actors' decisions are not necessarily based upon a cost-benefit perspective. Rather, decision criteria are often modified by other behavioral elements such as environment, cultural factors, a leader's worldview and beliefs, not to mention past lived experiences. Hence, an objective situation and the subjective perception of conditional reality may not necessarily match.<sup>44</sup>
- **Analysis of Power:** How much power (e.g., Military power, Economic power, Social and Political power) a state obtains, and what kind of power it exercises, not only dictates the means towards a defined end, but also invokes legitimacy and validity in policy terms. Because the application of power generates resistance both domestically and internationally, this category also analyses the methods used to solve problems, assessing the degree of power which actors have in implementing decisions. There is a recognition that the use of power is partly related to the availability of resources.<sup>45</sup> Combined with Perception Analysis and Interests Analysis, Power Analysis becomes an important instrument in assessing the degree to which an actor can realize its aims and objectives in pursuit of its

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44 Siedschlag, *op. cit.*, p.51.

45 *Ibid.*, p.53

interests.

- **Analysis of Behavior:** It focuses upon policy application where it can be comprehended that a policymaker acts in the fulfillment of identified interests. This category draws conclusions from the interactions which take place between actors or countries. This can take the form of cooperation when interests among countries are aligned, or conflict when they are not.

Constellation Analysis has proved to be a useful technique for addressing covert and overt issues of causality related to policy implementation and decision-making, while providing a framework for assessing interactions between individual states within a range of complex international environments and situations, from the confrontational post-World War II Cold War structure, through détente period, and into the post-Cold War era.<sup>46</sup>

## **1.2. Comparative Analysis Framing**

Based on the general concept of the previous Constellation Analysis, this study established the following analysis framework, consistent with the purpose of research.

(1) The term ‘structure’ refers to the position that each country maintains in respect of its differential power relationships within international community. Therefore, in terms of structural analysis, the following comparisons were mooted: East and West Germany and North and South Korea, divided structurally by the

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46 Gottfried-Karl Kindermann, *Grundelemente der Politik, Eine Einführung* (München: Piper, 1991). p. 132.

Cold War and established respective oppositional governments after WWII. Consequently, East Germany established a political system that was different from West Germany and North Korea established a political system that was different from South Korea. Analysis of the impact of external relations and structural influence exerted over policy decisions in East Germany and North Korea raises questions of interdependence and the degree of autonomy exercised by both states during the structural change which occurred during international transition from the Cold War to a Post-Cold War environment. This study looks at how East Germany and North Korea developed policies during the Cold War in the context of their structural relationships with socialist states, particularly the Soviet Union and China, and how these were impacted by transitional structural realignment.

(2) A divided country operates as a unique system in the process of policy making, which can be anomalous to the normal characteristics of state-to-state foreign policy. Some relevant examples concern the issue of statehood recognition in the context of regime competition (including United Nations membership) and the system of relations between divided states, taking into account other surrounding states (i.e., cross-border diplomatic relations, bilateral alliances, multilateral security cooperation regime, etc.). In the case of East and West Germany, the discrepancy between national and ethnically defined communities became embedded in the decision-making system by the formation of special relationships. In the case of North and South Korea, a unique armistice system was devised which afforded each country statehood and UN membership separately for more than half a century, despite distinct, discreet and opposing reunification objectives. Correspondingly, system analysis aims to explore and analyze the unique systemic features in divided nations, which affect foreign policy decision-making.

(3) In applying an analysis of interests focused on determining the gains and

benefits that divided states pursue, this study in fact challenges the neorealist premise of constellation analysis, which holds that policy decisions are made according to a confluence of interests, while at the same time providing an interrogative frame that can determine which interest factors can be deemed influential in terms of policy decisions. Given that the economic condition of any country determines its national power to define foreign policy, it is clear that ruling leader's economic interests also play an important role in the structuring of hostile division by supporting military power. In the case of a divided country, where the struggle for survival means avoiding being absorbed by an opposing party, the need to unite populace under a vision of a better system while engaging in systemic confrontation with another country inevitably, means that economic issues become directly related to and are impacted by unification policies.<sup>47</sup> Empirical evidence demonstrates that economic disparities between East and West Germany influenced West Germany's policy toward East Germany and vice versa, therefore it is critically important to examine specifically how the economic conditions in East Germany and North Korea affected and were impacted by policy decisions.

(4) With regard to an analysis of norms, it is pertinent to compare the socialist characteristics of East Germany and North Korea during the Cold War. While both countries pursued foreign policies based upon socialist ideology, their characteristic nationalism, implementation of socialist ideology differed in each case and this becomes a point of interest. As Hobsbawm (1990) demonstrates that regimes use national symbols to strengthen nationalism and to govern on this basis

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47 The reason why East German regime allowed exchange and cooperation with West Germany while maintaining a two-state system was because the economic gap with West Germany made hostile confrontation meaningless. In the case of North and South Korea, which have always maintained a hostile confrontational relationship, the reason why North Korea stepped back to Low-level federal system after the end of the Cold War was also due to regime security problems caused by the economic gap.

whenever possible,<sup>48</sup> it must be acknowledged that the function of nationalism in a category of norms is multiplied by the objective of national reunification, especially in the case of divided countries. This study therefore, specifically analyzes how East Germany and North Korea employed nationalist discourse and positioned in respect of their policy making decisions.

(5) This study also interrogates perceptions of reality held by national leaders, in relation to their espousal of a federal system of reunification, as representative reunification policies relevant to both East Germany and North Korea. When discussing the East German unification proposal, for example, consideration simply from an ideological state perspective makes it difficult to grasp nuanced social and political realities implied by the propagandistic stances and rhetoric adopted and employed by state representatives. Although existing Western-oriented studies have considered East Germany's reunification policies, such as German Confederation proposal, to be insincere propaganda construed merely to aid political maneuvers, a more balanced and nuanced understanding evinced by a leaders' perceptions of the reunification issue can allow apprehension of a range of dynamic environmental changes in the condition of the field. Hence, the intensification of factional confrontation after the division of the country, interrogated via its leader's subjective position, allows the conditionality of an internal historical situation, such as that of East Germany or North Korea, to be refracted via a contemporary lens.

(6) For a divided country, power is inevitably aggrandized as a crucial factor in the defense of sovereignty or national interests and in the support of system security. It is, therefore, critically important to analyze how East Germany and

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48 Eric. J Hobsbawm, *Nations and nationalism since 1780* (Cambridge University Press, 1990), translated in Kang Myung-se (Seoul: Changbi, 2016). p.123.

North Korea utilized power in the process of pursuing unification policies during the Cold War. The Munich School believes that a country's power can be collectively determined by a combination of military-strategic, economic-technical, geographic-demographic, political-moral, and technological factors.<sup>49</sup> In this study, the military capability that physically supports the security of the regime is specifically analyzed.<sup>50</sup> This preliminary analysis of military power is necessary in order to examine the path of Kim Jong Un's unification plan later on. While there has been a considerable amount of research in South Korea on the military integration of East and West Germany after reunification, however, discussions of East German military power have been limited to the context of personnel and armament numbers before the reunification of East and West Germany (Bae, An-seog 2007, pp.1-2). In particular, there are few studies on the period from the establishment of the East German Army to its dissolution. This is due to an inherent research limitation whereby the East German Army operated a closed and uniform military force under the political and military influence of the Soviet Union.<sup>51</sup>

(7) Finally, an examination of the historical context of East-West and North-South relations, and how mutual behaviors affected the reunification policies of East Germany and North Korea, is construed. East Germany and North Korea generally pursued aggressive policies when external conditions were favorable,

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49 Kim, Kyung-Rae & and Hur, Joon-young, *op. cit.*, p.170

50 The economic power of East Germany and North Korea will be specifically analyzed in a field of analysis of interests.

51 Regarding the political role of the military in communist countries, Adelman suggests three types based on the method of seizing power: The first is that the military plays a strong political role, such like China and Vietnam where the regime was established through workers resistance or civil war; the second is that the military plays a minimal political role like East Germany and Eastern Europe where power was seized by an external factor; The third is that the military plays initially a small but increasingly significant political role as in the Soviet Union. See Jonathan R. Adelman. *Toward a Typology of Communist Civil-Military Relations, Communist Armies in Politics* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1982).

believing that their systems are superior to the opposition. However, when both countries were unable to forcibly unify as adversaries or jointly unify under domestic and/or international conditions, they pursued isolation policies to block the influence of the opposing country's policies while trying to stabilize their own internal regimes. Hence, to establish context, analysis of mutual behaviors and relations between the divided countries needs to be combined with an analysis of West Germany's and South Korea's unification policies.

After World War II, the division of Germany and the Korean Peninsula was not simply a matter of individual states. It was the result of a complex intertwining of interests and negotiations between great powers and the divided countries constituted a key part of the process of reconstructing a post-war world order. In application, the significance of constellation analysis as a method associated with the Munich Neorealist School is in respect of its holism. This sophisticated analytical technique makes it possible to apprehend the policy decisions of actors as a multi-dimensional gestalt, which allows the prediction of future behavior. In this study, analysis of unification policy-making cases of East Germany and North Korea, via this holistic framework, offers a resultant indicative model of inquiry when applied to the Kim Jong Un regime, which can portend the preponderance of inherited unification policy and the regime's appetite for transformation.

## **2. Comparison of East Germany and North Korea According to Constellation Analysis**

### **2.1. Analysis of Structure: Socialist Suzerainty**

#### **2.1.1. East Germany**

Given its geopolitical situation on the front-line of Cold War boundaries, the government of East Germany, established in 1948 by the Soviet Union, initially retained a strong Soviet influence. It was also subject to unilateral decisions by the Soviet Union with respect to the issue of German reunification. Hence, the 1952 Soviet proposal to reunify Germany as a neutral country was ineluctably driven by Soviet interests, designed to discourage and disturb Western unity. In fact, so long as it was not hostile, a neutral reunified Germany, even which might be interpreted as indicating a policy of GDR abandonment, could be a preferable outcome to Soviet planned socialist re-construction in Germany. However, once it was rejected by the West, the Soviet Union buried the concept of neutral reunification and began to intervene directly in the East German policymaking. In June 1953, a decisive moment came when the Soviet Union suppressed an East German uprising by force. Consequently, many of those who revolted fled the country. Fearing future East German incorporation into the West, the Soviet Union determined that the East German Communist Party should not pursue policies independently (Yoo, Ji-Hoon, 2007, p.66). In response to West German accession to NATO (May 9, 1955), and the failure of the Summit Meeting (Gipfelkonferenz) in Geneva two days later, the Soviet leadership embraced the GDR's 'Two-state' (Zweistaaten) policy as a way of isolating the East Germany from Western influence, and signed a sovereignty treaty with the GDR which recognized of its status as an independent state.

The asymmetrical relationship between the GDR and the Soviet Union can be clearly discerned by looking at the content of a series of sovereignty treaties. In 1955, the GDR was recognized as a sovereign state through the Treaty on Relations between the Soviet Union and the GDR (the Sovereignty Treaty), while the Treaty on Mutual Assistance and Cooperation (the Alliance Treaty) was signed twice in

1964 and 1975. At first glance, the 1955 treaty seemed to indicate equal bilateral relations, with Article 1 stating the basic principles shared between the two countries: complete equality, respect for each other's sovereignty and non-interference in internal affairs, etc. Moreover, Article 4 stated that Soviet troops stationed in East Germany shall not interfere in the internal affairs and social and political life of East Germany (Kim, Sang-kyu, 1985, p.40). However, the treaty also included provisions that allowed the Soviet Union to exert an extraordinary influence over East Germany, over and above its 'victor' rights as one of the Four Powers. For example, Article 2 stipulated that both countries consult each other on major international issues of mutual interest, effectively limiting the GDR unilateral decision making over its own foreign affairs policy (Lee, Kyung-Suk & Kim, Kyung-Mi, 2016, p.160). Thus, while the Soviet Union seemed overtly to guarantee GDR diplomatic autonomy, it covertly exerted control by tying East Germany to its sphere of influence. Even as the GDR's political and economic weight swelled along with its position and rank within the Warsaw Pact, the GDR leadership was compelled to seek agreement with the Soviet Union on the details of its policies.

However, the GDR did not unequivocally capitulate to every Soviet position. Beginning in the late 1960s, Ulbricht's East German leadership became increasingly conflicted because of its perception that the Soviet policy of easing tension with the West could jeopardize the very existence of the East German regime. This friction culminated when West Germany and the Soviet Union signed the Moscow Treaty in 1970. Subsequent deliberations between West Germany and Eastern Bloc countries and the signing of the Eastern Treaty heralded negotiations between East and West Germany, leaving the East German leadership increasingly concerned about the erosion of its internal control and the potential international isolation that a wave of Western liberalization could bring. The Soviet Union,

however, continued to support negotiations with the transitioning countries and sought to hold the East German regime to principles and standards that it had set. Amid this conflict, GDR Party Secretary Ulbricht resigned. While it is impossible to deduce the exact extent of Soviet involvement in Ulbricht's resignation, it seems undeniable that there was some connection.

The second Soviet-German Alliance Treaty of 1975, signed after Erich Honecker became General Secretary of the GDR Communist Party, again sought to bind the GDR within the Soviet Union's ideological framework of 'Socialist Internationalism.'<sup>52</sup> This dictated that sovereignty in socialist countries was bound together and exercised collectively, not individually or autonomously. This meant that any socialist state attempting to leave the alliance, could be brought back into the League of Socialist Brothers by other socialist states (Kim, Sang-kyu, 1985, p.55). This form of coercive internationalism was further reinforced by the 'Brezhnev Doctrine', which under particular circumstances rationalized armed intervention by the Soviet Union under the guise of shared principles of comradeship and fraternal aid. This, in fact, provided the ideological basis for the 1968 Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia. It was ultimately this ideological foundation that prompted East Germany and the other Warsaw Pact countries to subordinate their domestic affairs to Soviet diktat.<sup>53</sup> In this atmosphere, the Honecker regime removed all references to German reunification described in previous treaties from the Second Alliance Pact.<sup>54</sup> From 1971 the Honecker

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52 Article 1 of the Second Alliance Treaty states that "we hereby establish in all respects permanent relations of friendship and fraternal mutual assistance, based on the principles of socialist internationalism."

53 Internationalism was a hegemonic ideology of the Soviet Union. Warsaw Pact countries let their domestic affairs to Soviet decisions, utilizing it politically. With no prospect of realizing a unified state, the East German leadership began to emphasize the "socialist community" with the Soviet Union to curb the growth of a non-socialist sense in East Germany.

54 Article 6 of the 1955 Sovereignty Treaty states that "this Treaty will remain in force until the reunification of Germany as a peace-loving and democratic state has taken place or until the Contracting Parties have agreed to its

regime's policy of ethnic separation dispensed with the very idea of one German nation, and the Second Alliance Pact notably neglected to address the issue of reunification at all.<sup>55</sup> Rather, the two parties would keep each other informed and consulted in all important international affairs and act from a common position consistent with the interests of both powers, only strengthened the rationale for deep Soviet Union involvement in any future reunification negotiations between East and West Germany.

Consequently, the GDR strengthened and then abandoned its original reunification policy, while foreign and domestic policy were conducted in consultation with the Soviet Union.<sup>56</sup> East Germany's geopolitical location was a fundamental concern for the Soviet Union who exhibited a pronounced interest in exerting influence over its jurisdiction, and although post-war, a neutralized reunification of the region had been sought, since the 1970's the GDR explicitly served as the frontier outpost of an expanded Soviet buffer zone. Conversely, in the late 1980s, when the Soviet Union cut off support and withdrew military backing from the GDR regime and pro-democracy protests flared up in East Germany, East German regime's dependence on Soviet contributed to the regime's rapid collapse. Consequently, a lack of autonomy and independence in its relations with the Soviet Union had left the East German regime with a very weak popular support base, which was eroded further by poor public relations and its unpopular

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amendment or annulment," and Article 7 of the 1964 First Alliance Treaty states that "the formation of a peace-loving and democratic united Germany, in accordance with the fact that there are two sovereign Germanys, is only possible through equal negotiations and understanding between the two countries."

55 Until the 1968 constitution, the GDR adhered to the principle of one German nation-two German states, but in the 1970s, the concept of German nationhood was modified and the 1974 constitutional amendment removed all references to German reunification.

56 The Honecker regime, until its collapse, did not agree with all the Soviet Union's policies. For example, it did not accept Gorbachev's reform and openness policies in the 1980s. However, even in such cases, it was difficult for East Germany to escape the influence of the Soviet Union. (Kim, Sang-kyu 1985, p. 59).

espousal of an anti-unification national separation.

### **2.1.2. North Korea**

Soviet influence in North Korea during the early years of its communist regime can usefully be compared to the case of East Germany. Likewise, division of the Korean Peninsula in 1945 at the end of World War II, coupled with US occupation of South Korea and Soviet exertions of influence on North Korea, clearly parallels to post-war divided Germany, albeit with significant differences. Sovietization, particularly conspicuous in North Korea after liberation from the Japanese in 1945, was pervasive until the establishment of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea in 1948, and was then resurgent during the Korean War in 1950.

Having said that, the Korean War also marked a pronounced shift in terms of Soviet influence in North Korea. When Stalin's precondition of immediate war victory failed to materialize and the Soviet Union stepped back from supporting North Korea, China participated in war, assuming the protector role formerly associated with Soviet Union (Ulam 1974, p.532). In contrast to East Germany, whose autonomy had been eroded by Soviet intervention as a foundational element of the initial Soviet Socialist Bloc, North Korea, navigated a diplomatic tightrope, simultaneously wed to both the Soviet Union and China. Responding to the 1956 August Factional Incident in North Korea<sup>57</sup>, Kim Il Sung purged opposing factions to consolidate his political base domestically with establishing a dual alliance with the two socialist powers externally. Kim Il Sung had persistently demanded that

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<sup>57</sup> The August Faction Incident was an attempted removal of Kim Il Sung from power by leading North Korean figures from the Soviet-Korean faction and the Yan'an faction, with support from the Soviet and China, at the 3<sup>rd</sup> Central Committee of the Worker's Party of Korea in 1956. The attempt to remove Kim Il Sung failed and the participants were executed. Through this political struggle, Kim Il-sung quashed all opposition to him within the central party leadership. Retrieved from [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/August\\_faction\\_incident](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/August_faction_incident) (21 January, 2023)

the Soviet leader Khrushchev visit to Pyongyang, since the late 1950s, and when Khrushchev refused his invitation, Kim Il Sung travelled to Moscow himself to sign a treaty of friendship, cooperation, and mutual assistance with the Soviet Union in July 1961. Notably, five days later, a similar treaty was signed with the People's Republic of China. In 1961, conspicuously, North Korea was the only country in the world to have military alliance treaties with both the Soviet Union and China. By navigating a neutral line through the Sino-Soviet split engendered by Chinese criticism of Khrushchev's revisionist de-Stalinization policies and the Soviet Union's attitude of peaceful co-existence with the West, and exacerbated by dogmatic Soviet criticism of Mao's Cultural Revolution which worsened after Khrushchev's 1956 speech on Stalin, North Korea took the neutral position (equidistant policy) from both of its socialist neighbors even while they engaged in a series of diplomatic spats (Kim, Changjin 2019, p.79).

Looking more closely at the development of North Korea-China and North Korea-Soviet relations during the Cold War, it can be discerned that from the early 1960s, up until Mao's Cultural Revolution in 1965, North Korea adopted a pro-China stance which emulated the Chinese model of economic development. This was also primarily due to regime anxiety in North Korea concerning Khrushchev's policy of peaceful coexistence and his de-Stalinization.<sup>58</sup> In this climate, Khrushchev cancelled a planned visit to North Korea in October 1961, but then attempted to appease Pyongyang, by forgiving North Korea's debt of \$190 million (760 million Rubles) before suspending military aid to North Korea in 1963.<sup>59</sup>

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58 On October 1959, Khrushchev urged North Korean leaders to refrain from using force because the United States did not want an armed conflict on the Peninsula, but Kim Il Sung did not agree with the Soviet advice, accusing the United States of instigating war on the Korean Peninsula. (Bae Jae-in 1985, p. 84)

59 In response to this Soviet aid to North Korea, the China provided a long-term loan of \$150 million from 1961 to 1964. (Yearbook of the DPRK, 1961, p.135). This is an example of the Chinese government was competing with the Soviet Union for influence on North Korea.

Following Khrushchev's resignation in 1964 and the outbreak of Mao's Cultural Revolution in 1965, however, the Soviet Union again sought to reestablish close ties with North Korea. Taking advantage of the post-Cultural Revolution estrangement between Pyongyang and Beijing, the Soviet Union increased military aid to North Korea in 1968, and North Korea-Soviet relations were further restored in 1972 by US President Nixon's visit to China. Moreover, the development of sports exchanges between China and South Korea throughout the 1980's antagonized North Korea, who responded by strengthening ties with the Soviet Union as way to keep China in check and prevent the continued expansion of U.S. influence on the Korean Peninsula (Choi, Soo-Kyung, 1986, p.54). In May 1984, Kim Il Sung's first official visit to the Soviet Union since 1961 reflected an alignment of North Korean and Soviet interests, designed to curb China's open-door policy and constrain its approach to South Korea. Although historically, the Soviet Union's position on North Korea may appear inconsistent, Soviet relations with North Korea persisted not only because North Korea needed continued Soviet economic and military aid, but also because the Soviet Union did not wish to diminish the influence it exerted over the region.

That said, apart from some equidistant foreign policy initiatives, Kim Il Sung's regime was prodigiously more pro-China than pro-Soviet.<sup>60</sup> From the late 1970s especially, China's influence over North Korea eclipsed that of the Soviet Union. In April 1982, on Kim Il Sung's 70th birthday, Deng Xiaoping and Hu Yaobang paid an unofficial visit to Pyongyang, and in June 1983, Kim Il Sung

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60 The reason for North Korea's pro-China stance includes geographic proximity, close political, economic ties, and cultural homogeneity due to the 'Confucianism'. In addition, Soviet military brutality during the Soviet occupation from 1945 to 1948, Soviet bystander attitude during the Korean War, and Soviet interference in the internal affairs of North Korea during the equidistant diplomacy period are factors of great distrust. It is also pointed out that Kim Il-sung had formed ties with the Chinese Communist Party mainly in Manchuria until he was chased by the Japanese army and fled to Siberia (Bae Jae-in 1985, pp.92-93).

travelled to China to hold a summit with Deng Xiaoping, desiring to develop bilateral relations through active cooperation and exchanges based on mutual political interests. North Korea-China relations reached their peak in the 1980s, during a period of political transition which saw Deng Xiaoping's reform-and-openness-oriented leadership established in China, while the Kim Jong Il's succession system was formalized at the Sixth Congress of the Workers' Party of North Korea in October 1980 as the successor to Kim Il Sung.

In conclusion, North Korean equidistant diplomacy reinforced an independent line on policy decision issue despite the influence of its two powerful neighbors. Opposition to North Korea's foreign strategy, would have undoubtedly tilted the precarious balance of power in the region, therefore, neither China nor the Soviet Union had any choice but to support the North Korean regime. As it remained the most rational option for China and the Soviet Union to maintain the 'status quo' in Northeast Asia, these two socialist countries basically upheld the division of the Korean Peninsula. For these two countries, Korean division worked as means of reducing the pressure on confronting the United States military and Kim Il Sung's unilateral attempting unification by force. This acquiescent attitude on the part of both the Soviet Union and China allowed Kim Il Sung, for a long period of time, to demonstrate the superiority of North Korean communist ideology via regime competition, while consolidating his will to unify the Peninsula through socialist revolution on South Korea. In the wake of the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1990, North Korea actively sought to re-establish relations with China. Hence, China became a strong socialist bloc country that could effectively exert influence on North Korean foreign policy. That said, Chinese influence over North Korea has been modest when compared to the Soviet intervention in East Germany, which determined to stem the swelling tide of liberalism and rapid globalization in the early post-Cold War era.

< Table 1: Comparison between East Germany and North Korea in relation to Socialist countries >

	<b>East Germany</b>	<b>North Korea<sup>61</sup></b>
<b>Socialist Suzerainty</b>	Soviet Union's strong influence in East Germany's foreign policy decisions	Relative Self-reliance through equidistance between the Soviet and China
<b>Independence of Unification Policy</b>	Weak	Strong
<b>Policy Outcomes</b>	Separation Policy rather than Regime Competition.	Regime Competition and Confrontation.

## **2.2 Analysis of System: External Structure of Decision-making in a Divided Country**

### **2.2.1. East Germany**

In this chapter, external structures that influenced East German policy, specifically the issue of UN membership and the participation of the Council for Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) are examined. It is important to note, however, that the UN played a minor role in the division of Germany. This was mainly due to Soviet suspicions that the UN operated under US influence, and the intention of the great powers to resolve US-Soviet conflicts outside of the UN.

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61 At the time setting of analysis, all the following tables will compare 'East Germany' with 'North Korea during the Kim Il Sung era (Cold War period)'.

Additionally, referring the German question to the UN would have nullified the Potsdam Declaration, thus reducing any claim to authority over Germany that had been agreed previously between the Western powers and the Soviet Union.<sup>62</sup> Nonetheless, UN membership was a non-negotiable issue for both East and West Germany, as each sought the validity of international recognition of their respective states during a period of regime competition. Until 1969, West Germany upheld the 'Hallstein Doctrine', and rejected East Germany's first application to join the UN in 1966, insisting instead on the right to sole representation.

As East Germany grew to become the second largest industrialized country in the Eastern Bloc, and the tenth largest in the world, a growing number of Western countries began to oppose West Germany's Cold War diplomatic line. In seeking the establishment of relations with East Germany to promote an atmosphere of peaceful coexistence, these countries attempted to integrate the GDR into the European security system, epitomized by the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE), which was in preparation at that time.

As West Germany abandoned its sole representation clause and turned towards a policy of engagement with East Germany, to secure state recognition, the GDR insisted upon UN membership before signing a framework treaty with West Germany, who responded that both parties could join the UN simultaneously after the framework treaty normalized bilateral relations and ended hostilities. These conflicting positions were resolved by an agreement in 1970 between West Germany and the Soviet Union endorsing West German position. Following the signing of the Basic Treaty, on their respective accession to the United Nations, East and West Germany exchanged letters (Nov. 8, 1972) and the following day

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62 The United Nations had only intervened in German problems on two occasions: the Soviet blockade of Berlin in 1948-49; The preparation for free elections of Germany in 1951-1952. (See Case book of East-West German Exchange and Cooperation (Seoul: Ministry of Unification, 1993). p. 242)

(Nov. 9), a meeting of the Four Powers was convened to remove international obstacles to the Basic Treaty. On September 1973, with the support of the victor states, the 28th session of the United Nations General Assembly passed a resolution on the simultaneous admission of East and West Germany to the United Nations. Having achieved international recognition of its status as a nation, in September 1974, the GDR went on to establish diplomatic relations with the United States.

Simultaneous accession to the United Nations may have ratified both states under international law, however, the West German government maintained its position of non-recognition of the GDR, based on an argument that the GDR was not a foreign country from the perspective of one German people. Consequently, West Germany, in an attempt to block international recognition of the GDR, argued that the Basic Treaty stipulated that a policy of reunification should continue to be pursued until it was achieved by a vote of self-determination mandated by the people of both countries. Correspondingly, the GDR, legitimized under international law via simultaneous accession to the UN, abandoned its former reunification policy stance in favor of adopting a notion of national separation.

The Helsinki Process and the Council for Security and Cooperation in Europe were two further external mechanisms that proved influential to East German foreign policy. Initially proposed by the Soviet Union, the Helsinki Process was poorly received by the Western countries and faced opposition within West Germany.<sup>63</sup> Opposition political parties, such as the CDU (Christian Democratic

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63 NATO members initially were hesitant about the foundation of CSCE, suspicious of the sincerity of the Soviet's proposal. Consequently, However, as West Germany's Ostpolitik was implemented to increase the West's trust and, as the diplomatic environment changed in the 1970s, the United States and Western Blocs were interested in establishing a new European peace order. Contrary to the characteristics initially envisioned by the Soviet Union, adding human rights provisions, it has become Europe's largest conference since the Vienna Conference in 1815 (Kim, Jin-Ho 2009, p.222).

Union) in West Germany, feared it would dismantle the West-integration policy that had been maintained for more than two decades since the establishment of the West German government and make it difficult for all German people to exercise their right to self-determination (Chung, Yong-Kil 1990, p.62).<sup>64</sup> It was also recognized that CSCE recommendations, resolutions, and declarations were mere expressions of political and moral viewpoints which could not themselves be elevated to the status of international treaties or agreements made under Article 102 of the UN Charter (registration of international treaties and agreements). Correspondingly, these were not documents that could ultimately determine the fate of German unification in international law.<sup>65</sup> Nevertheless, the West German SPD (Social Democratic Party) Brandt government realized East German participation in the CSCE could be a lever which could apply pressure to improve inter-German relations even though it accelerated, consolidated and maintained the status quo in Europe.

Contrarily, the GDR viewed the Helsinki Final Protocol as an internationally binding instrument that ultimately would resolve fundamental hindrances to the normalization of relations between East and West in the post-war period. Hence, the GDR asserted its statehood by lending international legal weight to the provisions of the declarations of principles in Basket I of the Final Protocol, which recognized the Eastern Bloc under terms dictating “inviolability of territory” and “non-interference in internal affairs.” East and West German signing of the Helsinki Final Document, followed by simultaneous accession to the UN, was claimed prodigiously by the East German Honecker regime to designate international legal recognition of two completely independent and sovereign states

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64 Chung, Yong-Kil. *The Ostpolitik of the West Germany and South Korea's Policy toward the Communist Countries. Korean Journal of International Relations*. Vol. 29, No. 2. 1990. p.62

65 Case book of East-West German Exchange and Cooperation (Seoul: Ministry of Unification, 1993). pp. 223-226.

within Germany.<sup>66</sup>

< Table 2: Three Baskets of the Helsinki Accords >

	<b>Contents</b>
<b>Basket I</b>	<p><i>Declaration of Principles Governing the Relationship of the Signatories</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Equality of sovereignty, non-use or threatened use of violence, inviolability of territory, peaceful settlement of disputes, non-interference in internal affairs, guarantee of human rights and fundamental freedoms, mutual cooperation among states, fulfilment of obligations under international law, etc.</li> </ul> <p><i>Security Issues</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Military confidence-building measures (CBMs), security and disarmament, etc.</li> </ul>
<b>Basket II</b>	<p><i>Cooperation in the fields of economics, science, technology, and environment</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Trade promotion, economic cooperation, science and technology cooperation, environmental issues, cooperation in transportation and tourism, etc.</li> </ul>
<b>Basket III</b>	<p><i>Human Contact Fields:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Reuniting separated families, improving travel conditions, youth and sports exchanges, etc.</li> </ul> <p><i>Information Exchange Fields:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Exchange, access and dissemination of information, improving conditions for journalists to operate, etc.</li> </ul> <p><i>Culture/Education</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Cultural exchanges, academic exchanges, etc.</li> </ul>

\*Source: Case book of East-West German Exchange and Cooperation (Seoul: Ministry of Unification), 1993, p.224

While East Germany responded positively to Basket I of the Helsinki Accord, which proved useful in accentuating independence, it notably took a passive stance

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66 *Ibid.*, pp. 228

towards Category II which included cooperation in economic, scientific, and technological fields, and Category III which provided for people-to-people contact, education, and culture. With regard to Category III, the GDR stuck to its position that respect for human rights and freedoms in Category III could be guaranteed only to the extent that the principle of non-interference in internal affairs stipulated in the Guiding Principles of Category I was also kept (Woo, Pyung-kyun 2010, p.176).

At the time of the signing of the Helsinki Final Protocol, East and West Germany had already signed a number of treaties and agreements including the Framework Treaty, and concluded major agreements in the fields of transportation, trade, and telecommunications. Moreover, the GDR government, seeking to distill the spirit of the Helsinki Accord into bilateral relations, prioritized agreements and negotiations in areas that directly benefited the GDR regime, while delaying and frustrating agreement in areas that would place it under a burden. For the GDR, the most important objective in terms of CSCE participation was the facilitation of broad international legal recognition of state legitimacy, accordingly, any impact on bilateral relations and reunification was secondary.

### **2.2.2. North Korea**

In contrast to the situation in Germany, the United Nations as an actor was actively involved in dividing the Korean Peninsula. In December 1945, despite the outcome of the Moscow Conference of Foreign Ministers, the U.S.-Soviet Joint Committee discussing Korean independence was disbanded. In September 1947, over Soviet objections, the United States transferred the issue of Korean independence to the UN General Assembly, who then attempted to hold proportionally representative general elections throughout the Korean Peninsula

under UN supervision. When these were thwarted by the Soviet Union, the UN General Assembly in December 1948 anointed the government of the Republic of Korea as the sole legitimate government in the region. Although, unlike Germany, Korea was not a defeated country divided by victorious powers, the United States-led UN intervention in Korea was carried out in response to the Western concerns about the spread of soviet communism.

Consequently, the transfer of the Korean issue to the UN made it impossible for the United States and the Soviet Union to engage in dialog and ultimately sparked deeper divisions on the Korean Peninsula. When both North and South Korea attempted to join the United Nations on their own volition, each excluded the other, thus they were repeatedly rejected by the permanent members of the UN Security Council. While opposition from the Soviet Union and China prevented South Korea from joining the UN, paradoxically, the Soviet Union also submitted two resolutions to the United Nations in 1956 and 1958 recommending simultaneous UN membership for the North and South. These proposals went unrealized because of North Korean insistence on joining the UN under a single state name (the Democratic People's Republic of Korea) reflecting its 'One Korea' theory. In contrast to succeeding in the simultaneous UN accession of East and West Germany, North and South Korean attempts to seek legitimacy via UN recognition were effectively blocked by the end of the Cold War. While the simultaneous East and West German UN accession was conducted during a process of bilateral engagement endorsing a special relationship neither externally nor internally foreign to both participants with cross-approval guarantees offered by neighboring countries, simultaneous North and South Korean accession to the UN finally conjoined with the end of the Cold War and only afterwards was a basic agreement between two Koreas signed which stipulated the special conditions of any inter-Korean relationship. Simultaneous UN accession, from a North Korean

perspective, was the result of Chinese and the Soviet pressure applied at a disadvantageous stage of post-Cold War. However, accession also prevented regime collapse by providing an escape from international isolation. Despite North Korean adoption of the Inter-Korean Basic Agreement (1991) three months after UN accession, subsequent agreements have demonstrated that the North Korean regime preservation has proven to be an ineffective premise for achieving unification on the Korean Peninsula.

The most revealing area of comparison with East Germany concerns cross-authorization, exemplified by South Korean development of diplomatic relations with China and the Soviet Union. North Korea proved to be incapable of instituting reciprocal ties with the United States and Japan during the post-Cold War. Diplomatic relations between armistice signatories obvious hold immense significance, and while the United States and North Korea have not established new political relations beyond the armistice, rapprochement between China and South Korea signaled an important paradigm shift in the politics of the region.

In contrast to Europe, mechanisms for multilateral security cooperation such the Helsinki process of the Council for Security and Cooperation in Europe did not exist in the Korean Peninsula and Northeast Asia during the Cold War. Northeast Asia had difficulties in establishing a multilateral security system such as the CSCE, as it lacked a shared perception of security threats, had no past experience of multilateralism and collective cooperation, and harbored internal historical and ideological divisions among individually constituted countries. Of course, it is not without such an attempt. The South Korean Roh Tae-woo government proposed the institution of a peaceful order in Northeast Asia based upon a resolution of the Korean Peninsula issue, contextualized by post-Cold War alignments. In October 1988 President Roh's speech to the UN General Assembly proffered a 'Six-party

Consultative Conference for Peace in Northeast Asia.’<sup>67</sup> However, it was only in the 2000s, long after the end of the Cold War, that any East Asian regional multilateral security framework could be established, when a mood of Korean reconciliation prevailed and North Korea was invited to participate.<sup>68</sup>

In conclusion, in the climate of the Cold War and the détente power balance, East Germany’s ability to consolidate its two-state system via the signing of a basic treaty with West Germany and simultaneous accession to the United Nations, while participating in the Helsinki process, contrasted significantly with North Korea’s implementation of indigenous policies independent of the influence of any international regime. However, one cannot fail to mention how the ‘armistice system’ acted as an extra-systemic factor, which forced North and South Korea into maintaining a hostile coexistence by internalizing conditionalities of inter-Korean conflict without establishing a complementary mode of peaceful coexistence and mutual recognition which could permanently end hostilities. Consequentially, the armistice system evolved beyond its negotiated military structure, designed to balance military inter-Korean power dynamics and to counteract the use of force, to specify a system of international political relations which defined the sovereignty of both Korean jurisdictions and their relations with neighboring countries such as the United States, the Soviet Union and China. Hence, the armistice system constitutes a special type of division on the Korean

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67 In response, North Korea opposed the South Korea's 1988 proposal Six-party Consultative Conference for Peace in Northeast Asia, calling it a maneuver to isolate the North Korea and an attempt to pressure it into isolation. (Ohm Tae-am. *Multilateral Security Cooperation in Northeast Asia - South Korea's Options*. Seoul: KIDA Press, 2006. p. 191.

68 The meetings related to Multilateral Cooperation in Northeast Asia that North Korea currently participates in include the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), the Northeast Asia Security Dialogue (NEACD), and the Council for Security and Cooperation in Asia and the Pacific (CSCAP), however, all of which were established after the end of the Cold War. Compared to the 1.5-track NEACD and the non-governmental CSCAP, the ARF is an inter-governmental organization, North Korea’s joining on July 2000.

Peninsula, incommensurable with the case of East and West Germany. Given that it has regulated North Korea's policy-making process, it is undeniable that the armistice system has constrained inter-Korean relations and inhibited the normalization of diplomatic ties with North Korea, even after the conclusion of the Cold War. A comparison of the external systems of foreign policy making in East Germany and North Korea according to Constellation Analysis are summarized in the table below:

< Table 3: External Systems of foreign policy making in East Germany and North Korea >

	<b>East Germany</b>	<b>North Korea</b>
<b>Collective Security Regime</b>	Simultaneous UN membership during the Cold War	Simultaneous UN membership after the Cold War
<b>Collective Defence Regime</b>	Member of the Warsaw Pact Organization	None
<b>Cooperative Security Regime</b>	Participation in the CSCE	None
<b>Bilateral Relations with the United States</b>	Establishment of diplomatic relations with the U.S.	None
<b>Policy Outcomes</b>	Strengthening statehood to solidify 'two-state' coexistence	Strengthening the independence and self-reliance

### **2.3. Analysis of Interests: Economic Power and the Promotion of Unification**

### 2.3.1. East Germany

The German Customs Union, established in 1834, is claimed as the origin of the modern unified country now known as Germany. In other words, before its post-WWII division, Germany was constituted as a market-integrated nation state. After the end of World War II, however, the economies of East and West Germany were divided into separate economic zones and in 1948, the East German economy commenced industrial nationalization and instituted a planned economy. The GDR's first five-year plan, from 1951-55, prioritized heavy industry, but weak industrial structure, aggravated by the repayment of Soviet war reparations, meant the effects of economic planning were minimal. In the 1950s, East Germany's productivity remained a quarter of that of West Germany, while living standards were 40 percent lower (Klaus Schroeder 1998, pp.110-115). A second five-year plan, implemented from 1956-60, sought in vain to bridge the gap between goals of the planned economy and civilian demands to address living standards and shortages of basic goods. Economic policy failures fueled worker discontent, leading to a strike on June 17, 1953, which in turn contributed to the increasing exodus of East German citizens to West Germany.<sup>69</sup> Introducing a 'New Economic System' in the 1960s, East German leader Ulbricht gave autonomy to producers and sought to incentivize workers by promoting skills and technical proficiencies. This led to some improvement in economic growth and living standards, but these remained far below those of West Germany and other Western countries.

As East Germany's industrial base deteriorated under the weight of war reparation payments to the Soviet Union, internal trade deficiencies were exacerbated due in part a small domestic market and lack of industrial raw

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69 At least 4.57 million East Germans crossed into West Germany in the period 1950-1989, with more than two-thirds of them leaving the GDR in the 1950s (Bettina Effner & Helge Heidemeyer. *Die Flucht in Zahlen, Flucht im geteilten Deutschland* (Berlin: be.bra, 2005). p. 28.)

materials. Trade imbalance was compensated for by inter-German trade, and there was no more favorable market for East German products than West Germany (Jung Jin-sang 2006, p.5). For this reason, the GDR constantly sought to expand its trade with West Germany, demanding that West Germany relax its restrictions on exports to Communist Bloc as well as easing restrictions and West Germany's onerous and complex licensing procedures and even proposing the formation of an All-German Economic Commission. In the 1960s, as tensions intensified, West Germany began to gradually expand its economic exchange with East Germany, and when 'Ost-Politik' was in full swing during the 1970s, intra-German trade has expanded dramatically from 740 million DM in 1950 to 15.3 billion DM in 1989, an increase of nearly 20 times before reunification.<sup>70</sup>

< Table 4: East Germany's trade with West Germany in the 70s and 80s (Unit: billion VE) >

Year	West Germany → East Germany	East Germany → West Germany	Total Trade
1950	330	415	745
1970	2415	1996	4411
1975	3342	3922	7264
1980	5579	5293	10872
1985	7636	7901	15537
1989	7200	8100	15300

(Source: Statistische Bundesamt, 1990. *Statistische Jahrbuch 1990 für Bundesrepublik Deutschland*. Wiesbaden. p.323)

70 In the 1950s, there was criticism in West Germany that the measures taken by the West German government to ease economic pressure, were hindering the revitalization of Inner trade, and it was argued that Inner-German trade should not be linked to the issue of recognizing the statehood of the GDR. (Kim Youngyoon. Economic Exchange between East and West Germany before Reunification. *International Journal of Korean Unification Studies* 4(2). 1995. p.284).

However, from a West German perspective, with intra German trade sharing 1.5% of total trade volume, East Germany was the 15th largest trading partner. By contrast, for East Germany, intra-German trade was about 8% of its total trade volume. After the Soviet Union, West Germany became the GDR's next largest trading partner. However, the inter-German trade share of the total economy of East Germany remained at about 3%. This was because the economy of the GDR was subordinated to the Soviet Union and aimed for a self-sufficient economic structure that limited reliance on foreign trade (Heo Tae-Soo 1990, p.99).

Recognizing that economic problems were to blame for Ulbricht's downfall, Honecker, when he took over as party leader, promoted social and economic policy integration. He also sought to raise the standard of living of East Germans through social policies such as housing construction, state subsidies for basic goods and public transportation, guarantees for labor rights and provision of financial support for unproductive workers. However, when the cost of raw materials and energy skyrocketed, there was not enough money to pay for this rising standard of living, the GDR's economy struggled. In the 1980s, the GDR faced a liquidity crisis when the Soviet Union, under economic pressure, cut oil supplies to its allies and raised interest rates on loans. The GDR attempted to increase exports and decrease imports to combat the economic crisis, but its external debt continued to increase. In 1980, net exports to the West amounted to DM 3,762 million, but interest payments amounted to DM 2,591 million, nearly 90% of net exports. Foreign banks refused to lend to the GDR, citing the country's deteriorating external creditworthiness, and the country began to face stability problems. The GDR was forced to solve its foreign exchange shortages and shortages of raw materials for production via financial loans from West Germany (DM 1.95 billion, twice in 1983 and 1984). In return, West Germany demanded increased civilian visits, relaxation

of restrictions on West German entry into the GDR, less censorship on letters and packages, and improvements in human rights.

Chronic difficulties in the East German economy forced the GDR to adopt West Germany's policy towards East Germany. In this context, the GDR adopted a contradictory attitude, opposing its special relations status on the one hand, and offering de facto recognition of the special status on the other, due to a dilemma whereby special status recognition weakened GDR independence while non-recognition would eliminate the economic benefits from West Germany. In the end, as the East German economy deteriorated, the government had no choice but to recognize East-West exchanges and special relations to overcome economic difficulties and reconcile the dissatisfaction of East German citizens with the governmental system. Politically, however, the GDR had little choice but to adhere to its two-state system and advocate a policy of separation to suppress the eroding impact of West German capital on its socialist economic system.

### **2.3.2. North Korea**

Economic development in the early years of the North Korean regime was different from that of East Germany. Liberation after 35 years of Japanese colonial rule, prompted North Korea to lay the foundations of a socialist economy via land reform and industrial nationalization. Its industrial infrastructure, a legacy of the Japanese occupation, as well as its abundant underground resources and electricity supply, led the North Korean economy in 1947-49 to a high average annual growth rate of 49.9%. Immediately after the Korean War, however, the country was faced with an economic crisis as gross industrial product fell to 64% of its pre-war level and gross agricultural product fell to 76%. Nevertheless, North Korea recorded a high average annual growth rate (13.7%) from the mid-1950s to the early 1960s

because of its post-war policy of prioritizing heavy industry, large-scale aid from socialist partners such as the Soviet Union and China, and a broad-based mass mobilization of the populace exemplified by the ‘Chollima (Thousand-li Horse) Movement.’ In the mid-to-late 1950s alone, South Korea achieved an average annual growth rate of only 4.5%, one-third of that of North Korea.<sup>71</sup> This was largely because South Korea promoted an industrial model based on import-substitution centred on non-durable consumer goods linked to U.S. aid. In contrast, North Korea achieved initial high growth through its heavy industry priority policy, coupled with economic planning based on in-kind aid from the Communist countries (Yang, Moonsoo 2015, p.35).

North Korean economic dominance in early years directly influenced its unification policy. In 1960, Kim Il Sung proposed economic exchanges between the two Koreas while advocating for a federal system. To give the impression that it had several options, North Korea asked the South to choose among accepting a general election, implementing a federal system, or organizing a North-South Economic Commission composed of representatives from the business community. In particular, North Korea argued that it could fundamentally improve the lives of the South Korean people by linking North Korea's industry and South Korea's agriculture and jointly developing resources across the country to mobilize the economic power of the two Koreas. This was an attempt to approach the issue of unification based on economic superiority.<sup>72</sup>

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71 See “Estimating North Korea's Long-Term Economic Growth Rate: 1956-1989”, Economic Research Report, Bank of Korea (July 2020).

72 The Supreme National Committee of the Koryo Federal System is supposed to play a pivotal role in the inter-Korean relations, and its mandate can be divided into three phases: The first is to promote a political approach through economic cooperation, the second step is to enlarge inter-Korean exchanges to promote peaceful unification, and the third step is to establish a permanent body for unification, including military reduction between the two Koreas. North Korea was planning to use its economic superiority to aid the South in the phrased implementation of following sectors: agriculture, industry, fisheries, science, and culture (See Park Jae-Kyu.

However, since the 1960s, North Korea has faced various challenges to its security environment. When the Cuban Missile crisis (1962) demonstrated Soviet inferiority to the U.S., Soviet aid cuts during the Sino-Soviet conflict and the emergence of an anti-communist military regime in the South, forced North to adopt an independent economic strategy for defense and strengthen investment in its defense sector (December 1962). During 1961-1966, military expenditure accounted for 19.8 percent of the North Korean budget, and from 1966 until the early 1970s, North Korea spent an average of 30 percent of its budget on defense to promote military escalation and modernization (Park Jong-chul 1996, p.242). From the mid-1960s, this was supported by completion of a self-reliant economic system (developed throughout the 1950s), which served as the foundation for its aggressive unification policy. In the medium to long term, however, this led to an imbalance in resource allocation, and serious underdevelopment of the light industry and agriculture sector, which ultimately created stagnation in the North Korean economy.<sup>73</sup>

While South Korea actively sought to engage with global markets through its export-based industrialization policy, North Korea followed an isolationist path of self-renewal, relying on frugality and the widespread mobilization of labor to offset its lack of capital and technology, thus perpetuating an inefficient, pre-modern cycle of economic development that depended entirely on adherence to the guidelines extolled by the Supreme Leader and the mass mobilization of the populace for their implementation (Park Sun-song 2019, p.15). When aid to North Korea plummeted due to the weakening of the socialist bloc, the country found

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Theory and Practice of the North Korean Federal Proposal. *Peace and Security in East Asia*. Seoul: The Institute for Far Eastern Studies. 1974)

73 North Korea extended its seven-year economic development plan, which ends in 1967, by three more years. North Korea has expanded economic relations with capitalist countries since the early 1970s, but North Korea has recorded its trade deficit since then.

itself unable to receive aid or to develop an economic exchange system with South Korea, as East Germany had with its West German counterpart.

In this respect, major differences can be discerned between the case of East Germany and that of North Korea, particularly in East Germany's formation a COMECON (Council for Mutual Economic Assistance) with Soviet satellite states, its establishment of a socialist division of labor, and its continued economic cooperation with West Germany. By contrast, North Korea's pursuit of a recalcitrant, self-sufficient and self-reliant economic trajectory, while spending a disproportionate amount of its budget on a military build-up, arguably squandered any initial economic advantage it might have enjoyed.

Subsequent reversals in the economic fortunes of North and South have had a transformative impact on North Korea's unification policy. North Korea's switch from an aggressive attitude to the promotion inter-Korean dialogue and the Koryo federal system in the 1970s can also be rationalized economically. Once détente was established, North Korea sought to resolve its economic crisis by attracting aid from Western capitalist countries through the projection of a peace-seeking image. In the 1970s, of the total amount of loans received by North Korea (\$2.27 billion), about 57% (\$1.29 billion) came from Western OECD countries. Moreover, North Korea revised its costly policy of strengthening its defense forces and actively promoted inter-Korean dialogue for reducing defense cost. These decisions were made in the belief that U.S. troop withdrawal from Vietnam would create a favorable environment for leading inter-Korean dialogues.<sup>74</sup>

However, two global oil crises occurring in the 1970s severely damaged North Korea's foreign trade structure and deepened its foreign debt problems. In

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74 During the 1970s, when North Korea pushed for inter-Korean dialogue, the country reported that the share of defense spending in its national budget dropped from 30 percent in 1971 to 15 percent in 1973.

the 1980s, North Korea made great efforts to expand its foreign trade by implementing the Joint Venture Act (1984) and signing trade agreements with the Soviet Union (1984) and China (1986). Additionally, to alleviate security fears caused by its economic crisis, North Korea tried to sign a peace agreement with the United States and adopt a declaration of North-South Korean inviolability.<sup>75</sup> North Korean economic self-reliance could not prevent the impact of the collapse of the socialist economic system internationally. During the post-Cold War period, Kim Il Sung retreated from his positive policy to advocate a ‘One-nation, Two-state, Federal system’, while Kim Jong Il’s regime deprioritized the issue of unification to secure economic benefits by advocating national cooperation and promoting North Korean appeasement in the South. In summarizing the discussion of East Germany and North Korea, the following schematic is useful.

< Table 5: Comparison of Economic Conditions in East Germany and North Korea >

	<b>East Germany</b>	<b>North Korea</b>
<b>Economic Conditions</b>	Allowance of Economic exchanges with West Germany due to worsening economic problems	Early economic superiority over South Korea but gradually becoming economically disadvantaged.
<b>Impact on Policy-making</b>	Adherence to the Two-state theory and Separation policy due to impact on the regime	Offensive South Korean revolutionary policy based on One Korea Strategy

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75 On January 1984, North Korea proposed trilateral talks among South Korea, North Korea, and the United States, which were originally proposed by South Korea and the United States during President Carter's visit in 1979. At the time, the proposal was rejected by North Korea. In the mid-1980s, however, North Korea changed its position to improve relations with the United States, attempting to withdraw U.S. troops from South Korea, and curb South Korea's military buildup. Most of all North Korea needed to control its excessive investment in the military sector to revive its economy.

## 2.4. Analysis of Norms: Changes in Ethnic Concept and Relationship to Unification Policy

### 2.4.1. East Germany

What was interesting about the GDR after its founding in 1949 is its navigation of notions of "nationalism" and "socialism" in its conceptualization of a German policy (Kim Hyung-ryul 1994, p.275). Expressed as the idea of a single nation-state, the GDR represented an identity (Identität) secured in conjunction with the establishment of an international socialist system, exemplified by its demand for sole representation (Alleinvertretungsanspruch) of the German nation throughout the reunification process.<sup>76</sup> Failure to gain acceptance for its unification plan to create a single, neutralized nation-state in the 1950s, however, compelled the GDR to modify its continuity and identity theories (Kontinuitäts- und Identitätsthese) and adopt a national federation plan based on a two-state, one-ethnicity solution. Furthermore, when the Brandt government of West Germany, on the basis of maintaining the unity of the nation (Einheit der Nation), refused to recognize the international legal status of the GDR while emphasizing the special relationship between the two German states (Besondere Beziehung Zwischen Zwei Deutschen Staaten), the Ulbricht regime modified its concept of nationhood by re-defining the GDR as 'A Socialist German Nation-state (Ein sozialistischer deutscher Nationalstaat).'<sup>77</sup> In a speech on January 19, 1970, Ulbricht asserted:

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76 The first constitution of the GDR in 1949 defined Germany as 'one indivisible republic (Eine unteilbare Republik)' and unified nationality as 'one German nationality (Eine deutsche Staatsangehörigkeit)', making it clear that the constitution of the GDR was intended for all German people and all German territory.

77 AdG vom 16.1.1970, S.15196 C.

*“It is contradictory for West German Prime Minister to claim nation-state unity while recognizing two German states with different social orders, and it is a historical fact that East Germany is a socialist German nation-state and West Germany is a capitalist NATO-state (Ein kapitalistischer NATO-Staat). Brandt's intention in claiming nation-state unity is to avoid establishing normal and equal international legal relations with East Germany.”*<sup>78</sup>

Ulbricht did not materially transform the GDR into a fully-fledged two ethnic peoples, two states regime, given his differentiation of the concept of one ethnicity. It was not until leadership passed to Honecker that the unity and permanence of the German nation-state was explicitly denied. Honecker argued that within Germany there were not only “two German states” (Zwei deutsche Staaten), but also “two German nation-states” (Zwei deutsche Nationen) - a “socialist nation-state” (Ein sozialistischer Nationalstaat) and a “bourgeois nation-state” (Ein bürgerlicher Nationalstaat). Hence, East Germany had developed into a "socialist nation-state" that had nothing to do with West Germany as an ethnic entity.<sup>79</sup>

Honecker continued:

*“The German Democratic Republic seeks to establish equal relations with the West on the basis of international law, and there will never be an endogamous relationship between the socialist East, with its developing socialist German people, and the monopoly-capitalist*

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<sup>78</sup> Neues Deutschland vom 20.1.1970.

<sup>79</sup> On October 1974, the 25th anniversary of the founding of the GDR, all references to a single German people were removed from the East German Constitution. In Article 1 of the 1968 Constitution, the phrase "socialist state of the German people" was replaced with "socialist state of the workers and peasants". Article 8, which stated the mission for reunification, was deleted.

*West, with its former bourgeois people”.*<sup>80</sup>

Honecker’s denial of National Homogeneity (Nationale Homogenität) and his policy of National Separation (Nationale Abgrenzungspolitik) was motivated by the international political climate of the time, characterized by a relaxation of Cold War tensions and his desire to prevent any destabilization of the East German socialist system that might result from improved Western relations (Kim Hyung-ryul 1994, p.291). Whereas the GDR had previously framed its identity as a conjoined socialism which equally accommodated the nation-state, a new socialist national consciousness which elevated socialism firmly above nationalism was sought after the early 70s, in an attempt to legitimize the independent differentiated status of East Germany in relation to West Germany. In other words, the GDR regime’s initial claim to be the legitimate successor to the historic German nation-state, was an attempt to set socialism and nationhood on equal footing. After the 1970s, however, concurrent with its policy of ethnic separation, the regime promoted its new theory that GDR socialism had actually given birth to a new German nation-state, making socialism, as opposed to ethnicity, the decisive determining element of the GDR's identity.<sup>81</sup> Moreover, in placing a renewed emphasis on German (specifically Prussian) traditions, the GDR leadership employed historians to reconstruct the country's national history to suit the behest of the party. The East German regime emphasized that East Germany should become made a model state for all Germany and insisted that it inherit the historical legitimacy of the socialist German people through re-evaluation of all German history.

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80 Neues Deutschland vom 29.5.1973.

81 In the past, it was considered that there was equal connection between socialism and the nation-state, but the Honecker regime newly established it as a relationship mainly based on socialism and a nation-state as a servant.

In conclusion, despite international legal recognition via simultaneous UN admission in 1973, the East German leadership continued to push a ‘two-state and two-nation’ theory as a means of coping with its internal crisis of social integration, resulting from an explosion of socio-cultural exchanges between East and West Germany after the signing of the Basic Treaty in 1972. Consolidating its state of separation by denying cultural commonalities with West Germany and even going so far as to national separation (Nationale Abgrenzung), the GDR sought to secure its own legitimacy in the face of full-scale regime competition and the drain of its citizens towards West Germany.

#### **2.4.2. North Korea**

Heavily influenced by the Soviet Union in its early years, North Korea, like East Germany, borrowed Stalin’s definition of Ethnicity.<sup>82</sup> Forged at the beginning of his regime, Stalin emphasized commonality of language, territory, economic life and shared psychological state.<sup>83</sup> Similarly, North Korea adopted the Stalinist concept of an ethnic centred socialist nationalism. This socialist ideology of proletarian internationalism, was purported to be inherently incompatible with the bourgeois nationalism that concurrently emerged with the rise of capitalism, in that it sought ultimately to erode the divisive notion of ethnicity, which was theoretically expected to disappear with the realization of worldwide communism.

However, in the late 1950s, under pressure to clarify its position in the midst

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82 Stalin referred that a nation is not a racial or tribal, but a historically constituted community of people, based on the commonality of language, territory, economic life, and culture (See J. V. Stalin. *Marxism and the National Question. Prosveshcheniye* No. 3-5, March-May, 1913)

83 Under the slogan of ‘Socialist in Content, National in Form’, Stalin sought to harness the explosive power of nationalism as an impetus for his regime, while not losing control of it through socialist regulations. (See Kang, Hyesuk. *The Political Dynamics of North Korean Nationalism, 1945-1985: Compared to the History of Socialism. North Korean Studies* 21(2). 2017. pp.119-154.)

of the Sino-Soviet conflict, the North Korean leadership combined socialist and nationalist elements to advocate a ‘Socialist Patriotism’, thus presenting patriotic nationalism as the core tenet of a socialist education which embraced the identity of the Korean people.<sup>84</sup> Kim Il Sung declared that people would be educated in the spirit of socialist patriotism and proletarian internationalism, and that patriotic service to one's country was entirely consistent with proletarian internationalism.<sup>85</sup>

Since then, North Korean political thought with its unique ‘Juche ideology’, expounding core themes of self-reliance and self-determination, has foregrounded nationalism as the defining special paradigm of North Korean socialist system. In the 1970s, when the concept of national ethnicity was promoted as something that went beyond class relations and internationalist perspectives, ‘Juche ideation of the whole society,’ constituted and consolidated a distinct North Korean socialist ideology (Jeon, Mi-yeong 2003, p.192). Emphasizing blood and language, and linking to the issue of national unification, the concept of a commonality of economic life that underpinned Stalinist notions of ethnicity was eroded. In its pursuit of unification, North Korea’s emphasis on an ethnic primacy which prioritized ethnicity over class, was dissimilar to the kind of ethnic division based on class which heralded notions of capitalist ethnicity and socialist ethnicity in the context of East Germany (Kim, Kap-sik 2006, pp.151-153).

Instituting the ‘Su-ryong (Supreme leader)’ as the source of national lineage, North Korea distinctively promoted nationalistic concepts like ‘Kim Il Sung Nation’ (1994) and ‘Our Nation-First’ (1989), during the crisis of the post-Cold

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84 Han, Sung-hoon, "The Formation of North Korean Nationalism and the Combination of Anti-American Patriotism, Liberal-Socialist Patriotism, and National Crisis," *Studies in Korean Modern and Contemporary History* no.56, *Studies in Korean Modern and Contemporary History*, 2011, p.152

85 Kim Il-sung. *Collected Works of Kim Il Sung 12*. Pyongyang: Workers' Party of Korea Publishing House. 1981. pp. 596-598

War era.<sup>86</sup> Kim Il Sung made it clear that ethnicity was a concept that took precedence over class when in an August 1991 speech he stated that:

*“...There should be no such thing as putting class interests above national interests or substituting the struggle for the realization of class demands for the struggle for the reunification of the Fatherland...”*<sup>87</sup>

In this way, despite the defensive situation of the post-Cold War, North Korea tried to lead the issue of unification through the transformation of the national concept, which is not irrelevant to that North Korea's initiative for unification would not be maintained if it was unified by South Korea, which has a legitimacy foundation through democratization in the late 1980s.

Later, in the Kim Jong Il era, the 2000 North-South Joint declaration attempted to promote ethnicity as a complement to North Korea's prevailing position on the unification issue. The so-called ‘Uriminzokkiri (between our nations)’ doctrine and the ‘National Cooperation Theory’ based upon it, expanded North Korea's ethnicity concept to include ethnic Koreans both North and South. In 2004, ‘Our Nation First’ became a unification slogan that was extended to the entire Korean Peninsula, where it had previously been applied specifically to Korean people in the North.<sup>88</sup> North Korea's expansion of Nationalism beyond its

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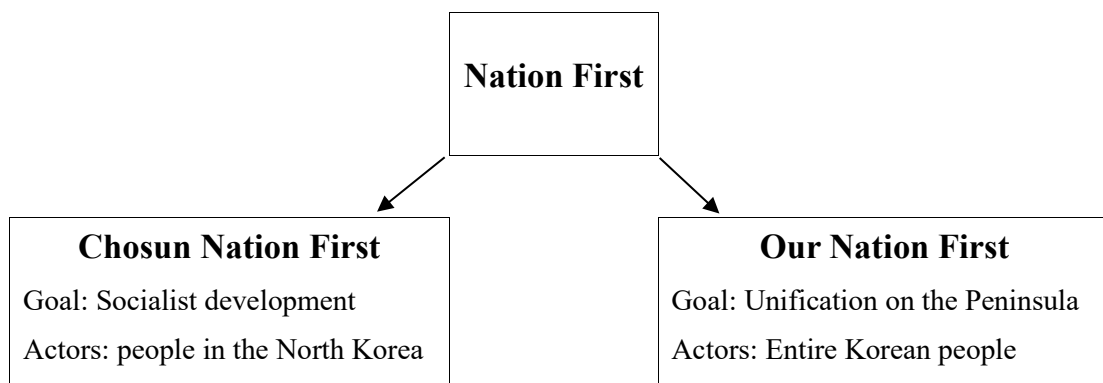
<sup>86</sup> Kim Jong Il defined Korean nationalism as a sublime sentiment of thought expressed in pride and self-confidence in the greatness of the Korean people and a high awareness, insisting that the most important thing is the unity for the Supreme Leader, the Party, and the masses, the pride and the self-confidence of living in the most superior socialist system under the guidance of the Supreme Leader and with the great Juche ideology as the guiding thought.

<sup>87</sup> Rodong Shinmoon, August 5, 1991

<sup>88</sup> Since the 1990s, North Korea has espoused ‘Chosun Nation First’, a concept that emphasized the superiority of the Nation under the leadership of the Su-ryong (Supreme Leader) and was directed exclusively at the people of North Korea, whereas ‘Our Nation First’ was a unification slogan aimed at the entire Korean people, including South.

exclusive use, was linked to tactical strategic slogans such as, ‘National Coordination’ and ‘Our Nation First’. These were developed to provoke a latent South Korean national consciousness and were attempted to weaken the U.S.-ROK alliance to secure the unification initiative while supporting and maintaining Kim Jong Il's regime.<sup>89</sup>

< Figure 2: Differentiation of North Korea's Nation-first Discourse >



(Source: Kim Bomin 2021, p.154)

To summarize, while the GDR emphasized the superiority of socialism over nationalism in an attempt to secure the survival of its socialist system and strengthen its position as a separate independent state, North Korea sought to overcome its crisis of ideological orthodoxy by adopting nationalism as a unifying force during socialism's post-Cold War collapse (Jeon, Miyeong 2018, p.226). Moreover, while the GDR separated ethnicity as a concept from its adherence to socialism as an ideological framework, deemed useful overcoming differences in the national capabilities of East and West Germany, North Korea placed ethnicity

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89 The National Cooperation Theory stemmed from Article 1 of the June 15, 2000 South-North Joint Declaration, which states that "South and North will solve the problem of national unification independently by working together as the owners of the country." The intention behind this theory was to attract the South to its side against the U.S. policy of pressure on North Korea due to its nuclear development, to disrupt the U.S.-ROK alliance, and to gain economic support from South Korea.

squarely at the top of its agenda and adapted the concept to suit an evolving political situation. Throughout the post-Cold War era, North Korea embraced a duality in its strategic utilization of ethnic and nationalist concepts according to internal and external priorities, accentuating an exclusive concept of ethnicity in relation to regime legitimization, but a transcendent concept of ethnicity in relation to national unification. In contrast to East Germany, North Korea's utilization of ethnicity was a generic by product of the process of self-development, self-reliance and strident nationalism, which characterized Kim Il Sung's monopolistic rule from the beginning of the North Korean regime.<sup>90</sup> Even after the 1990s, when the regime faced a significant crisis which threatened its survival, it was able to actively utilize the concept of ethnicity to transform its unification policy, enhance its legitimacy, unify its population, and attract practical benefits from South Korea.

Summarizing the previous discussion of East Germany and North Korea makes the following schematic possible:

< Table 6: Comparison of Socialism and Nationalism in East Germany and North Korea >

	<b>East Germany</b>	<b>North Korea</b>
Preference of the regime	Socialism > Nationalism	Nationalism > Socialism
Policy Outcomes	Reinforcing the two-state system through ethnic division	Strengthening the legitimacy of national unification policy

<sup>90</sup> Han Un-suk (2005, p.20) explained that the North Korean leadership, with its experience of nationalist protest in anti-Japanese armed struggle, was more nationalistic in its approach to the unification issue than the East German ruling leadership, who had not suffered from colonization. Unlike East Germany, North Korean anti-Japanese nationalism was elevated to the official ideology of the party and was able to develop into unique 'Juche' ideology.

## **2.5. Analysis of Perceptions: Party Leadership's Perceptions of the Unification Issue**

### **2.5.1. East Germany**

Federalism is incompatible with the Marxist view of the state as a centralized entity which exercises power in pursuit of the interests of the people. Therefore, federalism remained an uninteresting principle to both the Soviet Union and East Germany until the 1950's. By the end of 1955, however, with the number of escapees from the GDR already exceeding 250,000, the Ulbricht regime took internal unrest seriously. In February 1956, during a closed-door session of the 20th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, Khrushchev accused Stalin of dogmatic policies and political crimes. Overt criticism of Stalin by the party's most powerful figure had a tremendous impact in the Soviet Union and Eastern Bloc countries, and in East Germany, critical intellectuals such as Wolfgang Harich, Walter Janka, and Gustav Just officially called for the de-Stalinization (Entstalinisierung) of the GDR (Lee, Dong-ki 2009, p.302).

Fearing that the spread of these critical perspectives might erode political stability within the GDR, the Ulbricht regime felt the need to constrain the voices of critics, while conceding that an alternative approach to the vexed question of national reunification be put to the party and to the public. The Proposal for creating a Confederation was conceived in this context. With the SED (Socialist Unity Party of East Germany) leadership focused on maintaining solidarity between the working class and critical bourgeoisie in West Germany around the national unity debate, this federation proposal was consistently on the agenda when

party officials and members visited East Germany. In March 1959, when the West German SPD (Social Democratic Party) introduced its German plan, a unity platform very similar to the SED's unity plan, East Germany further strengthened its united front offensive.<sup>91</sup> In this part, the personal perceptions of Ulbricht, one of the main architects and promoters of the German Confederation cannot be ignored. In his vision of the future, a 'united socialist Germany' always took center stage, and German reunification achieved via cooperation with West Germany was neither contradictory nor incompatible with socialist state construction (Aufbau), consolidation (Stärkung) and transformation (Transformation). At the Fourth Plenary Session of the Central Committee of the SED in 1959, Ulbricht argued, "what is important in our republic is not merely the construction of socialism, but the development and reshaping of socialism in all spheres." (Lee, Dong-ki 2009, p.314). This heralded a new qualitative change in the development of socialism in the GDR while also responding to changes in West Germany's political landscape. Democratic reforms of the SED in East Germany were expected to yield electoral victories and increased political support for the SDP in West Germany, and a parallel development of socialism within each of the two German states internally would effectively be completed with under the unification of Germany as a socialist state. Ulbricht also believed that, under the framework of the federal system (regime competition between two systems in one country), West German economic superiority and strength could be used to build socialism in East Germany. Therefore, in March 1957, observing that establishment of the EEC(European Economic Community) and the division of the country into factions threatened to paralyze economic exchanges between two Germanys,

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91 In April 1960, with its manifesto, "Deutschlandplan des Volkes," the SED directly targeted West German workers with the prospect of national unity and the slogan of 'National Compromise' (17. April 1960: Offener Brief des ZK der SED an die Arbeiterschaft der Bundesrepublik, Dokumente zur Deutschlandpolitik, IV/4(1960), pp. 749-762).

Ulbricht placed emphasis on cooperation in the economic sphere, and especially upon agreement between East and West Germany on tariff and monetary matters.<sup>92</sup> Hypocritically, at that time, the GDR's interest in economic cooperation stemmed from its socialist utopian outlook, which envisioned an eventual victory for a socialist GDR in its systemic competition with a capitalist West Germany. For example, in mid-July 1958, the SED resolved at its Fifth Party Congress that it would soon catch up with and overtake West Germany in its consumption of core consumer goods and basic necessities.

While it cannot be denied that some of the SPD leadership and the West German working class reacted positively to Ulbricht's proposal, these proponents were far removed from the actual political orientation of West German workers and the political reality faced by the West German SPD (having lost the 1957 election).<sup>93</sup> Moreover, because of its endemic nature as an instrument of class struggle, the SED's national confederation proposal created an obstacle to serious dialogue and negotiation between the two Germanys at the time.<sup>94</sup> At an emergency congress held in Bad Godesberg on November 13, 1959, the West German SPD abandoned its Marxist platform and adopted a new platform (Godesberger Programme), which declared its support for a policy of the West integration (Westintegration) and military alliance (Bündnispolitik) which it had

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92 Walter Ulbricht, *Der Weg zum Künftigen Vaterland der Deutschen, Festansprache zum 20. Jahrestag der Gründung der SED am 21. April 1966 in der Berliner Dynamo-Sporthalle* (Berlin, 1966), p.58.

93 Markus Wolf, former head of the Foreign Intelligence Department in the GDR's Ministry of State Security, recalled that the number of SPD members, parties and union officials, connected in various ways to the GDR, was practically approaching the number needed to form a negotiating body at the time. (Markus Wolf. *Spionagechef im geheimen Krieg: Erinnerungen* (Muenchen: Ulstein), 2003, p. 208.)

94 In fact, Ulbricht's proposal for a National Confederation consistently called for political change in West Germany, including the move away from the military alliance, the gradual withdrawal of the armies of the four major powers from Germany, the elimination of fascist and imperialist forces in Germany, and emphasized solidarity with working-class peasants, intellectuals, and liberal bourgeois forces to replace the ruling powers in West Germany. (Lee, Dong-ki 2009, p.307)

formerly opposed. The formation of a grand coalition government which included the SPD in 1966/67 was a decisive factor in the SED's abandonment of the ten-year Ulbricht's National Confederation proposal. The National Unity Platform, based on Ulbricht's optimistic perception of political change in West Germany, rather than being a realistic proposal for national reunification, remained a GDR propaganda tool until it was officially abandoned in 1967.<sup>95</sup> Abandoning its pursuit of reunification, the East German regime instead focused on stabilizing and consolidating the two-state system as its bulwark for independent statehood, prioritizing the resolution of economic difficulties and construction of the Berlin Wall to curtail the escape of East German citizens to West Germany.

### **2.5.2. North Korea**

On August 15, 1960, shortly before the Koryo federal system was proposed as a unification plan, the Soviet leader Khrushchev suggested to Kim Il Sung, when they met in Moscow in June 1960 that he would refer to the East German government's proposal for National Confederation. Consequently, the federal plan proposed by North Korea in the 1960s, a de facto confederation plan, had many similarities with the East German Confederation proposal in terms of content, background, and party leadership perception at the time.<sup>96</sup> This had as much to do

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95 Lemke (2001, pp. 420-423) assessed that even if the National Confederation proposal itself was born out of an alternative idea for reunification, it was based on the East German leader's delusional perceptions, such as optimistic expectations of political change in West Germany, underestimation of the West German economic situation, and overconfidence in the socialist superiority of the GDR.

96 North Korea's proposal was to organize a supreme national council composed of representatives from both governments to implement a unified method of regulating the economic and cultural development of North and South Korea. In East Germany's proposal for national unity, a council composed of the same number of representatives (the All-German Council) was to be in charge of preparations for the introduction of a single administrative system. There are similarities between the GDR's demand for the withdrawal of allied troops and North Korea's demand for the withdrawal of U.S. troops from South Korea. The reason for North Korea's

with North Korean perceptions of the South Korean-situation at the time, just as East Germany was concerned with the situation of the working-class and progressive socialist forces in West Germany. With the collapse of the South Korean Rhee Seung-man's regime in 1960, which had pursued a hard-liner unification policy, in the wake of the April 19 Democratic Revolution in South Korea, North Korea sought to create a favorable environment for a North Korean-led reunification by uniting with progressive forces which had entered the institutional system. This included the Democratic Party in South Korea, which had come to power through the April 19 Revolution, reflecting social forces effectively driving the unification discourse.

Kim Il Sung's federal system proposal sought to strengthen the upper unification front, embodied by the Supreme National Committee, which was composed of representatives of the North and South governments. Given that economic turmoil in South Korea had not subsided after the April 19 Revolution, Kim Il Sung promoted as the rationale and underpinning objective of the federal system, the self-sustaining economic exchanges and advantages that the economies of North and South Korea could enjoy if integrated.

North Korea argued that institutional, ideological, and socio-economic differences between the two Koreas had deepened since the Korean War, and that transitional measures were needed to overcome these differences in some way before general elections could take place. Moreover, in the first half of the 1960s, North Korea felt that it should lead Korean unification, given its socio-economic

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insistence was that, while Soviet troops had been withdrawn from North Korea by 1948 and Chinese troops from the Korean War by 1958, there had been a continuous US military presence in South Korea. North Korea had been advocating for a reduction in the number of troops in the two Koreas to 100,000 or less since the armistice was signed, and since North Korea was not only economically superior to South Korea but also militarily stronger, it believed that if the U.S. troops were withdrawn from South Korea, it would be possible to unify the two Koreas under communism in solidarity with the innovative political and social organizations in South Korea. The table below compares East Germany's national unity plan with North Korea's Koryo federal system.

advancement over South Korea.<sup>97</sup> Kim Il Sung's regime rationalized that the lack of a Marxist-Leninist party in the South was the reason for the difficulties arising in the South Korean socialist revolution. In September 1961, Kim Il Sung argued at the Fourth Congress of the Workers' Party of Korea that revolutionary capacity among the workers and peasants in the South was weak and a revolutionary party was needed to manipulate them into a cohesive revolutionary vanguard. In April 1965, he set the Workers' Party's task, to quickly develop revolutionary capacity in the South and help the people of the South in their revolutionary struggle.<sup>98</sup>

However, the Democratic Party of South Korea, which came to power after the 1960 April 19 Uprising, displayed intractable conservative colors, and when a military coup in May 1961 established a strong anti-communist government in South Korea, inter-Korean relations developed in a starkly different direction from those envisaged by North Korea. Nevertheless, the Kim Il Sung regime's perception of reality was not changed and continued to develop a federal unification plan for socialist revolution in South Korea right up until the end of the Cold War.

Taken together, East German and North Korean proposals for a federal system can be characterized by their similarities in background and structure, and their differences in their subsequent trajectories. The East German leadership, full of confidence in building a unified socialist state at the founding of the country,

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97 North Korea, which was economically superior to South Korea until the 1960s, emphasized that the economic problems of South Korea could be solved through the federal system, including economic exchange between two Koreas. Kim Il Sung proposed a transitional federal system, suggesting that the Supreme National Council be formed to begin economic and cultural exchanges, if the South government could not accept the federal system. After the April Revolution in 1960, innovative forces in South Korea recognized the need for a self-reliant economic development strategy that integrated the economies of the North and South Korea. The Kim Il Sung regime, recognizing the demand for modernization in South Korea, urged South Korea to accept the federal system and conduct economic exchanges with North Korea.

98 Rodong Shinmoon, 25 April, 1965

promoted solidarity with what it regarded as parallel progressive forces in West Germany. But internal dissidence expressed through a popular uprising in 1953, and the rejection of the proposal for a Confederation by West Germany and the West because of its instrumentalization of elements of class struggle, eroded this confidence. Although North Korean proposals for a federal system were also rejected by the South Korean government because it contained elements of tactical struggle in its quest for unification, the North Korean leadership, however, tried to cement its leadership on the unification issue by evolving and developing the federal proposal in response to changing conditions.

North Korea's Koryo federal system apprehended a federal state in which two systems could coexist in one country as the final stage of unification. But its intention was the implementation of a federal system as a prelude to socialist revolution in the South which would inevitably lead to socialist unity. North Korea's federal proposal was necessarily more sophisticated and aggressive than East Germany's, because unlike West Germany, South Korea, a country newly independent and recently liberated from imperialism, had a relatively late experience of acute capitalist development. As pronounced ideological and social conflicts over the new system intensified, this was perceived as fecund ground for socialist revolutionary activity.

Comparing the discussion of East Germany and North Korea above, the following schematic is possible.

< Table 7: Comparison of the Perceptions of the party's Leadership >

	<b>East Germany</b>	<b>North Korea</b>
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<b>Perception of party Leadership</b>	predicting East Germany's victory in the regime competition with West Germany.	Liberating South Korea by strengthening the capabilities of the Korean Revolutions.
<b>Policy Outcomes</b>	Solidify a two-state solution to stabilize the system after the federal plan failed to gain support in West Germany.	Continue unified front tactics to build South Korean people's support for a federal system

## **2.6. Analysis of Power: Military Power and Initiative in Unification Issues**

### **2.6.1. East Germany**

The more independent a country is in its external relations, the stronger the role of the military to maintain internal order and counter external military threats, but the more dependent a country is in its external relations, the more it becomes a foreign affairs issue and the more it minimizes the role of the military (David E. Albright 1980, p.566). In Albright's terms, the impotence of the military in most Eastern European socialist countries was due to their over-dependence upon the Soviet Union as an authorizing force. Until the collapse of the Soviet Union, Eastern European militaries were demonstrably unable to conduct their own security policies and consequently were mere adjuncts to Soviet military capability.

The development of an East German military from the shreds of a defeated

German army, was obtrusively guided by Soviet intervention. In October 1945, shortly after the end of World War II, with the approval of the Soviet military government, the GDR created a People's Police (Volkspolizei, VP) and after November 1946, an armed border guard. The Soviet Union, concerned that the creation of an East German army would give the West an excuse to create a West German army, first created a combat ready Volkspolizei (Kasernierte Volkspolizei) which operated like a real army. However, in July 1952, when West Germany became a member of NATO, it announced the existence of an East German army, declaring that it would be developed into a modern combat force (Diedrich und Wenzke 2003, pp.558-559). Responding to West German NATO membership, the GDR joined the newly created WPO (Warsaw Pact Organization) in May 1955, and in January 1956 enacted the Defense and Military Establishment Act, which created a GDR standing army with 120,000 troops. Initially, poorly equipped with Soviet World War II-era T-34 tanks as its mainstay, in the early 1960s, the GDR began to acquire MIG-1 and T-55 tanks from the Soviet Union, and by the mid-1960s it was producing weapons systems that rivalled those of the Soviet Union. In terms of military strength, before reunification, the GDR's regular armed forces numbered 173,000.<sup>99</sup>

During an overt Sovietization of the military, the GDR, sent officers to study in the Soviet Union, who reciprocated by sending advisors to lower echelons of the armed forces. The GDR Communist Party strengthened the political education of its soldiers and kept the military under direct party control, which ensured maximum combat readiness in the prioritization of security under the party-state

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99 In terms of military power, East Germany could not keep up with West Germany. For example, West Germany had 490,000 regular troops and East Germany had 170,000, while the reserves were 850,000 and 320,000, respectively. There were 380,000 Soviet troops in East Germany and 400,000 troops from NATO countries, led by the United States, in West Germany. (Kim, Jin-ki, 1991, pp.116-117)

system. As a result, the GDR army became the most elite military force in the WTO outside of the Soviet Union. Advanced weapons technology, however, was kept in the hands of the Soviet Union for fear of leakage to the West, and typically East German military technical equipment remained a decade behind its Soviet equivalent. By the 1980s, when the East German economy was in crisis, foreign currency shortages and rising commodity prices exacerbated the military's difficulties by making it increasingly difficult to acquire the latest Soviet-made weapons systems.

Meanwhile, East Germany was exceptional in Europe's Cold War nuclear arms debate because the GDR has never developed or possessed nuclear weapons. Given that North Korea has continued to develop nuclear weapons since the time of Kim Il Sung to the present day, the presence or absence of nuclear weapons constitutes a key difference that warrants consideration in the comparison between North Korea and East Germany. The nuclear weapons debate in Europe began in 1975-1976 when the Soviet Union deployed 650 SS-20 intermediate-range ballistic missiles (IRBMs) in Eastern European countries, including East Germany. With a range of 4,500 kilometers, the SS-20s put most of Western Europe, including West Germany, at risk. This prompted West Germany to call on NATO for a strategic military response to the Soviet threat, leading to the adoption of "Double-Track Decision" to negotiate and deploy in 1979. When subsequent US-Soviet negotiations broke down, and the U.S. deployed the Pershing-2 tactical nuclear missile, a counterpart to the SS-20, in West Germany in 1984, the Soviet Union in 1987 withdrew its missiles after signing an INF (Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty) with the U.S. to eliminate intermediate-range tactical nuclear missiles. The background of the Double-Track Decision and the nuclear weapons debate will not be discussed in detail here. However, it is important to note that the East German government did not have any influence in the decision-

making process relating to deployment and withdrawal of nuclear weapons, which were central to the state's security issues. By extension, GDR subordination to the Soviet Union, transparent in the formation, operation and maintenance of its military as well as its the security policy, inevitably ensured that when the Soviet Union declined to intervene by force when the Berlin Wall fell in late 1980, East German military left lethargic.<sup>100</sup>

From the perspective of the security environment during the Cold War, the easing of tensions between East and West could be interpreted as a re-balance of power based on shifts in the status quo. Hence, the maintenance of a two-state system in a divided Germany can also be construed as the product of a postwar power balancing between the major stakeholders. Consequently, for Germany, the objective of achieving a unified nation became subordinated to the wider issue of European security. Discussed as part of the institutionalization of a European security order between NATO and the Warsaw Pact, security issues such as disarmament and military confidence-building basically centred upon the relationship between the United States and the Soviet Union. Conspicuously, East and West Germany, which were positioned at the forefront of Europe's East-West divide, had little authority to discuss military issues independently. Consequently, the East German government, subordinated to the authority of the Soviet Union, had no discretion to negotiate independent security arrangements with West Germany, even as engaging in a peaceful propaganda offensive and disarmament negotiations under the direction of the Soviet Union.<sup>101</sup> In conclusion, at that time,

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100 When the Berlin Wall fell, Soviet troops stationed in East Germany decided not to intervene in East German situation. The East German military, politically and ideologically controlled by the Soviet and SED party during the Cold War, has been passively carrying out his duties under the direction of the party. During the time of the collapse of the communist bloc, SED party lost control of military and military lost their sense of identity and loyalty to the regime. Some units of the GDR army refused to participate in military exercises led by the Soviets, and thousands of soldiers were voluntarily leaving their barracks every day (JoongAng Ilbo, March 1, 1990).

101 Relating to NATO's deployment of nuclear weapons under the Double-Track-Decision, East Germany sought to

a friendly relationship between East and West Germany could only be sustained as long as either side did not make specific demands on the other's alliance bloc. This indicated the limitations of their bilateral relationship in the face of the realities of international politics.

### **2.6.2. North Korea**

North Korea's army grew in size and defense capability during the Korean War. Moreover, after the 1960s, the emergence of a less favorable security environment prompted Kim Il Sung's regime to prioritize rearmament and strengthen its own defense capabilities. Notably, North Korea's decision to adopt the 'Four Military Line' (December 1962), as self-reliant military buildup policy, was considerably impacted by the deterioration of relations with the Soviet Union. In March 1962, at the Fourth Plenum of the Party Central Committee, Kim Il Sung directly criticized the Soviet Union for withdrawing its missiles during the Cuban Missile Crisis, believing that the Soviet Union's peaceful coexistence policy threatened to destabilize North Korean security. Moreover, the security environment on the Korean Peninsula at the time, including the signing of the U.S.-Japan Military Security Assistance Agreement (1960), the emergence of an anti-communist military government in South Korea (1961), the signing of the Korea-Japan Agreement (1965), and South Korea's deployment to Vietnam (1965), was

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link East-West relations to security issues, arguing that West Germany should not join the U.S. decision to build up its nuclear arsenal and security issues of the allies should not aggravate East-West German relations. In April 1981, Honecker stated that "East-West relations should not be linked to the international situation...If there is an increased deployment of nuclear weapons in Europe, there will be no further progress in relations between the two Germanys." However, West Germany continued to develop its internal relations while blocking this GDR's peace offensive. (*Case book of East-West German Exchange and Cooperation* (Seoul: Ministry of Unification), 1993, p.260)

unsettling to North Korea, particularly given its experience of Soviet passivity during the Korean War. This undermined confidence that the Soviet Union could be relied upon to defend North Korea if a conflict should reignite on the Korean Peninsula.<sup>102</sup> North Korea had received military support from China since the Korean War, however, in 1958 Chinese troop withdrawal left a gap in North Korea's defense capabilities. Additionally, in 1962, the Soviet Union's military aid cuts, occurring in the wake of the Sino-Soviet conflict, heightened North Korean anxieties. Correspondingly, the North Korean regime adopted the 'Four Military Line', and formulated the 'Economic-Military parallel development policy (Byungjin Policy)' around the 1966 Party Congress. The latter came at a time when North Korea was under pressure to complete its post-war reconstruction and successfully conclude its seven-year plan to build a socialist state. Inevitably, while recognizing that devoting large amounts of resources to defense would delay the economic development, North Korea had no choice but to adopt extra security measures in order to respond to rapid changes in the security situation.<sup>103</sup> Predictably, Kim Il Sung linked the defense buildup to an aggressive unification policy. In December 1964, Kim Il Sung issued the so-called 'Plan for Strengthening the Three Revolutionary Capacities,' which reemphasized his South Korean revolution and described the three revolutionary capabilities:

*“to strengthen our revolutionary base politically, economically, and militarily by building socialism in the northern half of the republic; second, to strengthen the revolutionary capacity of the South by politically awakening and uniting the people of the*

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102 Choe Jeong-woong & Lee Jun-hang. *The Experience of the Anti-Revisionist Struggle of the Workers' Party of Korea* (Pyongyang: Social Science Publishing House, 1995). pp. 104-106.

103 Kim Il-sung, *Current Situation and the Tasks of Our Party* (Party Delegates' Meeting, October 5, 1966), Rodong Shinmoon, October 6, 1966

*South; and third, to strengthen international conditions to facilitate the communist reunification of the Korean peninsula.*”<sup>104</sup>

Thus, strengthening the capabilities of the North Korean revolutionary base through the advancement of political, military, and economic power, became the foundation for the pursuit of a hegemonic unification strategy in the late 1960s, in which North Korea sought to dominate the security environment on the Korean Peninsula based upon its military might. Clashes along the military demarcation line between North and South Korea which occurred intensively in 1967 and 1968, the infiltration of the Blue House on January 21, the capture of the U.S.S. Pueblo, and the Uljin-Samchok airbase incidents were exemplary extensions of this aggressive unification strategy.<sup>105</sup>

In the 1970's, North Korea faced economic problems as it spent 30 percent of its budget and 15-20 percent of its GNP on defense and strengthening its military capabilities in irregular warfare (including guerrilla warfare and terrorism). While continuing to insist on the withdrawal of U.S. troops from South Korea, North Korea's intention was to actively create sudden unrest in South Korea through psychological warfare, terrorism, guerrilla infiltration and sabotage, and to push for a red reunification at the most favorable moment. After observing the assassination of President Park Chung Hee, 1979, in South Korea, North Korea anticipated a repeat of the chaos of the 1960s and saw it as a golden opportunity to use its accumulated military capabilities offensively.<sup>106</sup> In the early 1980s, the

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104 Kim Il Sung's general report at the 4th Congress of the Workers' Party of Korea (September 11, 1961), Rodong Shinmoon, September 12, 1961

105 There were 122 skirmishes in 1967 and 236 in 1968 between North and South Korean soldiers on the Demilitarized Zone, resulting in 228 North Korean soldiers killed and 293 South Korean /U.S. soldiers killed.

106 Unlike East Germany, which has always been inferior to West Germany in defense comparison, North Korea's conventional military power during the Cold War has overwhelmed South Korea.

“Rangoon Bombing” in Burma (1983) and the armed invasion of multiple cannons in Busan (1983) can be interpreted as North Korea's intention to take the initiative politically and show off its military superiority.

Despite of this defense buildup, the transitional crisis of the Cold War pushed the entire North Korean system to the brink. Deciding that conventional arms could no longer guarantee its security, North Korea began to seek strategic alternatives in response to the U.S. military threat. With nowhere to turn, North Korea used the cliffhanger tactic of withdrawing from the NPT (Non-Proliferation Treaty) during the first North Korean nuclear crisis (1993-1994) to obtain a passive security guarantee from the United States that it would not threaten to use nuclear weapons against North Korea. This was while trying to overcome the limitations of conventional armaments through asymmetric power development, including the development of long-range missiles and nuclear weapons. Unlike East Germany defense forces, North Korea was not entirely subordinated to the Soviet Union, and strengthened its own defense forces by steadily developing its military capability and during the post-Cold War period, seeking to develop nuclear weapons as a safety valve for regime survival.

To summarize, North Korea under Kim Il Sung used its military superiority

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< Table 8: Comparison of military power of North and South Korea in 1979 >

	North Korea	South Korea
Army	600,000	520,000
Combat Units	35	15
Tanks	2,150	860
Field artillery	3,500	2,100
Navy		
Combatants	330	23
Submarines	15	0
Air Force		
Combat aircraft	480	254
Transport aircraft	251	34

(Source: Military Balance, 1979-1980, London: IISS, 1979, pp.68-69)

as the foundation of its renewed aggressive unification policy. During the Cold War, North Korea tried to seize the initiative for reunification by creating tension on the Korean Peninsula through its overwhelming defense capability attempting to implement its South Korean revolution via a two-pronged strategy of participating in inter-Korean dialogue to maximize its effectiveness politically, and by prioritizing military power in line with strengthened international revolutionary capabilities and building the capacity for revolution in South Korea.<sup>107</sup> During the post-Cold War period, faced with the threat of extreme system collapse, North Korea continued its policy of using defense as a foundation for its security and defense capabilities. However, North Korea's defense capabilities could not forcibly reunify Korea unilaterally, while the U.S.-South Korea military alliance and U.S. troops in South Korea was maintained.

Comparing the discussion of East Germany and North Korea above, the following schematic is possible.

< Table 9: Relationship between Military power and Policy-making >

	<b>East Germany</b>	<b>North Korea</b>
<b>Military Power</b>	Subordination to the Soviet Army	Strengthening independent military capabilities
<b>Outcomes</b>	No role in the process of Unification	Recognition as the physical foundation for security and unification strategy.

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107 Lee, Sang-woo, et al. *40 Years of North Korea* (Seoul: Eulyoo Publisher, 1990). pp.34-38.

## **2.7. Analysis of Behavior: Interrelationships and Unification Policies in Divided Countries**

### **2.7.1. East Germany**

Whether it is acknowledged or not, decision-making in divided countries is interconnected. Comprehension that the most important driver of policy change in a divided country is the coordination of policy towards the other side of the division, involves an apprehension that the outcome of the implementation or application of that policy is either a form of conflict or cooperation. In this section, how changes in East-West relations affected and reflected East German reunification policy over time will be inferred.

Chronologically, the period from 1947 to 1962 can be determined as the height of the Cold War, and according to the factional logic represented by the NATO and the Warsaw Pact, East and West Germany constituted a relational epicenter which epitomized Cold War confrontation and competition. Concluding that the only way West Germany could maintain its diminished post-war sovereignty was full integration into the Western camp, the West German Adenauer government sought to establish clear boundaries against communism.<sup>108</sup> Postwar experiences of Soviet looting, the 1948 Berlin blockade, and the mobilization of

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108 Until the early 1950s, East Germany believed that it could establish a unified country through the socialization of West Germany. Through letters to West German political parties, press, propaganda literature, and solidarity with pro-GDR groups, the GDR attempted to influence domestic politics in West Germany through its sister party, the German Communist Party (KPD), and pro-socialist trade unions. However, the KPD lost ground in West Germany when the Federal Constitutional Court ruled the party unconstitutional and dissolved it in 1957. In 1959, the West German Social Democratic Party (SPD) revised its party rule in the Godesberg Platform and formed a coalition government with the CDU in 1966, the East German regime was forced to give up a socialist revolution through the establishment of a united front in West Germany (Hwang, Byung-duck 1998, pp.165-167).

Soviet tanks to break up workers' strikes rendered a majority of West Germans hostile to communism, and they chose to pursue systemic prosperity and external security via Western integration above any aspirational reunification. West German insistence on sole representation and the Halstein Doctrine, which prohibited relations with any state recognizing the GDR, alongside the development of a reunification plan promoting national elections supervised by Allied powers and the United Nations, can be understood given this historical context. Prior to UN recognition of the GDR, East-West relations were hostile and non-cooperative, as both jurisdictions competed to be the sole legitimate representation of the will of the German people. The GDR's 1956 German Confederation proposal, then can be viewed a transparent attempt to pressure West Germany into abandoning its policy of international legal non-recognition. When this failed however, the GDR retreated to a policy of division and separation.

West Germany's political shift towards an 'Eastern Policy' which emphasized peaceful coexistence with the GDR, coupled with international recognition via the UN of an East German state, exacerbated and entrenched tensions between the two Germanys from the late 1960s onwards. Division was further deepened by concerns about and resistance to unification through absorption of the economically weaker party (i.e. East Germany). Hence, despite the political rhetoric, the relationship between East and West Germany during this period can be characterized as one of 'hostile coexistence'.

In the 1980s, the West German Helmut Kohl coalition government, inheriting the CDU's traditional pro-Western policy stance, pursued a 'realist' coexistence policy that sought to maintain economic ties with the Soviet Union and Eastern Bloc countries.<sup>109</sup> In terms of relations with the GDR, it focused on ensuring that

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109 In the early days of Kohl's administration, West Germany criticized the Soviet arms expansion, relations between

existing treaties and agreements were implemented and followed a détente policy that emphasized political freedom, human rights, and economic cooperation. Predictably, Kohl's government in line with conservative party rhetoric, criticized GDR bi-nationalism and attacked its communist system on a declaratory and normative level. While some historians have highlighted contradictions between the Kohl government's pragmatic continuation of the Eastern Policy and its normative criticism of the GDR, it is nevertheless credible, given his orientation towards a 'domestic' political arena, that Kohl's emphasis on practical (*praktisch*) and pragmatic (*pragmatistisch*) cooperation and dialogue was aimed at persuading conservatives in West Germany to support his coalition government.<sup>110</sup>

Convinced that the German East-West divide would continue for as long as the division of Europe persisted, external recognition via simultaneous UN membership and the signing of the East-West Basic Treaty meant that under the two-state system, GDR survival was deemed possible if its internal blocking system against West German influence could be strengthened while a simultaneous cooperative relationship in economic terms was maintained.<sup>111</sup> In this context, Honecker appears to have been preoccupied with his role leading a functioning state within a two-state system.<sup>112</sup> In December 1982, Honecker held a summit

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West Germany and the Soviet Union were not good. In July 1983, Kohl visited Moscow, but that did not change the relationship between the two countries. As a result, Honecker also gave up visiting West Germany in 1984. Relations between the two countries improved after Gorbachev appeared, as West Germany's economic aid was needed to promote reform policies.

110 Helmut Kohl showed his political skill to soften the backlash from the conservative critic, allowing Franz Joseph Strauss, his biggest political rival as Bavarian governor, to take the initiative on the issue of economic aid to the GDR (Lee, Dong-ki, 2008, pp.364-365).

111 In April 1979, the SED created a new Press Act to control West German media's activities in the GDR, and in his 1980 speech in Gera, Honecker made four demands of the West German government: (1) West Germany should recognize the East German citizenship. (2) The Permanent Mission in Bonn and East Berlin should be upgraded to Embassy. (3) Accept the GDR's position that the border between the two countries is the centerline of the Elbe River. (4) Close the Salzgitter Central Archive Center, collecting evidence of human rights violations. (Jonathan Dean, *Direction in Inner-German Relations*. *Oribis*. Vol.29. No.3. 1985. pp.612-613)

112 Erich Honecker met Helmut Kohl several times, attending Andropov funeral in 1984, Chernenko funeral in 1985,

with West German Chancellor Schmidt to promote the continuation of bilateral dialogue during a period of deteriorating U.S.-Soviet relations. In September 1987, Honecker made a state visit to West Germany, where he was welcomed by West German President Weizsäcker and Chancellor Kohl and received a military salute from the West German armed forces (Bundeswehr) as part of a series of normal state diplomatic protocols. In the early 1980s, Honecker even refused to allow the Soviet Union to deploy new intermediate-range ballistic missiles in East Germany. Despite these occasional signs of rapprochement, however, prior to the collapse of the Eastern Bloc, the relationship between East and West Germany can be construed as one of ‘hostile cooperation’ under the prevailing two-state system.

Taken together, the policy changes in East Germany in response to West Germany's policy toward the GDR can be summarized in the table below:

< Table 10: Policy Changes in East Germany responding to West German policy >

<b>Time</b>	<b>Features</b>	<b>Highlights</b>
<i>1947-1962</i>	Cold War maintaining hostile confrontation	Formation of polarized blocs Arms race
<i>1963-1975</i>	Détente Seeking coexistence in hostile relationships	Erosion of blocs Arms control Economic cooperation
<i>1975-1990</i>	Seeking hostile cooperation	Unbalanced international relations Change through access

(Source: Shin In-a 2008, p.57)

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and the funeral of Swedish Prime Minister Palme in 1986, and they issued the statement: “There should be no war in Germany again, only peace (Von Deutschland duerfte nie wieder Krieg ausgehen, nur noch Frieden).” (Yoo, Ji-Hoon 2007. p.96)

### **2.7.2. North Korea**

A fundamental difference between East and West Germany's relationship and that of North and South Korea is the latter's experience of a fratricidal War in 1950. In the immediate aftermath of the Korean War, the South Korean government refused to agree to an UN-imposed armistice and expressed continued hostility towards North Korea even after the negotiation of a ceasefire. North Korea's 'Democratic Base' theory and the 'South Korean Revolutionary' theory legitimized an aggressive pursuit of unification with the aim of eradicating South Korea as a political entity. Having experienced the war, both parties demonstrated a pronounced pattern of psychological confrontation whereby mutual hatred of the "enemy or foe" went beyond any system rivalry or ideological difference. Thus a confrontational mechanism developed on the Korean Peninsula that was completely at variance from that experienced by East and West Germany throughout the Cold War and the subsequent *détente* period (Shin In-a 2008, p. 73).

While East and West Germany navigated their Cold War relationship within the polarities of 'hostile coexistence or cooperation', the relationship between North and South Korea remained one of 'hostile confrontation' despite changes in the international environment exemplified by US-Soviet *détente* and improved US-China relations. Although in a declaratory sense, the two Koreas adhered to peace-building under *détente* conditions ('72 July 4 Joint Statement), relations did not actually improve. Rather, it was felt that the reunification initiative, dependent upon the unilateral interests of the great powers, could be removed at a whim. Hence, each jurisdiction moved towards strengthening their own specific power base in order to confront the opposition. While *Détente* played a role in creating dialogue, it contrarily resulted in undemocratic dictatorships. Throughout the 1980s, attempts at inter-Korean dialogue went through a series of hot and cold

spells which reflected the unstable relationship between North and South, ultimately failing to reconcile the atmosphere of 'hostile confrontation' between the two parties. Correspondingly, it was not until the end of the Cold War that an opportunity arose for a transition to an East-West German style of 'hostile cooperation'. After the end of the Cold War, South Korean government was able to pursue, via its Northern Policy and the subsequent Sunshine Policy, a cooperative engagement strategy with its rival. However, just as East Germany experienced systemic insecurity and responded to West German overtures to reconciliation by consolidating its two-state policy, North Korea shifted its survivalist mode and defensive unilateral stance to adopt a two-state policy of truculent engagement with South Korea's conciliatory post-Cold War policies of engagement.

Although West German policy towards the GDR, framed by an emphasis on coexistence rather than reunification, remained consistent throughout conservative governments with differing political alignments, South Korea's North Korean policy, by contrast, fluctuated dramatically with successive conservative and progressive governments, even after the end of the Cold War. While the Northern Policy of the post-Cold War Roh Tae-woo's government and the Sunshine Policy of the progressive Kim Dae-jung government paved the way for South Korean coexistence with North Korea through the mechanism of inter-Korean dialogue and expanded socio-economic exchange programs, the succeeding conservative Kim Young-sam government, although initially embracing an active engagement approach to North Korea, turned towards a hardline stance as the crisis on the Korean Peninsula escalated, prompted by North Korea's announcement in 1993 that it would unilaterally withdraw from the NPT. The assertive stance towards North Korea adopted by Kim Young-sam's government, reflected the fact that North Korean superiority was perceived to have been eroded by the collapse of the

socialism internationally and the death of Kim Il Sung. In North Korea, these adverse conditions were considered a systemic threat which lost them the initiative for unification (Park Young-ho 1998, pp.40-47).

South Korea's conservative Lee Myung-bak government, which took office after the Kim Dae-jung and Roh Moo-hyun governments, also reverted to a hardline policy toward North Korea which failed to secure continuity in terms of inter-Korean relations, a position opposed to the previous administration's policy of cooperative engagement. Various evaluations of the conservatives' hardline approach to North Korea policy, have critically put a brake on the accepted functionalist approaches to the unification issue. Ultimately, this is because of the North Korean nuclear issue. Hence, there is a clear difference between the Kim Dae-jung and Roh Moo-hyun governments' continuance of inter-Korean relations despite North Korea's alleged nuclear weapons program, and the Lee Myung-bak government's seeking to resolve the North Korean nuclear issue before taking any move to improve inter-Korean relations. Moreover, after North Korea's transition to Kim Jong Un's regime, the Park Geun-hye government sought to find a solution to North Korea's continued nuclear development through a policy of unification by absorption which presupposed the disappearance of the North Korean regime entirely.

A simple logical comparison with West Germany might conclude that its exchange and cooperation program was able to continue and succeed because it did not have the problem of East German self-development of nuclear weapon. In the case of inter-Korean relations, North Korean nuclear development served as a precondition for inter-Korean exchange and cooperation, therefore, any continuation of reconciliation and cooperation policy aimed at North Korea depended upon an acknowledgement of this political and military reality.

Each pattern of East German relationship with West Germany and North

Korean relationship with South Korea can be summarized in the table below:

< Table 11: Patterns of Behavior between divided countries >

	<b>East Germany</b>	<b>North Korea</b>
<b>Relations b/w Divided Countries</b>	Moving from hostile confrontation to coexistence and cooperation in a hostile mood.	Maintaining hostile confrontation, seeking hostile coexistence after post-Cold War
<b>Policy Outcomes</b>	Strengthening the two-state system, concerning about the impact on the system	Competing for unification leadership through regime confrontation

### 3. Comparative Analysis: Findings

In summary, during the Cold War, East Germany responded to the inter-German issues defensively by adopting a Two-State policy based on a policy of blocking and separation. Contrastingly, North Korea's unification policy under Kim Il Sung was aggressive and advocated for a One Korea policy based on a federal system. Constellation Analysis determined that the elements of the unification policy-making process in both cases demonstrated opposite tendencies with the results summarized as follows:

First, a structural analysis compared the political relationships between the North Korea and the socialist superpowers such as Soviet Union and China in foreign policy-making during the Cold War, and related this analysis to notions of 'subordination' and 'autonomy'. East Germany, under the strong influence of the

Soviet Union, saw a deepening structural subordination to Soviet interests. This inexorably led to a systemic adoption of a two-state division, adhered to throughout the confrontational climate of the Cold War. By contrast, North Korea demonstrated a relative independence in navigating its relationships between the Soviet Union and China since the Sino-Soviet dispute, and thus was able to maintain an autonomous stance with regards to its foreign policy and an aggressive unification derive.

Second, taking into account external influences on system of divided countries by a system analysis, it can be demonstrated that East Germany was able to strengthen its position as an independent state via simultaneous UN membership, resulting in diplomatic relations with the West, including the United States, and participation in a cooperative security organization called the Council for Security and Cooperation in Europe. North Korea, on the other hand, was not exposed to the kind of cooperative external relations that secured its national legitimacy under the armistice system and could only pursue unification policy on its own aggressive terms by systemically winning political ground through confrontation with South Korea.

Third, an analysis of economic disparity between the comparison countries, as a by-product of the competition between divided regimes in these countries, revealed its impact upon unification policy. East Germany, for example, despite its advanced economic weight in terms of the Eastern Bloc, was unable to keep up with the developing economic power of West Germany, while an increasing interdependence, deepened through its exchange and cooperation program with West Germany, led to a loss of initiative with respect to the relationship with its rival. North Korea, by contrast, pursuing an aggressive unification policy from the beginning of its regime, exploited its economic advantage through its industrialization policy during the 1950s-1960s. Notably, even when it later lagged

behind in terms of economic development, North Korea attempted to take the lead on unification by continuing a series of provocations against the South, persisting in its objective of South Korean revolution and promoting its federal system of Korean unification. It was not until the post-Cold War economic collapse of the international communist bloc, due to its failure to institute economic reforms, making systemic competition irrelevant, that North Korea switched to passive strategy of engagement.

Fourth, utilization of nationalism as galvanizing concept was compared in East Germany and North Korea in terms of their respective unification processes. While East Germany distinguished nationalism from its socialist, class-based stance, to strengthen the state's legitimacy via assertions of socialist superiority, North Korea, via development of its distinctive 'Juche' ideology, modified the Stalinist concept of nationalism, seeking to lead the unification process through assertions of 'ethnic superiority' that went beyond the class perspective traditionally associated with socialism. Although it is difficult to make a simple direct comparison between the two cases, it can be observed that North Korea transformed the concept of ethnicity in the unification issue more broadly and employed it more readily than East Germany.

Fifth, perceptions of the party leaderships in East Germany and North Korea were analyzed and linked to the federalization debate. Both East Germany and North Korea sought to tactically build a united front through solidarity with progressive party, working-class, and reformist forces in West Germany and South Korea, in the belief that federal unification would be possible unilaterally, without the political and military intervention of Western powers. Each leader's perception regarding the superiority of the socialist system and its economic advantages over capitalism played a role in the decision-making policy of each country. However, distinctions and divergences were manifest when East Germany abandoned its

original idea of federal unity and the two-state system became an entrenched political and socio-economic reality. By contrast, each successive North Korean regime sought to secure an initiative in the unification issue by evolving and developing its inherited notion of federal unification.

Sixth, representative military power was compared in terms of support for unification policies. East Germany, politically and militarily subordinated to the Soviet Union, was constrained in determining its own military and security policies. By contrast, North Korea demonstrated its military superiority over South Korea during the course of the Korean War and secured military aid from the Soviet Union and China to independently expand its military and conduct its own defense multiplier via adoption of the Four Military Line in the 1960s. Although conventional weapons superiority then became the basis for an aggressive North Korean policy toward the South by the 1980s, when the socialist bloc began to crack, North Korea endeavored to append its security system by developing a nuclear weapons program.

Finally, East German and North Korean respective behavioral characteristics in response to West Germany's policy toward East and South Korea's policy toward North were analyzed and compared. Initially, East and West Germany were disposed to hostile confrontation, however, West Germany's 'Ostpolitik' and its successive engagement programs, at least permitted East Germany to maintain a two-state system based upon coexistence. In marked contrast, North and South Korea, having fought a war with each other, maintained hostile relations until the end of Cold War. Hence, North Korea, seeking to secure the legitimacy of its regime by promoting an aggressive unification policy based on its One Korea theory, was then required to compete and win in the systemic confrontation with its rival, South Korea. Taken together, the result of this analysis can be summarized in the < table 12> below:

< Table 12: Comparison between the results of analysis and unification policy >

Country	East Germany	North Korea (under Kim Il Sung era)
Aspects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>Two States Policy</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Passive Position of Unification</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>One State Policy</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Offensive Position of Unification</i></li> </ul>
(i) Structural influence from Socialist Suzerainty	<i>Strong</i>	Weak
(ii) System of State Recognition	<i>Strong</i>	Weak
(iii) Relative Economic power	Weak	<i>Strong</i>
(iv) Utilization of Nationalism	Weak	<i>Strong</i>
(v) Party leader's Perception of unification issues	Weak	<i>Strong</i>
(vi) Independent Military power	Weak	<i>Strong</i>
(vii) Relationship with the other divided country	<i>Strong</i>	Weak

According to the table above, East Germany has taken a Two-state policy based on the following factors:

- Strong influence of Socialist Suzerainty (i)
- System, supporting statehood recognition (ii)
- Cooperative Relationship with other divided Party (vii)

North Korea, on the other hand, can be analyzed as having pursued a One-state policy, influenced by the following factors:

- Relatively superior economic power (iii)
- Strong Nationalism (iv)
- Independent Military power (vi)
- Strong leader's perception of unification issues (vii)

In the next chapter, tendencies within the Kim Jong-un regime will be analyzed based on the application of the common factors previously discussed, to determine whether the regime favors a one-state or two-state system in its approach to reunification.

## **IV. Kim Jong Un's Unification Policy Path**

### **1. Analyzing the Case of Kim Jong Un's regime**

The previous chapter's chronological analysis examined how the countries of East Germany and North Korea approached the issue of unification while external and internal forces were implicated in maintaining division. Even though both these countries were divided at roughly the same time after World War II, it is clear that each took obverse positions in terms of their respective unification processes. On the one hand, East Germany adopted a 'Two-state theory (Zweistaaten-theorie)' based upon a 'Demarcation policy (Abgrenzungspolitik)', exemplified by a notion of 'Two Nations, Two States', while on the other hand, North Korea during the Cold War (Kim Il Sung's era), attempted to lead on unification by promoting its One Nation-state policy under the guise of a federal system. As was noted previously, North Korea changed its attitude after the post-Cold War period (Kim Jong Il's era), to advocate a 'low-level of federation' as interim position. During the Cold War period at least, however, North Korea pursued a confrontational unification policy against South Korea for seeking an initiative for unification issue.

Another aspect of prolonged division on the Korean Peninsula has been its contribution to the maintenance of a dynastic regime by North Korea's hereditary ruling 'Kim' family. Third generation of this regime under Kim Jong Un is likely to rule the country for the foreseeable future. However, the prominence given to hereditary and dynastic elements by the current regime, means that its stance on Korean unification can be determined based on a general overview of past policy and current circumstances. On that basis, a prediction can be offered as to whether

the Kim Jong Un regime will opt to pursue a policy of aggressive unification based upon its inherited One-State approach, or adopt a separation or coexistence policy based upon a Two-State bilateral accommodation. Of course, it is also possible that the Kim Jong Un regime will respond to dynamic external and internal circumstances to take on completely new characteristics which cannot be determined by reference to antiquated paradigms. However, on the assumption that any inherited position on unification attributed to the earlier dynastic period cannot be changed easily, it is possible to apply results of Constellation Analysis to determine Kim Jong Un regime's likely position in terms of unification on the Peninsula.

### **1.1. North Korea-China Relations and China's Influence on North Korea<sup>113</sup>**

North Korea-China relations were often conflicted but mostly cooperative during the Cold War. As China pursued reform and openness policy terms after 1978, it avoided any unnecessary friction with regards to North Korea in order to maintain the stability of the region, particularly given Korea's proximity to China's immediate environment. Whenever China established diplomatic relations with South Korea (August 1992), however, relations with North Korea deteriorated significantly and rapidly. During this period, Chinese economic assistance as well as top-level dialogues and civilian inter-exchange programs were suspended.<sup>114</sup>

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113 During the Cold War, the Soviet Union and China, as socialist superpowers, influenced North Korea, but since the fall of communism, Russia has not been as influential in North Korea's foreign policy making process as China. In order not to blur the points, this study focuses on North Korea-China relations and excludes North Korea-Russia relations.

114 After the post-Cold War, mutual beneficial trade relations among socialist countries ended. As a result, China-

Nonetheless, China continued to maintain political, economic and security ties with North Korea and to support the Kim's regime. Notably, China participated in the 'Four-Party Talks' (December 1997)<sup>115</sup> to discuss the establishment of peace regime on the Korean Peninsula and supplied free food aid during North Korea's 'arduous march period'. Hence, in the immediate post-Cold War period, China and North Korea were able to develop a universal relationship based on shared national interests, as opposed to one characterized solely by ideological solidarity and blood alliance in the past.

By the time of the inter-Korean summit in 2000, amid a peaceful atmosphere on the Korean Peninsula and in Northeast Asia generally, the character of Sino-North Korean relations had transformed. When Kim Jong Il visited China in 2000 and 2001, the Chinese President Jiang Zemin reciprocated in September 2001. However, when North Korea conducted its first nuclear test (October 2006) without giving prior notification to China, relations between two nations deteriorated again, despite Chinese efforts to mediate the 'Six-party talks' occasioned by North Korea's second nuclear crisis in 2002. Since then, China, conscious of the global importance of its relationship with the United States and its role in the promotion of peace and stability across the region, has voted in favor of tougher sanctions whenever nuclear tests were conducted by North Korea, and

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North Korea trade fell sharply to \$890 million in 1993, \$620 million in 1994, and \$550 million in 1995. High-level personnel exchanges between North Korea and China also failed to develop. Kim Jong Il could visit China in 2000, about 10 years after Kim Il Sung's visit to China in 1989. There was no high-level exchange between the two countries for eight years from Hu Jintao's visit to North Korea in 1993 to Jiang Zemin's visit in 2001 (Lee, Ki-Hyun et al. 2016, pp.21-25).

115 On April, 1996, President Kim Young-sam, South Korea and President Bill Clinton, U.S. proposed Four-Party Talks for the Establishment of Peace Regime in the Korean Peninsula. After many twists and turns from March to November 1997, the Joint Explanation Sessions for Four-Party Talks were held in New York with the participation of South Korea, North Korea, U.S. and China. The first round of Four-Party Talks was held in December 1997 in Geneva and the Talks were held six times until June 1998. However, North Korea refused to hold the follow-up talks afterwards. The Talks have been stalled since then.

has adopted an oppositional attitude towards North Korea's nuclear development program.

Correspondingly, Chinese attitudes towards North Korea have followed two trends, observable throughout the Kim Jong Il and Kim Jong Un eras. First, Chinese political engagement with North Korea has tended to increase whenever instability in North Korea was increasing. For example, despite a second North Korean nuclear test in 2009, after Kim Jong Il's having a stroke, the Chinese government agreed Premier Wen Jiabao's visit to Pyongyang in October of that year and pledged continued economic assistance to North Korea. Moreover, within a year in 2010, Kim Jong Il travelled to China three times, significantly meeting with President Hu Jintao in May of that same year. Closer ties between China and North Korea were also forged to leverage Chinese influence in the face of Kim Jong Il's declining health, instability in the succession process, and the deterioration of inter-Korean relations following the Cheonan Warship attack in 2010 (Lee, Sang-sook 2010, pp.130-135). Mirroring the growing instability of the North Korean regime at that time, Kim Jong Il's three Chinese visits reflected China's intention to manage North Korean attempts at countering the hardline policy directives being implemented by the United States and South Korea.<sup>116</sup>

Second, closer relations between North Korea and China were determined to act as a counterweight to check U.S. influence in the region. Despite the strained relations of Xi Jinping's first term, occasioned by China joining international sanctions in opposition to North Korea's nuclear tests, under Xi Jinping's second term the China-North Korea relationship was gradually restored to its previous

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116 On May 2010, Kim Jong Il-Hu Jintao summit meeting agreed on five points of cooperation, including strengthening strategic communication on the critical issues of internal affairs and the experience of the state's governance. This could be interpreted as a controversial aspect of interference in internal affairs, but it could be meant that the Chinese leadership will exert influence through more active engagement on the instability of the North Korean regime. (Lee, Dong-ryul 2011, pp. 304-305.)

level of engagement. The 2018 Xi Jinping-Kim Jong Un summit, which was held ahead of the Donald Trump-Kim Jong Un summit, effectively triggered this relational change. After President Trump's inauguration, when conflict (including a Sino-U.S. trade dispute) was prevalent, the Chinese government was concerned that a summit meeting between the U.S. and North Korea would inevitably weaken its influence in the Korean Peninsula, and put it at a distinct disadvantage in its war of strategic competition with the United States (Hwang Sangpil 2021, p.166). It was also a consideration that summit failure might result in, a North Korean resumption of nuclear provocations, with an attendant strengthening of U.S. military and security influence around the peninsula in response (Lee Hee-ok 2018, p.26). Hence, it was in China's interest to be involved with a North Korea which could not ignore its role as a political guardian and economic supporter in the face of inter-Korean and intra-Korean belligerence. Conversely, if China were to twist negotiations with the U.S. and bend relations in opposition to the will of North Korea, as it had done during the early post-Cold War era, North Korean approach to the U.S. could not be guaranteed to unfold as might be intended (Kim Han-kwon 2019, p.13). As a result of mutual strategic interest, the Xi Jinping-Kim Jong Un summit was held in March 2018, and this was followed by five subsequent summits over the next 15 months until June 2019, producing documents containing symbolic references characterizing the Cold War-era China-North Korea relationship. Phrases such as: 'blood ties', 'lips and teeth's relationship', and 'community of one destiny', began to reappear and the sense of socialist solidarity between North Korea and China was further expressed in a confirming statement "[that] upholding a socialist state led by the Communist Party is an essential attribute of the China-North Korea relationship".<sup>117</sup>

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117 There are various debates over whether the blood alliance between North Korea and China, formed during the

Subsequently, Kim Jong Un praised China's important role in the Korean Peninsula, and re-stated the 'strategic choice' of North Korea to develop its inherited China-North Korea relationship, while vowing to continue to strengthen communication and cooperation ties with China. Ironically, North Korean antagonism towards South Korea and the U.S. after the failure of the second U.S.-North Korea summit in Hanoi in 2019, enabled North Korean-Chinese estrangement to be resolved, restoring communication and friendly cooperation. Even, while Kim Jong Un's regime continued in earnest to build up a nuclear arsenal, and the China-U.S.' conflict intensified, North Korean-Chinese relations continued to develop based upon a strategically shared socialist solidarity.

Undoubtedly, the primary incentive for China's level of interest, influence and cooperation with regards to North Korea, remains the intervening presence of the United States in the region. The geopolitical landscape of the Korean Peninsula, created a buffer zone between liberal and socialist camps, accentuated during the Kim Il Sung and Kim Jong Il eras, and has conspicuously led China to maximize its role and seek an advantage in the competition for influence on the Korean Peninsula through management of its strategic asset. Concerned about instability on the Korean Peninsula and in Northeast Asia generally, Chinese involvement in Korea can be apprehended as a mode of extended protection which insures its own national interests are safeguarded. A secondary but equally compelling incentive is North Korea's nuclear weapon development program, which China fears could become the rationale for an increased U.S. military presence in the region, risks of

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Korean War, has been restored. Since the past, relations between North Korea and China have repeatedly cooperated or conflicted depending on the situation. At the 2018 North Korea-China summit, blood alliance was emphasized because China wanted to control North Korea's access to the United States and keep North Korea tied to China's influence. Xi influenced Kim Jong Un through five North Korea-China summits, convincing him that the solidarity between North Korea and China was in line with strategic interests of the two countries. (Lee Sung-hyun 2020, pp. 10-18)

unilateral retaliation could potentially damage China's reputation as a responsible global power. Once it is understood that nuclear weapons are directly related to regime survival, it is clear that North Korean motivation to resist Chinese pressure to give up nuclear weapons is much stronger than China's motivation to exert that pressure (Lee, Sang-sook 2010, p.122). China then is faced with the dilemma of supporting sanctions to constrain North Korea's nuclear development, while at the same time opposing pressure and sanctions that destabilize its strategic asset in the region. This structural duality, which existed previously during the Cold War, has in fact been extant since Chinese participation in the Korean War. Furthermore, just as Kim Il Sung's regime used this duality to obtain and maintain its strategic advantage, the Kim Jong Un regime appears to be using the same strategy to maintain and maximize autonomy in diplomatic and public relations.<sup>118</sup>

## **1.2. State Recognition and Unification Policy in Kim Jong Un regime**

Previously, systemic factors which influenced East German and North Korean unification policy during the Cold War, such as: 'State Recognition' via simultaneous membership in the United Nations, normalization of diplomatic relations with the United States, and the existence of cooperative security systems such as the CSCE (Council for Security and Cooperation in Europe) were compared using Constellation Analysis. As a supplement, this chapter focuses on

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118 Chronologically, prior to the North Korea-U.S. negotiations in 2018, North Korea-China relationship was limited due to China's cooperation with U.S. sanctions against North Korea; in 2018-2019, when the North Korea-U.S. negotiations were ongoing, North Korea developed a selective and strategic approach to China; after August 2019, when the North Korea-U.S. relationship entered a long-term conflict, North Korea emphasized its identity, values and solidarity as a socialist country, strengthening strategic approach to China. (Lee, Changhee & Ahn, Kyungmo 2022, pp. 25-64.)

how these factors could be interpreted in the context of the Kim Jong-un regime.

What can be initially determined is that North Korea's inherited unification policy was made redundant in 1991 by simultaneous UN membership and international recognition of the North and South as separate jurisdictions. Furthermore, given that the inter-Korean Basic Agreement has been diminished by repeated inter-Korean confrontations, attempts to maintain a North/South 'special interim relationship', as opposed to a state-to-state relationship, can no longer be considered realistic. Accordingly, this indicates that the Kim Jong Un regime may favor inter-Korean relations in terms of a state-to-state relationship, as opposed to a special relationship aimed at future unification, if it considers the context rationally. Some scholars have argue, therefore, that North Korea's abandonment of its inherited policy and its embrace of a Two-state policy has become more prominent during the Kim Jong Un regime.<sup>119</sup> For example, Kim Jong Un's 2018 change from Pyongyang Time (UTC + 08:30) – adopted in 2015 on the 70th Anniversary of the liberation of Korea and the re-instigation of Korea Standard Time (UTC+ 09:00) – a legacy of Japanese Imperialism – in an act of re-alignment with South Korea, points towards a policy of eliminating differences between North and South. Additionally, the use of term 'Republic of Korea' to designate South Korea in inter-Korean dialogue on August 25, 2016, coupled with the wane of the rhetorical phrase 'national collaboration' and the promotion of terms relating to a state centric discourse such as: 'strong country', 'patriotism', and 'our country first', indicates that Kim Jong Un considers inter-Korean relations as a state-to-

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119 Cho, Seong-ryoul analyzed that during Kim Il Sung's era, the collapse of the Eastern Bloc led to a decline in its capacity for international revolution, and under Kim Jong Il's era, the capacity for South Korean revolution has also declined, so the Kim Jong Un regime can no longer pursue its 'one-state' policy. Cho noted that North Korea, passively, was forced to turn to 'two-state' policy in order to maintain its regime, but on the contrary, Kim, Keun-sik analyzed that confidence in economic development, success in seizing power and national security from having a nuclear power, was likely behind the shift to 'two-state' policy. (Radio Free Asia, 24 December, 2015)

state relationship.<sup>120</sup>

The deterioration in U.S.-North Korea relations, which was supposed to improve when the two Koreas simultaneously joined the UN in 1990, ushering in a new era of cross-recognition, has detrimentally impacted the North Korean nuclear issue, and its resolution has become a serious challenge for the U.S. Initially, Kim Jong Un's attempts to negotiate de-nuclearization directly with the Trump administration in 2018 and 2019, aimed at improving relations with the United States. Arguing that their sanctions violating nuclear program was a response to the U.S. policy of hostility and aggression towards North Korea, the regime publicly suggested that if the U.S. abandoned its hostile policy, it would reciprocate by discontinuing nuclear weapons development. However, the failure of the Hanoi summit in 2019 and mounting U.S. pressure exerted on North Korea in January 2021, coincident with the Biden administration taking office hardened Kim Jong Un's attitude. Subsequent statements that nuclear weapons were non-negotiable and could "never be given up", became effectively a refusal to negotiate with the U.S. on the matter. Furthermore, in September 2022, Kim Jong Un instituted a legal framework of support for North Korea's nuclear force policy, stating:

*“[that] by legalizing the nuclear force policy, our country's status as a nuclear power has become irreversible... for our nuclear policy to change, the world must change and the political and military environment on the Korean Peninsula must change...”*<sup>121</sup>

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120 “Kim Jong Un is becoming more like Honecker who supported two Germanys” (Chosun Newspaper, October 2015 issue)

121 Address by Kim Jong Un, a Speech to the 7th Session of the 14th Assembly of the Supreme People's Assembly (Sept. 9, 2022, North Korean Central News Agency: KCNA)

For Kim Jong Un, the transition from armistice to a peaceful system of relations on the Korean Peninsula is transformative in terms of the political and military environment. This attitude can be apprehended as an extension of North Korean attempts to normalize relations with the U.S. during the Cold War, exemplified by its consistent insistence on the signing of a peace agreement directly with the U.S. However, normalization of U.S.-North Korea relations is itself tied fundamentally to the resolution of military confrontation over the division of the Korean Peninsula, which includes the establishing diplomatic relationship with hostile country, the dismantling of the United Nations Command (UNC), and the withdrawal of U.S. troops from South Korea, which also directly linked to the hegemonic changes across Northeast Asian geopolitics, including U.S.-China relations in the region. Given the complexity of addressing these issues, an intransigent U.S. foreign policy which refuses to acknowledge North Korea's status as a nuclear power, means that improvements in U.S.-North Korean relations are fundamentally inviable. From a North Korean perspective, de-nuclearization promises and peace agreements which fail to recognize North Korea's sovereign status and provide guarantees for the security of the regime are to be discarded when unnecessary. Given the history of mutual distrust between the both countries, establishing any basis for cordial relations between the U.S. and North Korea remains a difficult task. Whereas the former East Germany received state recognition as a consequence of instituting diplomatic relations with the U.S., North Korea/U.S.' diplomatic relations have remained nonviable in the absence of a satisfactory bilateral solution to the North Korean nuclear issue.

Finally, an examination of multilateral security cooperation system as an external mechanism that influences decision-making in divided countries can be undertaken. In reflecting that the Helsinki Process contributed to regional Confidence-Building Measures (CBMs) in the German context during the *détente*

period, Northeast Asia can be perceived as moving in a contradictory direction. While China and Japan continue to build their military capabilities to strengthen their status in terms of regional leadership, North Korea's continued nuclear development in the face of security cooperation between South Korea and Japan, and military conflicts between the United States and China over Taiwan, are fueling arms races among Northeast Asian countries. This Northeast Asian Arms race inevitably inhibits the formation of any multilateral security cooperation frame. Although North Korea participates several multilateral security dialogues such as the ARF (ASEAN Regional Forum), these multilateral security dialogue organizations, however, often become arenas for mutual North/South confrontation and condemnation. Hence, it is expected to take a considerable amount of time, effort and environmental change to develop an East Asian counterpart to the CSCE in Europe.<sup>122</sup>

In summary, North Korea did not gain the same level of state recognition from external system mechanisms as East Germany did, despite being similarly admitted to the United Nations via simultaneous accession. Just as East and West Germany were effectively two Germanys after joining the UN in the 1970s, it is rational to assume that North and South Korea might also consolidate relations on a state-to-state basis. However, failure by the U.S. to normalize relations because of its opposition to North Korea's nuclear program, coupled with a lack of capacity

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122 As tensions between North and South Korea escalated, ARF became a forum for inter-Korean confrontation and a diplomatic battleground where each side sought to condemn the other. Whenever North Korea raised the level of nuclear and missile provocations in recent years, threatening international and regional peace, the South Korean government has focused its diplomatic efforts on convincing ASEAN countries to condemn North Korea in a strong tone. In response, North Korea pointed out in a statement on the 22nd anniversary (July 2022) of joining ARF that ASEAN countries should maintain fairness and objectivity in the situation created in the Korean Peninsula. North Korea's position is similar to the purpose of East Germany's participation in the CSCE in the 1970s. Although the CSCE in Europe and the ARF in Asia have different backgrounds, both East Germany and North Korea wanted to participate in the multilateral security organization as independent sovereign states, and tried to use the meetings to reverse unfavorable international public opinion against them.

and authority on behalf of the Northeast Asian Cooperation and Security Regime, has compelled North Korea to act independently as a state. Given that the Kim Jong Un regime has been unwilling and unable to give up its nuclear weapons program, North Korea has become isolated and has been denigrated as an illegal state via multiple UN Security Council resolutions. The problem with Kim Jong Un regime's nuclear program is that its very development undermines diplomatic relations with the United States and inhibits the formation of the type of multilateral security cooperation system in Northeast Asia which could provide the state security guarantees it expects. Nevertheless, the formation of state-to-state relations between the two Koreas through simultaneous accession to the United Nations is an undeniable systemic change. Additionally, given the crisis in inter-Korean relations, the 'special interim relationship' created as part of efforts to tie inter-Korean relations to national internal relations rather than state-to-state relations, seems not to be valid any longer.

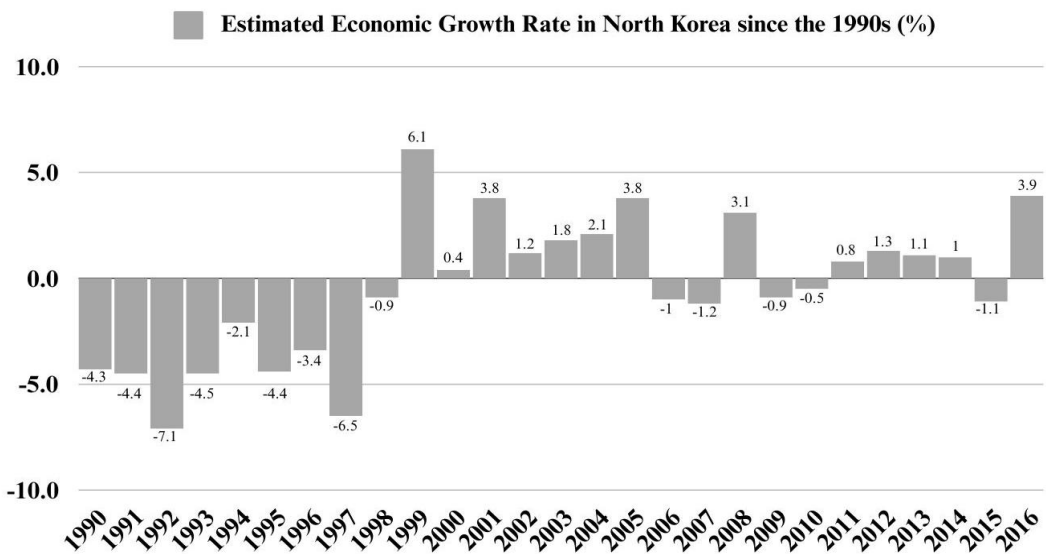
### **1.3. North Korea's Economy Since the Inauguration of Kim Jong Un**

In the post-Cold War era, Kim Jong Il's regime focused on overcoming economic challenges via inter-Korean exchange and cooperation, using the 2000 inter-Korean summit and the June 15 Joint Declaration to effectively postpone the push towards federal unification. During the Kim Jong Il era, marketisation, socio-economic openness, and the expansion of foreign trade were important factors contributing to North Korea's economic recovery. Moreover, after Kim Jong Un's accession, the promotion of North Korean-style economic management techniques and economic development zone policies have remained a priority. In Kim Jong Un's early period of power, the regime actively implemented diverse investment

projects to rebuild state-owned industries while improving economic management methods to increase efficiencies within the state economy.<sup>123</sup>

< Figure 3> below, presents North Korean economic growth estimates since the 1990s, calculated by the Bank of Korea. Significantly, the first five years of Kim Jong Un’s presidency (2012-2016) show modest growth, with the notable exception of 2015, when the country was hit by a severe drought. In 2016, taking into account favorable weather conditions and a base effect from the previous year's negative growth, estimates show North Korea to have recorded its highest growth rate in 17 years (3.9%).

< Figure 3: Estimated Economic Growth Rate in North Korea since the 1990s >

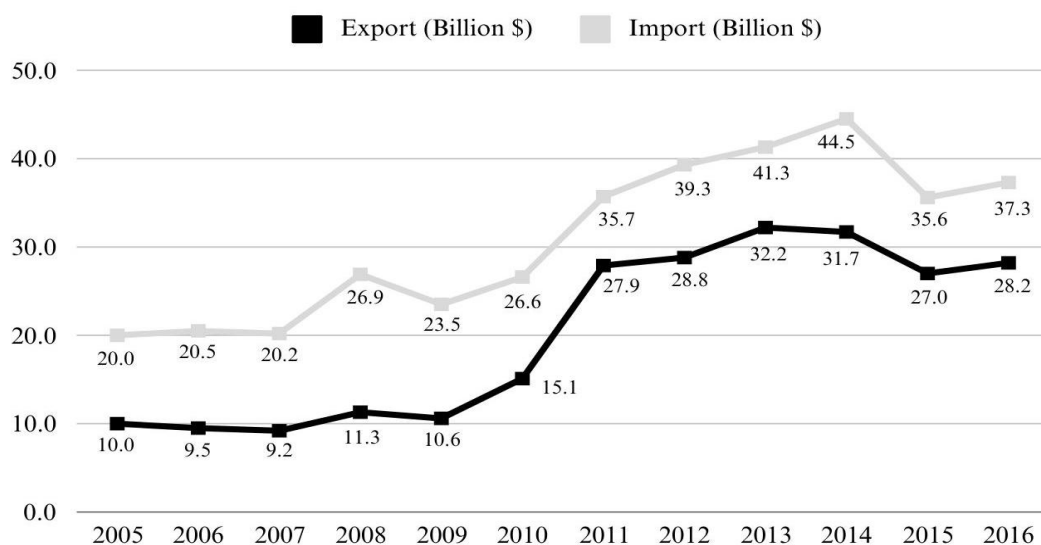


(Source: Hong, Jea-hwan (2018), p.24)

123 In early 2012, at the beginning of the Kim Jong Un regime, Kim Jong Un directed the formation of a cabinet-level working group to study economic reform, and implemented reform in business and agriculture in late 2012. In 2013, the ‘Law on Economic Development Zone’ was enacted, and in 2014, the ‘Socialist Corporate Responsibility Management System’ was implemented, expanding the power of individual corporate from planning to production and the disposition of their products and profits.

The average annual growth rate for the first five years of Kim Jong-un's presidency is estimated to be around 1-2%. Although this rate is not high when considered by itself, compared with the difficulties faced by the North Korean economy in the late 1990s and early 2000s, this is relatively good (Hong Jea-hwan 2018, pp.23-24). As an economic index, the price of rice, which was stagnant or declining overall, rose steeply in 2012, then fluctuated according to seasonal factors before becoming stable in 2013. Notably, another key index, the exchange rate also remained stable since 2013.

< Figure 4: North Korea's Foreign Trade Trends by Year >



(Source: Hong Jea-hwan 2018, p.33)

< Figure 4 > above, shows North Korean foreign trade has been gradually increasing since 2007. In particular, in 2011, due to an increase in the demand for exported coal, total exports increased by 85% year-on-year, while imports increased by 35%, resulting in a 52.3% year-on-year increase in foreign trade

volume to \$6.36 billion. Even as sanctions against North Korea were being tightened, this trend of increasing exports and imports continued, with total trade volumes reaching a record high in 2014, and worth \$6.65 billion in 2016. Therefore, it can be surmised that foreign trade was actively supported and promoted during Kim Jong Un's early years in power.

Consequently, the impact of Kim Jong Un's 2013 mid to long-term national development strategy, the 'Economy-Nuclear Parallel Line', presented when the North Korean economy was still recovering, deserves analysis.<sup>124</sup> It can be initially be observed that Kim Jong Un's 'Parallel Line' is a continuation of Kim Il Sung's 'Economy-Defense Parallel Policy' in the 1960s and a furtherance of Kim Jong Il's 'Military- First Economic Policy' in the 1990s, which prioritized economic construction and the building of defense capability as twin pillars of national development. However, while former policies accentuated defense modernization at the expense of the economy, Kim Jong Un's 'Parallel Line' has rationalized reductions in defense spending by promoting nuclear weapons development, thereby inflating North Korean deterrence capabilities by escalating defense power in a way that is non-detrimental to economic growth. Correspondingly, after adopting the 'Economy-Nuclear Parallel Line' in 2013, North Korea conducted four to six nuclear tests to advance its nuclear arsenal rapidly over four to five years, launching an ICBM (Inter-Continental Ballistic

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124 At the meeting of the Central Committee of the Workers' Party of Korea on March 31, 2013, Kim Jong Un addressed that "Our Party's line of advancing the construction of the economy and the nuclear arsenal in parallel...is a strategic line to build a strong nation by developing the nuclear arsenal, building the country's military power and putting more strength into economic construction. In his report, the background of 'Economy-Nuclear Parallel Line' was explained as follows: the inheritance of the path of advancement thoroughly articulated by Kim Il Sung and Kim Jong Il; the realization of the a socialist strong state by strengthening war deterrence and spurring economic construction; the realistic way to achieve maximum effectiveness in economic development and strengthening national defense in accordance with our situation; the method to improve economic construction and people's livelihoods while strengthening defense at a low cost. (KCNA, March 31, 2013)

Missile), the Hwasung-15, on November 29, 2017. This marked a de facto endpoint to the objectives of the 'Parallel Line', confirmed by a declaration at the Third Plenum of the 7th Central Committee of the Workers' Party of Korea on April 2, 2018. In April 2018, the Party's Central Committee sought to refocus national priorities upon economic construction, having demonstrably completed the development of its nuclear weapons program and having obtained the security blanket of a nuclear deterrence capability.

However, the situation did not develop as planned. Severe economic sanctions, imposed on North Korea in response to its nuclear test program and its launching of ballistic missiles, effectively constrained economic development. Consequently, North Korea faced a dilemma, developed to facilitate 'so-called' regime security, might in turn de-stabilize the regime it was engendered to protect by inviting sanctions. Existing research studies offer diverse views on the impact of full-scale nuclear development and resultant sanctions on the North Korean economy during the sixth and tenth years of Kim Jong Un's rule (2016-2020). One view is that economic sanctions against North Korea have been effective. This is based on an appraisal that North Korea's foreign trade, including exports, has been hurt by the gradual tightening of UN Security Council sanctions in response to North Korea's continued nuclear and missile development (Kim, Byung-Yeon 2017, p.2). A contrasting view is that sanctions have had a limited effect. This is based on the premise that North Korea's self-sufficient and durable economy was not significantly impacted beyond the specific sectors that were targeted and embargoed (Jeong, Hyung-Gon 2020, pp.65-67). Hence, the negative impact of sanctions, concentrated in the export-oriented mining and heavy chemicals sectors, allowed other sectors, such as food production and energy supply, to be able to hold their own. While there has been a general contraction in industrial production and market economy activities due to the tightened sanctions, it is deemed unlikely

that North Korea will experience the economic crisis of the 1990s again. (Choi, Ji-young 2020, pp.1-2)

Taken altogether, however, it is clear that the sanctions exacted against North Korea in response to its nuclear program are having a negative impact on its economy.<sup>125</sup> Therefore, the economic conditions under Kim Jong Un do not currently represent a foundation on which North Korea can aggressively pursue its inter-Korean and unification policies. Particularly, as strategies to improve inter-Korean and inter-North Korean relations and revive the economy via the 2018 inter-Korean summit and the North Korea-U.S. summit came to nothing, North Korea is returning to its past policy of self-reliance and self-sufficient economic structure. At the 8th Congress of the Workers' Party of Korea (WPK) in 2021, North Korea announced that it would abandon its attempt to lift sanctions through negotiations with the United States and return to its traditional economic policy based on self-sufficiency in order to overcome its economic difficulties.<sup>126</sup> Such a return to outdated economic policies is expected to strengthen the North Korean authorities' centralized economic control structure, further deepening North Korea's economic difficulties. Even so, the North Korean regime will not give up its nuclear weapons for economic development and move toward reform and opening up by easing sanctions. This is the dilemma that North Korea is facing. However, the international community will continue to impose sanctions on North Korea unless the Kim Jong-un regime gives up its nuclear program, consequently, the military confrontation on the Korean peninsula is bound to continue.

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125 Bank of Korea's Economic Research Institute analyzed that North Korea's real gross domestic product (GDP) fell by 11.4 percent from 2017 to 2021, and foreign trade plummeted to \$710 million in 2021, the lowest level since 1955. See "North Korea's Economy and Prospects for the Last Five Years"(Seoul: Bank of Korea), Sept. 5, 2022.

126 KCNA, January 13, 2021

#### 1.4. Retreat of Nationalism and Spread of Statism Discourse

In its early years, Kim Jong Un's regime appeared to inherit its predecessors' nationalist ideology.<sup>127</sup> However, once the party-centred regime consolidated its three generations dynastic legacy and completed construction of its nuclear arsenal, Kim Jong Un began to retreat from a 'Nation-first' discourse to instead promote a 'State-first' discourse. Correspondingly, in 2017, North Korea advocated 'Our State-first' instead of 'Our Nation-first,' and in January 2021, the 8th Party Congress declared the 'New Era of Pride and Prosperity' to be the 'Era of Our State-first.'<sup>128</sup>

This nuanced retreat under Kim Jong Un, from a discourse promoting the concept of 'Nation' to one which strengthens the concept of 'State' can be comprehended on two levels. First, the ideological discourse of national superiority associated with the Kim Jong Il era was less than attractive to the Kim Jong Un era. While Kim Jong Il thoroughly utilized this discourse as its preferred axis of political ethics, the significant deterioration in inter-Korean relations which occurred during the second half of the Kim Jong Il regime, effectively undermined the notions of national or ethnic superiority. Although the Kim Jong Un regime initially utilized a nation/ethnic-centred discourse to reinforce continuity in terms

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127 To secure the legitimacy of the succession system after Kim Jong Il's death, Kim Jong Un expanded the national ideology from "Kim Il Sungism" to "Kim Il Sung-Kim Jong Ilism", and in July 2012, he delivered a speech titled "Implementing 'Kim Jong Il Patriotism' to Build a Strong Nation". In July 2012, he called for the cultivation of "Kim Jong Il patriotism," stating, "We are going to open a new transitional phase in the construction of a socialist strong nation by stoking the flames of patriotism with the embers of "Kim Jong Il patriotism". Since then, patriotism has been emphasized, including "Kim Jong Il patriotism", and on October, 2012, at the foundation day of the Workers' Party, "patriotism" as an important link to improving party work was emphasized (Rodong Shinmoon, October 2, 2012). This emphasis of "patriotism" as a ruling ideology seems to be copy of the "socialist patriotism" raised by Kim Il Sung during the Cold War.

128 In 2019, when North Korea put 'Our State-first' policy forward, its constitution was revised in April of that year, reflecting a trend toward a more state-centered discourse. The revised constitution replaced the phrase 'fatherland' in the preamble with the more explicit phrase 'State', inserted the modifier "representing the state" in the regulation on the chairman' role (Chapter 6, Article 100). A clause that Kim Il Sung-Kim Jong Ilism is the only guiding principles for nation-building and activities, was also added (Chapter 1, Article 3).

of the succession system after Kim Jong Il's death, faced with the twin challenges of securing the state against external threat and rebuilding a robust dynastic system internally, the regime had little choice but to adopt a discourse based upon state and sovereignty (Jeon, Mi-yeong 2013, p.21).

Second, under Kim Jong Un, adoption of a state-first discourse was further defined by its relevance to the goals of socialist state-building, particularly in relation to the economic sphere. Introduced in Kim Jong Un's 2019 New Year's address, 'Our State-first', attempted to foster pride in North Korea as a nation state and to promote action for national development by, specifically:

*“...making a decisive turn in economic construction and improving people's lives, unleashing a great heyday of socialist cultural construction, and ushering in an era of all-round national revival...”*<sup>129</sup>

In other words, delivering improvements in people's daily lives became a central theme for the Kim Jong-un regime, while 'Our State-first principle' was promoted as the spiritual banner through which this objective could be realized.<sup>130</sup> Significantly, in 2016, North Korea's 7th Party Congress called for the construction of a 'Socialist Five-Power State', however, its core tenet, the 'building of an economic power and a civilized country', remained unrealized due to structural limitations which inhibited implementation and advancement. That said, the Kim Jong Un regime, believing that it had resolved the systemic security issue to a certain extent with the completion of nuclear weapons in 2017 and responding to the improvement of inter-Korean and North Korea-U.S. relations in 2018, prioritized the 'All-out Concentration Policy for Economic Building' and 'Our State-first' policies, as a new national strategy, in a clear attempt to shift the North

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129 Rodong Newspaper, January 21, 2019.

130 Kim Jong Un's New Year's address in 2019 (Rodong Newspaper, January 27, 2019.)

Korean paradigm to one which could engage in full-scale economic construction (Chung, Youngchul 2020, pp.29-30).

Finally, ‘Our State-first’ touts the country's unconventional international status and this is related to Kim Jong Un’s efforts to normalize relations with South Korea and the United States in 2018. Indeed, in his 2019 New Year's address, Kim Jong Un cited North Korean achievements at the inter-Korean and inter-North American summits, boasting that “the international authority of the republic is increasing due to our initiative.” The terms “changed status” and “international influence” became associated with Kim Jong Un’s diplomatic achievements and assertions of regime relevance and projected confidence. This was exemplified in Kim Jong Un’s statement that “our country is standing at the center of the world political system and increasing its international influence.”<sup>131</sup> In this way, ‘Our State-first’ is demonstrably an ideology that the Kim Jong Un regime utilized to inspire a sense of national pride and self-confidence among the North Korean people. North Korean achievements, including the building a socialist economic system while perfecting the country's nuclear arsenal, despite all the difficulties and obstacles, were effectively eulogized to strengthen and promote people’s loyalty to the current regime (Kim, Bomin 2021, pp.167-168).

With regards to the unification issue, the strengthening of the state discourse under Kim Jong Un can be considered an attempt to reinforce the so-called ‘Two-state’ theory which promoted peaceful coexistence between two distinct Korean entities, as opposed to the quest for a single unified nation. Significantly, ‘Our State-first’ as a ruling ideology, operates at a much higher-level than issue of unification. In other words, adoption of new strategies like ‘Kim Jong Il Patriotism’, ‘Economy-Nuclear Parallel Development Line’ and ‘Our State-first Principle’ can be apprehended as a product or symptom of Kim Jong Un’s restored dynastic authority. Statism, a concept with clearer and more definable boundaries than nationalism, becomes attractive to a regime exploring political initiatives in

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131 Rodong Shinmoon, January 21, 2019

the face of declining ideological relevance (Kang, Hye-suk 2019, pp.315-317). Hence, the regime opted to focus on system cohesion and improvements in people's lives via state-centred ideology, as opposed to hastily borrowing the 'Nation-first' concept to lead on the reunification initiative when the socio-economic gap between North and South Korea was blatantly transparent.

In conclusion, the Kim Jong Un regime ambivalently used an admixture of state-first and nation-first discourses according to the changing and evolving situation by way of tilting the normative aspects of its unification policy.<sup>132</sup> Norms in the Kim Jong Un era can, therefore, be seen as forming a duality, in that nationalism as an ideology of national unification and statism as a governing ideology were interwoven to strengthen the hand of the North Korean regime. Thus, there remains an ideological tendency to present ultra-systemic nationalism when inter-Korean relations or unification should be emphasized and a state-centred discourse emerges when internal unity is required.

### **1.5. Kim Jong Un's Changing Perception of Unification Issue**

By the end of 2010, Kim Jong Un had still not publicly articulated a unification policy that could be considered distinct from that of his predecessors. In his 2013 New Year's address, however, Kim Jong Un called for the inter-Korean partnership to work together and solve the unification problem independently (i.e. without foreign intervention). Furthermore, in 2016, at the 7th Party Congress, he presented the 'Juche' based unification line: 'Three charters: Kim Il-sung's 'Three

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<sup>132</sup> Kim Jong Un, however, did not ignore the concept of nationality or ethnicity. In the 2017 New Year's address, he emphasized that the independent unification strategy proposed at the 7th Party Congress (2016) reflected the aspirations and demands of national unification, and emphasized the need to actively promote the national unification movement. Moreover, in 2018, when the inter-Korean dialogue took place, Kim Jong-un also proposed to actively create an atmosphere for national reconciliation and unification (Kim Jong Un's New Year's Address, Rodong Shinmoon, January 1, 2018)

Principles for National Unification’; ‘Plan for the Establishment of the Democratic Federal Republic of Koryo’; ‘Ten-Point program of the Great Unity of the Whole Nation.’ It is necessary to examine whether these nominal references to inherited unification plans were made merely for the sake of preserving dynastic legacy, or whether evidence of an actual unification plan based on an inherited notion of South Korean Socialist Revolution is extant.

The previous chapter described how both East Germany and North Korea, while advocating federal system solutions, sought to unite with progressive forces in West Germany and South Korea respectively to foment revolution. Kim Il Sung's declared unification policy was premised transparently upon the instigation of revolution the South, in accordance with the three principles of national unification, supported by federal system. Kim Jong Il, while inheriting Kim Il Sung' s approach, changed emphasis to maintain regime survival amidst the upheavals of the post-Cold War era. A range of circumstance compelled the regime to embrace peaceful coexistence and cooperative exchange by putting forward a low-level federal proposal for unification rather than typically inciting revolution. This can be apprehended as a situational shift, away from the revolutionary unification paradigm of Kim Il Sung's regime which denied the legitimacy of the South Korean government and objectified the South Korea as an entity requiring liberation from U.S. imperialism, towards a defensive strategy through which regime survival and state inviolability could be substantially guaranteed by recognizing the South Korean government and improving relations with South Korea. Paragraph 2 of the June 15, 2000 Joint Declaration demonstrates that North Korea focused on building inter-Korean relations through the acquisition of practical benefits from South Korea, based on national unity rather than institutional unification. Hence, the North Korean leadership clearly judged that the conditions for promoting federal reunification and revolutionary action had been weakened in a post-Cold War environment which made regime competition irrelevant.

Although Kim Jong Un initially claimed to have inherited his predecessor's strategy, the revision of the Party Statute at the 8th Party Congress in 2021 notably revealed a significant positional change. North Korea has revised its Party Rules ten times since its establishment at the founding congress of the Workers' Party of Korea in 1946, including seven Party Congresses (2nd-8th) and Party Representative Conventions (2nd-4th). Significantly, under Kim Jong Un, it has been revised three times: the 4th Party Congress in 2012, the 7th Party Congress in 2016, and the 8th Party Congress in 2021. In the preamble of the Party Rules, the term “building a socialist state in the northern area of Peninsula” and “national liberation and democratic revolution on a nationwide scale” initially were retained until they were revised at the 7th Party Congress in 2016.

As shown in < Table 13> below, however, at the 8th Party Congress in 2021, the term “national liberation and democratic revolution on a nationwide scale” was replaced with the term “independent and democratic development of society on a nationwide scale”, while the premise for North Korea’s theoretical instigation of South Korean revolution, “[to] actively support the struggle of South Korean people” was removed.

< Table 13: Comparison of the Party Rules’ change between 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> party congress >

Party Rules	Revised of the 7th Party Congress (May 9, 2016)	Revised of the 8th Party Congress (January 9, 2021)
<b>Party Goals</b>	To build a socialist strong state in the northern half of the Republic and to <u>carry out the task of the national liberation and democratic revolution on a nationwide scale</u> , with the final objective of transforming the whole society into Kim Il Sung-Kim Jong Ilism and fully realizing the self-	To build a strong and civilized socialist society in the northern half of the republic and <u>to realize the independent and democratic development of society on a nationwide scale</u> , with the final objective of building a <u>communist society</u> in which the people's ideals are fully realized.

<b>Unification Strategy</b>	reliance of the people's masses.	
	<p>Strengthening the unified front with the patriotic and democratic capabilities of the whole country, <u>actively support the struggle of South Korean people for the democratization of society and the right to survival</u> by driving out the invading forces of the United States from South Korea, ending the domination and interference of all foreign powers, and defeating Japanese militarism and re-aggression.</p> <p><u>Struggle and join forces among our people to unify our country on the principle of self-reliance, peaceful unification, and national unity to achieve the unified development of the country and the people</u></p>	<p>Strengthen the united front with the patriotic and democratic capabilities of the whole country, ensure the democratic and national rights and interests of compatriots abroad, unite them firmly under the banner of patriotism, arouse their national pride and patriotic fervor, and encourage them to take an active part in the path to the unified development and prosperity of the Fatherland.</p> <p>To remove the aggressive force of the U.S. to finally liquidate the political and military domination of the U.S., to thoroughly reject the interference of all foreign powers, to safeguard the safety and peaceful environment of the Korean Peninsula by <u>suppressing fundamental military threats with strong national defense capabilities, to raise the banner of national independence and national unity, fight to advance the peaceful unification of the country, and achieve co-prosperity of the peoples</u></p>

These amendments to the preamble of the Party Rules have led to a debate as to whether or not the Kim Jong Un regime has indeed abandoned the ‘South Korean Revolution Strategy’ of his predecessors. The ‘abandonment’ argument points to the deletion of the ‘support the struggle of South Korean people’ clause, which for North Korean symbolized inter-Korean solidarity, as an eradication of

the symbolic expression of a dynastic revolutionary theory.<sup>133</sup> Furthermore, the modification of the actionable phrase ‘unify our country’, to promote a long-term aim to ‘advance the peaceful unification of the country’ with additional emphasis on the long-term inter-Korean coexistence couched as ‘co-prosperity of the peoples’, has been apprehended as the Kim Jong Un regime relinquishing its former South Korean Revolutionary Strategy in favor of a state-to-state relationship.<sup>134</sup>

The contrary view professes that it is premature to conclude that North Korea has abandoned its inherited Unification Strategies based upon revisions of the Party rules alone. Although it is difficult to accept that North Korea's revision of the Party rules at the 8th Party Congress completely extinguished the South Korean Revolutionary Unification, it is however cogent to argue that these amendments may have changed the logic of engagement at a tactical level, via simplification of terms and the use of alternative expressions (Oh, Kyung-sup 2021, pp.1-5). Accordingly, the revised phrase ‘realizing the independent and democratic development of society on a nationwide scale’, could be paraphrasing ‘national liberation and democratic revolution’, so that an ‘independent development of society’ would equate to the ‘national liberation revolution’. Hence, the ‘democratic development of society’ could refer implicitly to building socialism through via a people's democratic revolution in the South. Reappearance of the term ‘communist society, which was deleted in the 2010 revision of the Party rules, and the presence of the phrase ‘dismantling the U.S. aggression and finally liquidating the U.S. political and military domination over the South’, in the revision of the Party rules, can also be cited as evidence that the Kim Jong Un regime has patently not abandoned its inherited unification strategy.

Although the revised wording of the Party Rules could indeed be interpreted

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133 Lee Jong-seok, "North Korea, not aiming for unification...giving up on South Korean revolution", Yonhap News, June 2, 2021

134 Jeong Se-hyun, "North Korea formalizes Two Korea... Seems to be worried about absorption", News1, June 4, 2021

as an attempt to reserve or abandon South Korean revolution tactics, concluding that terminological semantics indicate regime abandonment of a dynastic inherited position would be hasty in several ways. To conclude that North Korea has abandoned revolutionary unification in any formal sense, there would need to be demonstrable evidence that the regime had explicitly abandoned the idea of transforming South Korean society into a communist system. This is not evident from the *prima facie* actions of Kim Jong Un's regime so far. In practical terms, having promulgated military threats and engaged in tactical attempts at establishing a unified front, it can be concluded that North Korea's South Korean Revolutionary Strategy has been maintained nominally.

However, it is also hard to deny that the change from the 2021 Party rules characterizes the Kim Jong Un's changing perception of South Korea, especially given the fact that North Korea's objective of instigating a people's democratic revolution in South Korea is no longer credible in the wake of democratic reforms in South Korea. It is also no longer credible to criticize South Korean society as an exemplar of capitalist exploitation and poverty in the face of South Korea's prodigious economic growth and the significant gap in comparison with the economy of North Korea. Hence, past policy directives have proved ineffective outside the targeted South Korea, and North Korea's perception to unification can be seen to have already changed in response to changing external conditions.

Consequently, opposing interpretations of the revision of the Party Rules should be apprehended as indicating shifts in the Kim Jong Un regime's perception of the unification issue, which are manifested in the revised wording of its revolutionary strategy for South Korea. Hence, this tendency demonstrates that the Kim Jong Un regime is still maintaining a defensive position on the issue of unification rather than an offensive one. It also signals that the Kim Jong Un regime will come up with new perceptions and approaches to the issue of unification in the near future.

## 1.6. Possible Changes in Unification Policy as Nuclear Forces Strengthen

In general, there has been a consensus that the main reason for North Korea's development of nuclear weapons is primarily its security concerns. North Korea has itself insisted that it has been developing nuclear weapons as a defense against U.S. military threats.<sup>135</sup> Facing a national crisis after the collapse of Soviet bloc and a declining economic status in comparison with its rival South Korea, North Korea has developed nuclear weapons as a means of self-defense and deterrence against perceived threats to its regime (Jang, Dal-Jung 1994, pp.163-164).<sup>136</sup>

Nevertheless, the Kim Jong Un regime has consistently strengthened its nuclear program, and it is worth examining whether North Korean military power advancement, represented by Kim Jong Un's development of a nuclear arsenal, increases the likelihood of North Korea turning towards an aggressive unification policy and a provocative strategy of foreign engagement, based on the assumption of military power influences policy decision making.

Alongside an examination of the nuclear development process itself, a chronological analysis, divided into four phases, will inquire as to how the Kim Jong Un regime used nuclear weapons development to determine its foreign and inter-Korean policies. Initially, from 2011 to 2016, after completing its accession to power, the Kim Jong Un regime used the 'Economy-Nuclear Parallel Development Line' to push towards completing its project of building a nuclear arsenal. Subsequently, from 2017 to 2018, prior to its participation in the 2018

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135 Rodong Shinmoon, May 26, 2009

136 In the traditional debate over Nuclear Proliferation, Waltz supported "Proliferation Optimism", arguing that the case of nuclear deterrence between U.S.-Soviet during the Cold War could be applied to nuclear proliferation at the global level. If a nuclear war occurs, it is the annihilation of the entire human race, nuclear power states have no choice but to be cautious about using nuclear weapons and can prevent nuclear proliferation through mutual nuclear deterrence. See Kenneth N. Waltz, "More May Be Better," in Scott D. Sagan and Kenneth N. Waltz, *The Spread of Nuclear Weapons: A Debate* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1995)

Pyeongchang Winter Olympics, the regime engaged in ‘Brinkmanship Tactics’ with the U.S. Trump administration. Next from 2018 to the 2019 Hanoi North Korea-U.S. Summit, the Kim Jong Un regime sought to improve relations with the United States through negotiations, expecting the benefits of sanctions relief, while completing its nuclear armament program on the other hand. The final period can be characterized as the aftermath of the 2019 Hanoi Summit failure, when the Kim Jong Un regime extolled its ‘new path’, upgraded its nuclear arsenal leaving open the possibility of a nuclear-first strike, then used this nuclear threat as a form of coercion diplomacy to force favorable conditions for resumption of negotiations.

< Table 14: Kim Jong Un regime's strategy by the nuclear development phase >

Nuclear Armament	Brinkmanship	Peace Offensive	Coercive Threat
2011-2016 3-5 nuclear tests	2017-2017 6th Nuclear Test	2018-2019 Inter-Korean Summit/ North-U.S. Summit	2019- Advancing Nuclear Arsenal

(Source: Kim Jin-ha 2021, p.164)

In each of these periods, the discourse of North Korean nuclear development was characterized by Kim Jong Un’s rhetorical links to the issue of unification. Hence, when the regime was focused on the expansion, upgrade, diversification, and miniaturization of its nuclear arsenal in 2016-2017, Kim Jong Un, when declaring the nuclear program complete, stressed that North Korea finally possessed a powerful, reliable and irreversible war deterrent, and he vowed to mercilessly punish aggressors and to achieve the historic feat of unifying the country if the U.S. and South Korea belligerents dared to ignite the fires of war.<sup>137</sup> Moreover, in his 2016 New Year's address, Kim Jong Un ordained U.S.-South

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137 Kim Jong Un, "Report on the Work of the Party Central Committee at the Seventh Congress of the Workers' Party of Korea," (Rodong Shinmoon, May 8, 2016)

Korea joint military exercises, an invasive nuclear war drill, and indicated that in the event of an actual war, nuclear weapons could be used to forcibly unify the Korean Peninsula, stating:

*"...If they touch us in the slightest, we will not tolerate any appeasement and will answer them with a merciless crusade of justice, Just War for Unification of the Fatherland..."* <sup>138</sup>

Significantly, the phrase ‘just war of unification’ also appears in the 2016 Workers' Party of Korea 7th Congress report, in which Kim Jong Un emphasized peaceful realization of a federal system based on national consensus, while leaving open the possibility of a non-peaceful coercive unification method, stating:

*"...If the South insists on institutional unification, the DPRK will ruthlessly wipe out the anti-unification forces through Just War of unification and achieve the historical feat of unifying the country..."* <sup>139</sup>

Conversely, in 2018, North Korea refrained from threatening rhetoric during denuclearization negotiations with South Korea. However, it resumed threatening nuclear weapons related rhetoric after the failure of the Hanoi summit in 2019, and refused to negotiate with the United States while further building up its nuclear arsenal. North Korean nuclear weapons rhetoric has evolved from being a threatening attitude to becoming an actual threat, which proposes not only self-defense capability, but also the potentiality of a pre-emptive strike. North Korea's “Nuclear Forces Policy Act”, announced on September 9, 2022, not only expanded nuclear weapons targets to an unspecified number of countries, but also heralded

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138 Kim Jong Un's New Year's Address in 2016, Rodong Shinmoon, January 1, 2016.

139 Rodong Shinmoon, May 9, 2016

a pre-emptive mode of engagement with which to repel attacks and achieve victory if deterrence failed.<sup>140</sup> Correspondingly, the preamble to the Act presents nuclear weapons as a powerful means of defending the sovereignty, territorial integrity, and fundamental interests of the nation, while also acting as a preventative to war in the Korean Peninsula and Northeast Asia, ensuring strategic global stability. Notably, the phrase ‘territorial integrity’, used in Kim Il Sung era before the Korean War in 1949, and also used by China to argue for the unification of Taiwan under the One-China principle, implicitly leaves open the possibility of armed unification through nuclear weapons.<sup>141</sup> Given that its development of nuclear weapons more fully protected its territory, it followed that North Korea’s duty lay in leading the Korean Peninsula towards unification. Kim Jong Un reiterated:

*“...our nuclear deterrence is the common national wealth that protects not only the DPRK but also the entire Korean nation, north and south, and makes it shine...”*<sup>142</sup>

Until the 7th Party Congress in 2016, North Korea consistently referred to the ‘Three Charters for the Unification of the Country’ as its dynastic inheritance, and advocated their realization via a Koryo federal system of unification. However, since launching its nuclear program and declaring its completion, North Korea has sought a new policy direction, centred upon its nuclear arsenal which has anointed its new strategic autonomous status, as an independent nuclear power state.<sup>143</sup>

All things considered, the sustained development of North Korea's nuclear

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140 The basis for judging North Korea's nuclear doctrine to be offensive is that it stipulates that nuclear weapons can be used if the possibility of nuclear war is deemed imminent, and it leaves room for arbitrary interpretation of other requirements for the use of nuclear weapons. (Lee, Ho-Ryoung 2023, pp.41-42).

141 The Korea Times, October 12, 2022

142 Rodong Shinmoon, January 8, 2016

143 On March, 2016, North Korea's Foreign Ministry stated that “We have state-of-the-art attack weapons that can attack the United States anytime, anywhere, and we are constantly developing and deploying powerful ‘Juche’ bombs and ‘Unification’ bombs.” (KCNA, March 6, 2013).

arsenal under Kim Jong Un is unprecedented. While Kim Il Sung's military adventurism in the 1960s reflected the fact North Korea's overall military and economic power exceeded that of South Korea, relatively enabling the pursuit of an aggressive unification policy. By contrast, Kim Jong Un's nuclear development strategy was patently the result of an attempt to overcome the regime's security concerns and sense of inferiority via asymmetric weapons development. This was inimitably a strident divergence from the hegemonic policy pursued by North Korea in the 1960s. Of course, it can be argued that the Kim Jong Un regime is taking an offensive position in foreign/unification policy, mentioning the possibility of a nuclear war to inflate regime confidence now that North Korea has become a de facto nuclear power state. An aggressive policy actuated from this 'new strategic position' could arguably be a return to a previous policy of assertive militarism, and nuclear weapons could be a decisive physical and psychological force that ultimately transforms North Korea's defensive stance into an offensive one.<sup>144</sup> Although North Korea possesses nuclear weapons, it is not enough to counter the nuclear capacity of the United States, when the U.S. is providing nuclear umbrellas to South Korea under the Korea-U.S. alliance. Hence, reckless attempts to change the 'status quo' by pursuing unification through nuclear force, are not only practically impossible but are also fraught with the risk of nuclear war. Although Kim Jong Un has not yet spoken officially about unifying the Korean Peninsula by the actual use of nuclear force, it is clear that nuclear force can become a physical backbone to change its defensive position to an offensive one.

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144 North Korea will be able to attempt North Korea-led unification if it threatens to use nuclear weapons in practice and blocks US intervention. Given the impact of nuclear force, it is not entirely impossible to pursue aggressive unification that excludes US intervention. For this reason, South Korea is reaffirming the nuclear umbrella commitments made by the United States. H. R. McMaster, a former U.S. National Security Advisor, supports this argument. He said that "...North Korea's intentions are to threaten to use nuclear weapons to create the conditions for a reunification that North Korea desires and to artificially change the status quo. North Korea's intentions are to use nuclear weapons for coercion and extortion, and then, to reunify the peninsula under the red banner...and to drive the States away from this peninsula that he would then try to dominate..." ("What if H.R. McMaster is right about North Korea?", *The Atlantic*, 2018.1.18.)

## **1.7. Inter-Korean Relations During Kim Jong Un's Rule**

It is difficult to ascertain whether inter-Korean relations under Kim Jong Un, about 10 years into his reign, are conflictual or cooperative. Typically, North Korean attitudes toward conservative South Korean governments have been hostile, while attitudes toward progressive administrations have generally been cooperative. From the start of the Kim dynasty's third generation in 2012 to its 10th anniversary in 2022, the South Korean governments tasked with responding to Kim Jong Un's regime were the late Lee Myung-bak, Park Geun-hye, and Moon Jae-in governments.

The governments of Lee Myung-bak and Park Geun-hye specifically pursued a 'first denuclearization, then inter-Korean relations' policy, and conspicuously linked resolution of the nuclear issue to progress in terms of inter-Korean relations, cooperation and engagement. In response, Kim Jong Un refused to abandon nuclear weapons development and continued to strengthen his nuclear capabilities through a series of nuclear tests. In contrast to the Lee Myung-bak administration, the early years of the Park Geun-hye government demonstrated flexibility by keeping open the possibility of inter-Korean dialogue despite North Korea's continued nuclear development. However, North Korea exacerbated military tensions around its third nuclear test in 2013 and unilaterally froze inter-Korean relations in March 2014 after President Park stated, during a visit to Germany, that unification on the Korean Peninsula should be completed in a manner similar to German unification. North Korea has, however, often demonstrated diplomatic inconsistency, like sending a high-ranking official to the closing ceremony of the Incheon Asian Games in October 2014, and then declaring a state of quasi-war in August 2015 in response to the South Korean government's blaming North Korea for a mine explosion in the Demilitarized Zone, only to express regret afterwards via high-level inter-Korean contacts behind closed doors.

In the first five years of Kim Jong Un's presidency, North Korean policy has

been to use provocations such as nuclear tests and long-range missile launches to induce negotiations when dealing with the South Korean conservative government. When these inducements to negotiate are refused, North Korea exercises coercion by escalating tensions on the Korean Peninsula and threatening new nuclear tests. Correspondingly, contemporary inter-Korean relations in the first five years have been characterized as hostile coexistence.

Since 2016, Kim Jong Un, in formally finalizing the succession process, putting in place a party-centred maintenance system and rushing to build a nuclear arsenal, have exerted the entire capacity of the nation. These efforts were especially concentrated in 2016 and 2017, when international redress aimed at North Korea's nuclear program was disrupted by escalating tensions between the U.S. and China. South Korea also lacked leadership to actively deal with North Korea's nuclear development due to President Park Geun-hye's impeachment. By 2017, North Korea declared the completion of its nuclear weapon program. Responding the peace process initiated by the progressive Moon Jae-in government, North Korea sought to break out of its defensive position based on its fresh perception of a restored power balance gained via completed nuclear development and system reform programs. Consequently, the Kim Jong Un regime temporarily changed its previous stance of excluding South Korea vis-a-vis the nuclear issue and unambiguously acknowledged South Korea's role in the peace process. Inter-Korean relations during this period could be said to be characterized by attempts at selective cooperation, in an atmosphere that was short-lived due to the failure of 2019 the Hanoi summit.

Disappointment and frustration at the failure of the North-South joint peace process heightened latent inter-Korean tensions, and North Korea, frustrated at South Korean security position, exemplified by continued US-South joint military drills and the deployment of US strategic assets on the Korean Peninsula, bombed the inter-Korean Joint Liaison Office in June 2020. From this point on, the Kim Jong Un regime closed the dialogue door to both the United States and South

Korea, designating South Korea as an adversary of the DPRK, the regime continued the build-up of its nuclear arsenal, including the development of new ICBMs.

While the two German relations during the East-West German era moved from hostile confrontation to hostile coexistence and cooperation, inter-Korean relations during the Kim Il Sung era remained in a constant state of hostile confrontation. Inter-Korean relations during the Kim Jong Un era, have been characterized by a recurring pattern of conflict and cooperation. In terms of the Kim Jong Un regime's peaceful offensive and appeasement policy in 2018, it can be concluded that North Korea used inter-Korean relations as a stepping stone to improve relations with the U.S. Ultimately, North Korea attached greater significance to the goal of strengthening its state system through the normalization of relations with the U.S. rather than conflicting resolution via inter-Korean relations.

## **2. Exploring the Kim Jong Un regime's Path to Unification**

An analysis of the Kim Jong Un regime in terms of relations with other socialist countries has discerned Chinese political tutelage during the recovery phase of North Korea-China relations. Notwithstanding this influence, North Korea is judged to have maintained a high degree of autonomy in terms of both inter-Korean and external relations. In particular, Xi Jinping's second term (2017-2022), marked by an escalating conflict between China and the U.S., enabled North Korea to develop nuclear weapons while importing resources necessary for survival through economic aid and trade, without the adverse pressure applied during Xi Jinping's first term (2012-2017), which proved corrosive to North Korean-Chinese relations. Correspondingly, Chinese political and economic support, coupled with North Korea's strategic autonomy under conflict-ridden

international context of U.S.-China relations, makes it more likely that North Korea under Kim Jong Un will persist in developing nuclear weapons and pursue an aggressive policy toward South Korea, adopting a similar hostile attitude to that which characterized the Kim Il Sung era.

Second, even though the Kim Jong Un regime took advantage of the détente between North and South Korea in 2018 to try to normalize diplomatic relations with the U.S., a failure to hold follow-up talks meant that its state security remained unguaranteed internationally. In addition, North Korea's continued nuclear development has negatively impacted on not only bilateral relations, but also the institution of a multilateral security cooperation framework. This has made it more difficult for the international community to accept North Korean participation on the same terms as other states, despite the fact that North Korea gained international post-Cold War recognition through simultaneous UN membership.

Third, although North Korea under Kim Jong Un experienced some economic recovery in its early years (2011-2015) as it aimed at opening up, since then, North Korea has been left struggling within the limits of economic development enforced by the international sanctions imposed on its nuclear weapons development program and its adoption of a nuclear-economic parallel path. North Korean attempts to overcome the impact of these sanctions via self-renewal, self-sufficiency and self-reliance, have been inhibited by its underdeveloped economic system. In January 2021, at the 8th Party Congress, the Kim Jong Un regime adopted a new five-year plan for economic development based on self-sufficiency and sustainable development without relinquishing nuclear weapons. However, striving to meet the objectives of a rapid economic growth plan in a closed economic structure seems to be very demanding. North Korea is not currently able to pursue an aggressive unification initiative similar to that of the early Kim Il Sung era, which was at the time premised on North Korea's military and economic advantage over South Korea.

Fourth, since inauguration, the Kim Jong Un regime has promoted a party-

and state-centred discourse which politicized the attainment of weapons through nuclear development, referring to the international status of a country that is different from the past. Given past attempts to reconcile and galvanize its population through the promotion of an overt nationalism, it is likely that North Korea's tendency to employ statism as an ideology will continue. However, the dynastic nature of regime succession in North Korea means that Kim Jong Un cannot easily abandon the ethnocentric unification ideology pursued by his predecessors. Therefore, when unification needs emphasis, the regime will most likely re-employ the concept of nationalism to seize the initiative on the unification issue. However, given the current international climate of regime isolation, economic pressure and diplomatic defeat caused by a belligerent and confrontational line, North Korea is more likely to focus its efforts on maintaining and retaining independence, autonomy and state security through policies of state-to-state rather than an aggressive promotion of unification based on common ethnicity.

Fifth, Kim Jong Un's perspective on the unification issue appears to be fluid. As was discussed previously, the revised terminology in the 2021 Party Rules does not constitute a complete abandonment of North Korea's traditional South Korean Revolution Strategy. North Korea cannot formally abandon this generationally inherited strategy just because it does not align with current political realities, and Kim Jong Un's inability to formulate a distinct unification policy appears to be related to this. However, given the deepening economic gap between the two Koreas and an urgent situation which challenges regime independence and survival, the Kim Jong Un regime's perception of unification will fade, and it is likely to pursue policies for the survival of the regime rather than unification.

Sixth, power (military strength) is the criterion that most distinguishes the East German case from the North Korean case. Historically, during the Kim Il Sung era, military supremacy served as the backdrop for an aggressive approach to inter-Korean relations. In Kim Il Sung's time, it was believed that if U.S. troops were

withdrawn from South Korea and the UN mission was dissolved, the conditions for a North Korean-led armed unification would be productive. However, as North Korea became more internationally isolated and its conventional weapons advantage was eroded during the Cold War, it sought security in nuclear weapons. After years of intensive development, Kim Jong Un's regime succeeded in completing its nuclear weapons system. Consequently, an aggressive rhetoric has been added to North Korean communications, to promote a 'new strategic position' based on its newfound status as a nuclear power, publicly flaunted with rhetorical quips such as 'unification war', 'territorial integrity' and 'unification bombs.' In addition, the promulgation of the Nuclear Forces Policy Act in September 2022, opens the possibility of a pre-emptive strike. This raises the specter of an offensive policy push on bi-lateral issues such as unification, given that the regime has opened up the possibility of nuclear weapons being deployed beyond defensive operations.

Finally, under Kim Jong Un, inter-Korean relations have been characterized by conflict or tension rather than cooperation. Although there was a period of time when talks and cooperation with the South were viable, regime instability, fears of absorption unification conducted via inter-Korean exchange program, and dismal relations with the conservative South Korean government, meant that North Korea consistently tried to exclude South Korea in its attempts to negotiate directly with the United States. However, since any future dialogue with South Korea and/or the United States will inevitably be center on the North Korean nuclear issue, the Kim Jong Un regime, which has no intention of relinquishing its nuclear arsenal, has difficulty improving relations with these countries.

In the previous chapter, demonstrated in <table 15> below, divided countries like East Germany and North Korea have tended to maintain a 'two-state' approach when there has been the strong influence of supportive socialist states and external systems such as the UN, as well as cooperative relations with divided countries. By contrast imposing factors related to economic and military power, and

pronounced utilization of nationhood rhetorically aligned with the leadership's position, make it more likely that an aggressive pursuit of unification based upon a 'one-state' approach will be pursued. The <table 15> below summarizes the one-state and two-state regime orientations of each element of the Kim Jong Un regime, along with the results of the East Germany-North Korea's constellation analysis.

< Table 15: Characteristics of One-state and Two-state Orientation >

Characteristics	Results of Constellation Analysis
<p><b>Two-State Orientation</b> Policy of Separation/ Passive Position of Unification</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Structure: Strong Influence from Socialist Suzerainty</li> <li>▪ System: Supporting Statehood Recognition</li> <li>▪ Behavior: Maintaining Relations with divided partner</li> </ul>
<p><b>One-State Orientation</b> Policy of Competition/ Aggressive Position of Unification</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Interests: Relative Economic Power Advantage</li> <li>▪ Power: Strong Military Force</li> <li>▪ Norms: Strong Nationalism</li> <li>▪ Perception: Leader's perception of Unification Issue</li> </ul>

According to the below <table 16>, the Kim Jong Un regime's unification direction has four two-state-oriented elements and two one-state-oriented elements, indicating that the Kim Jong Un regime currently favor policy directives based on a two-state system. Consequently, the current Kim Jong Un regime has a stronger tendency towards maintaining a two-state system on the Korean Peninsula. The Kim Jong Un regime's current path towards unification is focused on stabilizing its own system by passively or defensively distancing itself from a divided partner, South Korea. Of course, it was mentioned earlier that this conclusion is prejudged upon a particular time frame and specific geo-political climate. In other words, it is inferred from an analysis of the tendencies of the Kim

Jong Un regime over a period of about 10 years, from the death of Kim Jong Il in 2011 to the inauguration of Kim Jong Un in 2012 to 2022. Although it is unknown how long the Kim Jong Un regime will continue, it can be concluded that in the 10 years since its inauguration, the Kim Jong Un regime has pursued the inter-Korean relationship as a state-to-state relation, maintaining a separatist stance on the issue of unification.

< Table 16: State Orientation and Path to Unification of the Kim Jong Un regime >

Aspects of Constellation Analysis	The Kim Jong Un regime	
	Degree	Orientation
Structure: Influence from Socialist Suzerain states	<i>weak</i>	<i>One-State</i>
System: Supporting Statehood Recognition	<i>strong</i>	<i>Two-State</i>
Interests: Economic power	<i>weak</i>	<i>Two-State</i>
Norms: Nationalism	<i>weak</i>	<i>Two-State</i>
Perception: Leader's perception of Unification	<i>weak</i>	<i>Two-State</i>
Power: Military Force	<i>Judgement Reserved</i>	<i>Two-State or One-State</i>
Behavior: Relations with divided partner country	<i>weak</i>	<i>One-State</i>

The above <table 16> is highly useful in that it demonstrates that the North Korean regime's orientation toward unification can and will change if the seven conditions relating to the Constellation Analysis alter. In a hypothetical example, if North Korea is able to overcome the asymmetrical military power differentials

between the two Koreas through its nuclear arsenal, North Korea could be more likely to pursue an aggressive unification strategy. Hence, the table above reserves judgment on applied elements of power (military force), depending on whether the party leadership's confidence in its nuclear arsenal strengthens awareness of the unification issue, or the regime tries to lead the unification issue under the spurious logic that its nuclear arsenal guarantees the safety of the entire nation, or if its economic power is restored through the rapid development of the North's economy over the South. All these factors can and will shift the regime towards a unitary state orientation, making an aggressive unification policy probable.

## **V. Exploring Alternatives to Unification: Divergent Discussions on Korea**

In the post-Cold War era, systemic differences and intensified military confrontation have prohibited North and South Korea from simply re-unifying as one nation. Correspondingly, there have been numerous diverse attempts to reconstruct the discourse around Korean unification by referencing the changing international environment in the aftermath of German reunification. Despite a vast and varied research field, perspectives in South Korean academic research community can be broadly categorized as follows: the ‘one-state theory’, which accentuates the prospect of a unified Korean state as an achievable objective; the ‘two-state theory’, which is focused on peaceful coexistence and/or relationship transformation on the basis of state-to-state engagement; and the alternative approaches such as the ‘multi-state theory’, which seek out flexible variations of state formation for unification, exemplified by federal or confederal systems and structures (Lee Nam-ju 2021, p.51).

### **1. One-state Theory vs. Two-state Theory**

In considering analysis undertaken in the previous chapters which concluded that the Kim Jong Un regime would pursue a two-state direction like East Germany in the Cold War era, this study examines both the theory of one-state unification as a single nation-state and the theory of seeking peaceful coexistence while maintaining state-to-state relations rather than unification while recognizing the two-state system. In addition, this study examines the characteristics and limitations of these two theories and considers whether it is possible to form a unification discourse based on composite ideas of nation and state.

## 1.1. Features and Limitations of the One-state Theory

Conceiving that unification requires seizing the initiative to create a single Nation-state in the first place, the One-state approach acknowledges that the creation of a single unified state is the ultimate goal, even if a two-state status is temporarily created, it is regarded as a matter of process.

After liberation in 1945, the goal of establishing a modern Korean nation-state was frustrated by the division of the Korean Peninsula at the 38th Parallel. This created two distinct conflicting Korean governments and resulted in a war, which inevitably left mutually hostile relations in its wake. At that time, both jurisdictions held assumptions that a one-state system could be implemented by force and unified under a single regime, this was reflected in North and South Korea respectively by Kim Il Sung's policy of 'Democratic Base' and First President Rhee Syng-man's theme of 'March to North Unification'. These were the foundation for a range of unification strategies adopted by successive North and South Korean governments who viewed national unification as a mode of regime competition, where victory meant absorbing the defeated adversary.<sup>145</sup>

The South Korean Park Chung-hee regime, however, focused on modernizing South Korean society in the early years of the divided peninsula, and appeared to retreat from this adversarial mode by advocating a policy of 'construction first, unification later'. However, this policy also extolled a South Korean-led unification process via the attainment of secure systemic advantages. From the mid-to-late 1970s, the South Korean government, having gained the upper hand in economic terms, countered North Korea's aggressive unification offensive with a more systematic unification plan. In the 1980s, the South Korean government of

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<sup>145</sup> The Second South Korean President Jang Meon, which replaced President Rhee Syng-man with the April Revolution in 1960, had the same perception in viewing the Republic of Korea as the only legitimate government on the Korean Peninsula and emphasizing unification through UN-supervised free general election.

Chun Doo-hwan came up with a formula for 'Unification of Democracy and National Reconciliation', including that representatives of the two Koreas meet to form a national unification council and create a unified constitution and government. This characterized a transitional period in the unification process, whereby inter-Korean exchange & cooperation and provisional agreement on basic practical relations. However, this plan sought Korean unification from position of system superiority and was patently unrealistic, given that it was premised on the political objective of overcoming the crisis in legitimacy faced by the Chun Doo-hwan regime in its suppression of the 'Gwangju democracy movement (1980)' by force.

In the late 1980s, the end of the Cold War and the collapse of communism gave South Korea an opportunity to strengthen its initiative with respect to the unification issue, and terminate the previous era's colloquy of systemic and ideological confrontation. In contrast to the fall of East Germany, however, Korean structures of confrontation remained intractable and entrenched. Consequently, the South Korean government decided not to pursue rapid institutional unification under these conditions, opting instead to produce notions of 'National Community' and 'Special Interim Relations between the Two Koreas'. The 'National Community Unification Formula' (1989, 1994) proposed a transitional phase, the 'Korean Commonwealth', whereby a national community could be established as an alternative to a single state solution and unitary institutionalization. This transitional arrangement effectively endorsed a temporary two-state situation to restore ethnic homogeneity in the face of longstanding national division, and to overcome systemic ideological differences. However, this solution remained wedded to single state unification via a South-centred system, and proposed that a single One-Nation state form as a final mode of unification.

Responding to North Korea's deepening isolation after the end of the Cold War, the Kim Dae-jung government de-emphasized systemic unification which North Korea feared, and pursued reconciliation through cooperation in earnest,

while attempting to create a climate of 'de facto unification' as condition of institutional unification. However, during the period of reconciliation and cooperation associated with the Kim Dae-jung and Roh Moo-hyun governments, the dismantling of hostile inter-Korean infrastructure in the political and military spheres did not keep pace with economic and socio-cultural exchanges, making transition to the second stage in Unification Formula (i.e. The Korean Commonwealth) a significant challenge. Additionally, amid a rapid deterioration of Cold War infrastructure and a comparative lack of trust in North-South relations, North Korea began nuclear development and sought the regime security via negotiations with the United States while excluding South Korea. As North Korea sought to resolve political and military issues via direct diplomacy with the U.S. rather than through a forum for inter-Korean relations, inevitably the process of unification faltered and stagnated. As the nuclear issue emerged and North Korea began to advance its nuclear capabilities in earnest under Kim Jong Un's regime, the South Korean governments of Lee Myung-bak and Park Geun-hye responded by promoting policies of 'Denuclearization First'. At that time, absorption-typed unification was intended to deny the legitimacy of the North Korean socialist system by unilaterally incorporating universal values such as the change in global ideology after the end of the Cold War, the expansion of liberal democracy and human rights, and the development of the market economy, into the North Korean system, thereby strengthening the unification discourse based on one-state theory (Park Min-cheol 2015, p.8). This aggressive approach inevitably antagonized the Kim Jong Un regime, who correspondingly intensified its nuclear weapons development program and amplified its rhetoric of rejection in response to attempts at institutional unification. This South Korean approach reinforces the two-state orientation of the Kim Jong Un regime to focus on the survival of the regime rather than the issue of unification.

The federal unification plan, which North Korea has been advocating as one of its unification plans, cannot realistically be an alternative to the unification of

the Korean peninsula. Historically, there have been no cases of federal states with different political and economic systems, hence it could be argued North Korean advocacy for federation solution is patently unrealistic. Moreover, given that North Korea's proposed federal system aims to unite Korea as a one-state system through South Korean revolution, it is reasonable to suspect that overt federalization could readily become the façade for a covert institutionalized one-state policy directive.

## **1.2. Features and Limitations of the Two-state Theory**

The spread of universal values after the end of the Cold War and the change in generational perceptions due to Korea's prolonged division, have engendered support for the argument that North and South Korea should no longer be treated in terms of their special ethnic relationship, but rather in terms of their state-to-state relationship. Globalization, progressive democratization, and improvements in the quality of life following the end of the Cold War, have installed concepts such as freedom, peace, democracy, prosperity, human rights, and solidarity as universal values which have deeply penetrated South Korean democratic society. As these universal values become firmly entrenched in the minds of the younger generation, those reliant on nationalistic sensibilities and traditional values, peripheral to these universal norms, have been unable to gain traction in terms of the unification debate. Hence, ethnic-centred solutions based upon inherited nationalistic value systems appear to be losing ground. Moreover, the North Korean nuclear issue and continued hostilities render the value of peace and security higher than that of immediate unification, especially in the absence of consensus on whether unification can actually be implemented as a peace promoting corrective to division on the Korean Peninsula. This is a phenomenon which has, in turn, promoted and reinforced attitudes that characterize inter-Korean relations as state-to-state engagements rather than relationships between

groups with a shared ethnicity. Correspondingly, this has led to admonitions that the problems of Korean society need to be addressed through ‘post-division’ or overcoming division narratives as a central theme of conflict resolution. The post-division discourse reflects various contradictions and structural distortions that the division of Korea has foisted upon South Korean society, and prioritizes the elimination of contradictions over the immediate unification, arguing that unification is not necessarily an overcoming of the division (Chung Young-chul, 2019, p.56).

Hence, it is argued that a genuine two-state theory starts from an acknowledgement that building a single nation-state on the Korean Peninsula is unrealistic and that unification from a nationalistic position is unachievable. This is because if unification as a single nation is to be taken as a proposition, a confrontation between two systems is inevitable and one of the two must be extinguished. Supported by evidence that North and South Korea have already been acting as de facto two states since simultaneous UN membership, it is therefore argued that when inter-Korean relations based on nationalism (blood, language, culture, etc.) are transformed into relations between states that comply with universal international norms and principles (state, sovereignty, constitution, etc.). This effectively interrupts repetitive cycles of comity and hostility. These arguments, captured in the ‘Universal Discourse of Unification’, try to overcome the anachronistic aspects of the existing unification plan, prevent the severe division of domestic public opinion, and provide a basis for cooperation toward a common shared goal instead of minimizing North Korea's (Suh Bo-hyuk, 2014, pp.15-18). Recent South Korean academic studies that champion a post-division approach to unification explore a similar vein, and advocate the adoption of a global imagination as opposed to the inculcation of narrow nationalisms, heralding a move away from inherited concepts which reify unification in terms of defined nation-states.<sup>146</sup>

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146 They criticize the state violence produced by the divided structure and the challenges to democracy. They argue

Despite its pragmatic and progressive attributes, the two-state theory, nevertheless, has several logical limitations. First, neglecting the concept of 'nation' or ignoring the issue of 'special relations' within the divided Korean peninsula, is likely to result in another South Korea centric hegemonic configuration of the unification discourse in favor of a prioritization of so called 'universal value'. In other words, North Koreans are likely to perceive 'universalizing norms' as reflection of a prejudicial value system that is intended to galvanize a South Korean superiority complex by portraying North Korea's position as outmoded. Second, arguments that portray unification as a method or mode of aspiration, rather than a cause, objective or goal to be pursued, can be criticized for perpetuating division through an over-emphasis and over-determination of symptomatic phenomena. Third, the two-state approach could actually have opposite effects to those intended through its application. If both separated states continue to engage in conflict, it can become difficult to institute the conditions required for peaceful coexistence, let alone unification.

Forgoing its other problems, some advocates of a two-state approach based on an appraisal of the German context, hold certain misconceptions about the past experience of East and West Germany. First, West Germany did not relinquish reunification as a national objective, even while East and West became de facto separate states in the 1970s via the 'Basic Treaty' and UN simultaneous membership. Second, in East Germany, ethnic separation policies were used to consolidate the two-state system, however, West Germany was committed to restore national homogeneity within its long-term goal of building a nation-state. In this context, it can be surmised that even if the results of this study indicate a trend towards a two-state system and separation policy under Kim Jong Un regime, South Korean acquiescence would likely exacerbate national division and foment

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that North Korea has built a violent system of state mobilization to justify communism and South Korea to justify anti-communism, which has had a negative impact on the social developments of the North and South (Cho Han Hae-joang, *Opening the Era of Post-Division*. Seoul: Samin, 2000. p. 338.)

extreme conflict within the current South Korean society where unification has an enduring constitutional value.

## **2. Exploring the Possibilities of Federation Structure**

### **2.1. The Nation-state Issue**

The two-state theory acknowledges that representations of ethnic orthodoxy within a nation-state cannot possibly drive unification successfully, therefore, on the grounds of recognizing and accepting national division, it argues for the separation of unification and ethnicity. However, it is admitted that construction of a unified nation-state has been an objective of Korean unification, even if this is necessarily pursued over a significant amount of time. The Korean Peninsula was geo-politically a single nation until Japanese annexation in 1910, and was divided currently resulting from post WWII/Korean War/Cold War conditions and dispensations. Although Korea's prolonged division has intensified ethnic heterogeneity, these foundations of blood, culture, language, and historical homogeneity which existed prior to Korea's occupation and subsequent division still remain. This means that the re-construction of a unified Korea as a modern nation-state, cannot simply be rejected or derided on the basis of a political whim or as a response to a temporary socio-economic condition. Hence, restoration of the balance between heterogeneity caused by differences in system and ideology and the homogeneity of historical experience becomes a task on the road to unification and integration, not a justification for rejecting or abandoning it altogether.

As we have seen, North Korea has historically instrumentalized nationalism in its efforts to promote unification on its own terms, both to assert regime superiority and/or to compensate for its confrontational subjugation. Currently, the

Kim Jong Un regime remains, focused on regime security and its nuclear arsenal, and has not addressed unification and nationalism in any depth. Unsuccessful attempts at constructing a valid shared discourse on unification, will lead the Kim Jong Un regime to declare its nationalistic difference in the process of clarifying its position in terms of a two-state system, in a move similar to East German case in the past. However, given Korea's long and storied national history founded in memories of homogenized or shared experience, if North Korea abandons the concept of nation and strengthens its national character, but South Korea also abandons the concept of nationhood/ethnicity, it may never be possible to return to a single nation-state that has been formed through a long history. Therefore, an imposed or abandoned concept of the unified nation-state can engender challenges and difficulties in the form of popular national identification. Consequently, it is impossible to completely ignore the impact of ethnic and nationalist values on the formulation of unification strategy.

However, it also needs to be acknowledged that in South Korea, the nationalist appeal of the unification issue is weakening in the face of generational change. The most important criterion for future generations to address will be how to combine universal norms and traditional values with ethnicity and nationalism as special compensatory value for unification. In fact, the instigation and defense of universal values such as freedom, human rights, coexistence, and prosperity applies not only to the unification process but also to any subsequent integration process. If unification is considered as a process which accommodates social integration after reunification, it becomes inevitable that universal values become connected and interwoven into ethnicity or nationalism. What is clear is that neither North nor South Korea will accept the absoluteness of universalism as an imposition, hence, there must be a process that searches for the logic of 'agreed universals', to accommodate coexistence and integration between the two distinct Koreas (Chung Young-chul, 2019, p.57).

## **2.2. State Recognition and Special Relationship**

Since the end of the Cold War, the South Korean government has pursued unification with North Korea based upon functionalist policy directives. However, due to the North Korean nuclear issue, almost all inter-Korean relations have been suspended. From an integrationist perspective, the formation of mutual trust remains the most important thing, however, there has been a lack of success in building mutual trust and institutionalizing sustainable cooperation between the two Koreas. Essentially, this is because both North and South Korea have pursued self-directed unification plans without recognizing the other as an independent state.

In a general sense, a confederation unites states by treaty without ceding their sovereignty and independence to the confederation. The ‘Korean Commonwealth’ as an intermediate stage in South Korea's official unification formula, represents more of a loosely connected commonwealth than a typical confederation of states. It also differs from a typical national federation in that it assumes a federative structure, whereby both parties exist independently as sovereign states under international law, but unification is pursued through the maintenance of special interim relationships. To prevent the entrenchment of division, the Korean Commonwealth is designed as a quasi-confederation, however, this renders the international legal relationship between both jurisdictions opaque, hence, agreements between both parties lack the character and status of a ratified treaty. Additionally, aspirational references one-nation unification through the formation of a special relationship between the two Koreas, are implicitly constituted under South Korean direction, a position intended to reflect the predominance of post-Cold War era dispensations.

Likewise, North Korea's official unification plan, the federation formula, is problematic from an integrationist perspective. North Korea's proposed federal system assumes the formation of a North Korean-led state that prioritizes political

and systemic integration over homogeneous expansion, therefore, limitations exist because intentions and objectives expressed through the plan are patently unacceptable to South Korea, as preconditions for the formation of a federal state are linked to the North Korean Workers' Party's nationwide revolutionary strategy (Yun Young-sang, 2020, p.62). Moreover, it is unrealistic for a federal state accommodating two opposing systems to be institutionally functional.

Resolving difficulties in the unification process necessitates agreed solutions based on pragmatic assessments about how each of the divided entities can move towards unification by going through the stage of mutual recognition and peaceful coexistence, as is extant in the June 15, 2000 Joint Declaration, by avoiding an exhaustive debate on the issue of institutional unification. Some scholars suggest that future unification discussions need to start from this point of statehood recognition.<sup>147</sup> North Korea has three generations of successive governments founded upon a socialist system of economics with an attendant socialist socio-political infrastructure. It is also committed to nuclear development for the stability of its system, government, and institutions. Hence, the issue of system security is inextricably existential for the regime and the country. If the moment comes when the North and the South seek reunification, the formation of confederation structure based upon the two-state, two-system seems to be more realistic.

In terms of relationship analysis and its application to East and West Germany and North and South Korea, such thinking is not new. For example, after witnessing rapid societal transformation in the aftermath of German reunification in 1990, when he was leader of the opposition party, South Korean President Kim Dae-jung devised a three-stage unification plan proposing a transitional confederation model as an alternative to state absorption. Moreover, North Korea's initial call for a federal system in the 1960s was modelled after Ulbricht's proposal

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147 There are different interpretations of the agreement in paragraph 2 of the Joint Declaration. Opposing group argues that the agreement in paragraph 2 is merely a formal logic since the low-level federal system advocated by North Korea is, after all, based on the Koryo Federal system and South Korean revolutionary theory. (Kang, Sung-yoon, 2004. p.50.)

for National Confederation.<sup>148</sup> Furthermore, in November 1989, after the fall of the Berlin Wall, the Kohl government in West Germany also proposed a transitional confederation. Its 10-point unification plan stated that a confederative structure should be developed between the two German states with the aim of realizing a federal system. Although in mid-January 1990, rapid changes in the East German situation prompted Kohl to shift towards reunification, the fact that his government initially attempted to form a confederative structure, has notable implications for the Korean Peninsula. Hence, initial compromise and the formation of a confederative structure centred on state-to-state relations, followed by the mutual removal of obstacles to the operation of the federation in practice, is persuasive in its consideration of the structured process of engagement. However, where it is difficult to obtain consent from the other party and the environmental conditions dynamically change, any unification plan that assumes in advance the form that unification will take, can be rendered meaningless by changing circumstances and events.

### **2.3. Possibility of National Federation as a Complete Form**

Since the Cold War ended, there was hope in South Korea that the North Korean system could be transformed and that Korea could then unify through the formation of ‘National Community’. However, the demonstrable failure of South Korea’s functionalist and neo-functionalist approaches, has been compounded by the shift from the end of post-Cold War U.S. hegemony towards a ‘New Cold War’ paradigm characterized by an intensified U.S.-China conflict. In this climate, North Korea has taken advantage of changes in the international order, especially the challenge to U.S. hegemony, by strengthening socialist solidarity with China

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148 Hankook Ilbo, June 15, 2020 (Lee, Dong-Ki, "The North's Federal System Advancing East German Unification Proposal...No Different from the South's plan.")

and Russia and demonstrating a path of transition to a two-state system distinct from that of South Korea, while continuing to develop nuclear weapons for system security. In this situation, a formation of feasible unification discourse has become increasingly difficult. Additionally, given the difficulties in implementing either of these in a practical context, it requires a creative imagination to propose other structured possibilities between a one-state approach designed around a one country-led unification process, and a two-state approach, which emphasizes status quo and coexistence. Nevertheless, apprehending diversity in terms of state formats could be a way to overcome the contradiction between these two logical standpoints. Since diverse forms of composite states exist in various ways in the real world, demonstrably coordinated via confederation and federal systems of organization, utilizing the inherent flexibility of composite states may open the door to expanded relational thinking on unification beyond the usual tropes such as peaceful coexistence (Lee Nam-ju, 2021, pp. 55-56).

This study provides an overview of the concept of national confederation as a situated complete form of unification, applied to North and South Korea, whereby transition to a one side-led unified state or for that matter a federal state, is neither realistic nor achievable. In other words, national confederation is not considered as a unification method in itself, but as a complete structural implementation of democratic procedures and peaceful methods based on the realization that as objectives, ‘one country-two systems’ or ‘two countries-one system’, will actually impede unification unless one adversary is absorbed by the other. These imaginative structured solutions to the Korean unification problem can be divided into several camps, some of which propose launching a full-fledged national confederation between the two Koreas, or others advocating the addition of extra-federal elements to the system to compensate for the looseness of the confederative structure, while strengthening trans-national management systems. Of course, political consensus is crucial to a fundamental change of unification formula. Historical experience reminds us of the importance of a representative

body to coordinate interests and unify national consensus. For example, the United Arab Republic (1958-1961), despite the similarity of values of the Egyptian and Syrian leaderships, was not able to establish a representative system to reconcile their conflicting interests, and in Yemen, after unification (1990), the transitional government did not have the authority to control tensions that remained between the South and the North, which now in the midst of civil war (Kang, Kwang-sik, 2008, pp.92-93). It is important to state that failure to secure internal momentum and sustainability in terms of integration could catastrophically lead to a "Yemen tragedy". Moreover, hostile relations on the Korean Peninsula, which span more than 70 years, cannot be expected to disappear even after the formation of confederative structure. Furthermore, international factors such as the persistence of hostile elements, exemplified by confrontations among the great powers surrounding the Korean Peninsula, may act as centrifugal forces, which disrupt and pull apart any national confederation. In such a scenario, it would be necessary not only to make political efforts from above, but also to lay a solid foundation for coexistence and cooperation in all sectors of society as a basis for integration.

While state-to-state economic cooperation under a confederal structure is important, if North Korea experience rapid economic growth as well as an expansion of its military power, it is possible that North Korea will break the confederative structure or treaty community and return to the two-state system. Hence, the importance of establishing common rules and legal systems, which support federation-level integration, in addition to agreeing general state-to-state principles. Just as the three pillars of the European Union: economic integration, internal affairs & judicial cooperation, common diplomatic and security, have been formed to engage diverse actors, so too should the structure of any North-South Korean Union be able to accommodate opposing viewpoints. The establishment of any Korean Peninsula National Confederation will also require a favorable international environment and the support of neighboring countries. Consequently, if the leaders of the two Koreas make a grand bargain for the establishment of a

national confederation, a grand bargain guaranteeing regional and international support is also required. A national confederation structure formed by this process, would conceivably support the development of national integration. The question of how it will develop, either as a unitary state, or a federation of states, or whether it will continue to increase levels of integration while maintaining a confederation system, should be left strictly to future generations to decide. If the political systems and people of North and South Korea cannot find a grand consensus on the transition to such a path, it is highly likely that North Korea's two-state direction will continue and it will be difficult to find a path to unification for the time being.

## **VI. Conclusion**

North Korea's unification policy is generally approached from two different positions: one perceives that North Korea will continue to pursue the existing path of South Korean Revolutionary Strategy and Federal unification. The other argues that such theories are no longer realistic after the end of the Cold War.

These two opposing views are important because the South Korean government's unification policy reflects these positions. According to the former, regime competition is inevitable unless North Korea abandons the revolutionary unification route, and South Korea should maintain an aggressive unification strategy, rejecting inter-Korean exchange and cooperation programs which help to prolong the North Korean regime, while pursuing a policy that promote the collapse of the regime, to avoid being fooled by North Korea's false peace offensive. Conversely, the opposing position argues that a systemic confrontation with North Korea is no longer meaningful, so it is preferable to pursue a policy of transforming the North Korean regime through reconciliation and cooperation while restoring the Korean national community through the promotion of peaceful co-existence. The purpose of this study was not to argue for the usefulness of either approach. Rather, it was to emphasize the need for an objective analysis of the North Korean regime's position with respect to unification, given that the perspective from which North Korea is viewed determines the framework of South Korea's unification policy.

While there have been several studies on the policies of Kim Jong Un's regime, these have generally been diffused by a fragmented field that covers diverse topics such as inter-Korean relations, the unification issue, militarism, economics and aid as well as international relations. In particular, while there have been quite a few studies on the nuclear issue, the hallmark of the Kim Jong Un regime, there have not been many studies on what impact this may have on the stance the Kim Jong Un regime will take on unification. This study attempts to

shed light on recent policies of the Kim Jong Un regime, and through the analytic framework of ‘Constellation Analysis’, excavate factors which may arbitrarily change the unification environment on the Korean Peninsula beyond the regime's defensive intentions of regime stability. Accordingly, while the current Kim Jong Un regime, reflecting its two-state tendency, exhibits defensive and separation-blocking behavior, analysis shows that it is possible that North Korea may revert to its former aggressive unification policy in the future, if elements of its one-state tendency are expanded. As some have pointed out, it is not unreasonable to suggest that given the Kim Jong Un's last decade dedicated to perfecting its nuclear weapons program, the next decade could well be a period of striving towards coercive unification based on its perceived military supremacy. It is important to add that the any analysis of the Kim Jong Un regime's path to unification remains an accumulative time bound exercise. Moreover, broader more comprehensive scales and further detail-oriented analytical criteria will be required to rigorously analyze the evolving situation and to produce convincing results, findings and recommendations. The use of the ‘Constellation Analysis’ as a technique throughout this study has been very general, hence the exploration of more specific and objective analysis methods will be left to future research.

Follow-up research with a more open perspective on the South Korean unification plan is also required. ‘Time is on my side’ is not a viable position whenever it comes to unification. Waiting for North Korea to collapse like East Germany, or expecting inter-Korean relations to go back and forth without any objective beyond engagement leaves the unification process a hostage to fortune. As time passes, circumstances certainly change, but so also do generational perceptions. A post-war generation, which did not experience either the Korean War and the Cold War, now favors the ‘status quo’ of the country divided over rapid reunification. This generation is significantly less likely to recognize the population of the ‘other’ state as their own and consequently the desire to reunify the Korean Peninsula is waning. Moreover, as this study shows, the North Korean

regime, as it continues to promote its two-state tendency, is unlikely to pursue unification actively in the near future. This places the onus on South Korea to find the best solution for peaceful reunification, and if it fails, then Korean unification will not happen, even if the opportunity arises. This study's combination of academic analysis and investigation of policy issues is based on a recognition that without South Korean taking the lead in unification policy, unification on the Korean Peninsula will steadily become a more distant prospect over time.

In conclusion, this study has highlighted the rise of the two-state policy in North Korea, and suggested a possible shift in the One-Korea unification policy that has dominated North Korea's unification formula for decades. Further research is needed to explore imaginative and creative alternatives for Korean unification, beyond a moribund adherence to past perspectives, and outmoded unification narratives, theories and comparisons.

## **Appendix**

### **Abstract**

This study aims to understand the position and path of the North Korean Kim Jong Un regime on the issue of reunification of the two Koreas and to explore desirable alternatives to the unification of the Korean Peninsula. To identify the factors that influence the Kim Jong Un regime's unification policy decisions, the circumstances and conditions, under which the formerly divided countries conceived and implemented unification policies, were examined. Reunification policies of East Germany and North Korea under Kim Il Sung era, among formerly divided country cases, were analyzed because they were divided at similar times and had similar ideological characteristics. The contrast between the two cases, however, is that East Germany pursued a 'Two German-state policy' to secure its national sovereignty, while North Korea under Kim Il Sung era pursued an aggressive unification strategy based on a 'One Korea policy' during the Cold War.

To make a comparative analysis of these two cases, a sophisticated analytical tool used in the fields of international politics and social science was used. The Neorealist school in the 1970s at the University of Munich, established a framework of 'Constellation Analysis (Konstellationsanalyse)' specifically to analyze the behavior of individual states on the international political stage. Specifically, the Munich schools analyzed the motivations, actions, and interactions of individual actors based on the following seven categories: Structure, System, Interests, Norms, Perception, Power, Behavior.

Applying the analytical tools, East Germany has taken a Two-state policy based on the following factors: Structural Influence of Socialist Suzerainty, External system supported by statehood recognition, Cooperative Relationship with other divided Party, while North Korea has pursued a One-state policy,

influenced by the following factors such as relatively superior economic power, strong nationalism, relatively superior military power and strong leader's perception of unification issues.

Given the above results, the same factors of analysis were applied to the case of the Kim Jong Un regime, which currently rules North Korea. First, in terms of structural relations with socialist countries, Kim Jong Un's North Korea is judged to have maintained its self-reliance among socialist countries. Second, relating to the influence of the system on decision-making, lacking of an external framework for dialogue and cooperation has compelled North Korea to pursue its inter-Korean policy confrontationally and provocatively. Third, the Kim Jong Un regime, suffering from economic hardship due to sanctions imposed on nuclear developments, is not currently able to pursue an aggressive foreign policy like that associated with the early Kim Il Sung era, which was constituted on North Korea's economic advantage over South Korea after Korean War. Fourth, given the current international climate, with the regime experiencing isolation, pressure and diplomatic defeat, due to its confrontational line, the Kim Jong Un regime is likely to focus its efforts on maintaining the regime as an independent state through national normalization rather than an aggressive promotion of unification based on ethnicity. Fifth, it was analyzed that Kim Jong Un has a low perception of unification compared to previous North Korean leaders. Sixth, just as military supremacy served as the backdrop for an aggressive approach to inter-Korean relations during the Kim Il Sung era, Kim Jong Un regime practically completed its nuclear weapons system, and promoted its 'new strategic position' based on its newfound status as a nuclear power, publicly flaunting this with rhetorical quips such as 'unification war.' Finally, Kim Jong Un regime has characterized the relationship between North and South Korea as hostile and has made no effort to improve it, as it did under Kim Il Sung era.

Consequently, the Kim Jong Un regime's unification direction has four 'two-state-oriented' elements and two 'one-state-oriented' elements, indicating that

unification policy directives currently favor a ‘two-state’ system. In other words, the Kim Jong Un regime's current path to unification is focused on stabilizing its own system by defensively distancing itself from South Korea. Of course, it is mentioned earlier that this conclusion is prejudged upon a particular time frame and specific geo-political climate. The North Korean regime's orientation toward unification can and will change if the seven conditions relating to the Constellation Analysis alter. In an extreme example, if North Korea is able to overcome the asymmetry of military power between two Koreas through its nuclear arsenal or if its economic power is restored through the rapid development, North Korea may be more likely to pursue an aggressive unification policy. Correspondingly, if confidence in its nuclear arsenal strengthens the party leadership's awareness of the unification, or if the Kim Jong Un regime tries to lead the unification issue under the spurious logic that its nuclear arsenal guarantees the safety of the entire nation, all factors will shift toward one-unified state orientation, making an aggressive unification policy probable. However, if these indicators are not met yet, North Korea is likely to continue its ‘two-state’ orientation and ‘status quo’ in unification policy for the time being.

This study also attempts to derive policy implications by analyzing the situation in which the ‘One-state theory’ and the ‘Two-state theory’ have been raised as unification discourse in South Korean society. Considering that it is not easy to establish a single unified nation-state, achieved when one side is absorbed, and to form a federal system for two countries with different political and ideological systems, the possibility of forming a ‘Confederative Structure’ could be examined as an alternative measure for unification. Since various forms of compound states, such as national confederations and federal systems, exist in various ways in reality, utilizing the flexibility of compound states can expand the imagination of unification beyond peaceful coexistence. However, more ‘in-depth’ research will be needed on this subject in the future.

## **Zusammenfassung**

Diese Studie zielt darauf ab, die Position und die Pfadabhängigkeit des nordkoreanischen Regimes unter Kim Jong Un in Bezug auf die Wiedervereinigung der beiden Koreas zu verstehen und wünschenswerte Alternativen für die Vereinigung der koreanischen Halbinsel zu erkunden. Um die Faktoren zu identifizieren, die die Wiedervereinigungspolitik des Kim Jong Un Regimes beeinflussen, wurden die Umstände und Bedingungen untersucht, unter denen ehemals geteilte Länder Wiedervereinigungspolitiken konzipierten und umsetzten. Dabei wurden insbesondere die Wiedervereinigungspolitiken Ostdeutschlands und Nordkoreas unter Kim Il Sung analysiert, da diese Länder zur gleichen Zeit geteilt wurden und ideologische Ähnlichkeiten aufwiesen. Der wesentliche Unterschied zwischen den beiden Fällen besteht jedoch darin, dass Ostdeutschland eine „Zwei-Staaten-Politik“ verfolgte, um seine staatliche Souveränität zu sichern, während Nordkorea unter Kim Il Sung während des Kalten Krieges eine aggressive Wiedervereinigungsstrategie auf der Grundlage einer „Ein-Korea-Politik“ betrieb.

Für die vergleichende Analyse dieser beiden Fälle wurde ein analytisches Instrument verwendet, das in den Bereichen der internationalen Politik und Sozialwissenschaften Anwendung findet. Die neorealistische Schule der 1970er Jahre an der Universität München entwickelte den Rahmen der „Konstellationsanalyse“, um das Verhalten einzelner Staaten auf der internationalen politischen Bühne systematisch zu analysieren. Konkret untersuchte die Münchener Schule die Motivationen, Handlungen und Interaktionen einzelner Akteure anhand der folgenden sieben Kategorien: Struktur, System, Interessen, Normen, Wahrnehmung, Macht und Verhalten.

Unter Anwendung dieses analytischen Instruments verfolgte Ostdeutschland eine Zwei-Staaten-Politik, die von den folgenden Faktoren beeinflusst wurde: struktureller Einfluss der sozialistischen Schutzmacht, ein externes System, das

durch die Anerkennung der Staatlichkeit gestützt wurde, sowie eine kooperative Beziehung zur anderen geteilten Partei. Im Gegensatz dazu verfolgte Nordkorea eine Ein-Staat-Politik, die durch Faktoren wie eine relativ überlegene Wirtschaftskraft, starken Nationalismus, militärische Überlegenheit und eine ausgeprägte Wahrnehmung der Wiedervereinigungsfrage durch den Führer beeinflusst wurde. Die gleichen Analysefaktoren wurden auf das derzeit herrschende Kim Jong Un Regime angewandt. Erstens wird festgestellt, dass Nordkorea unter Kim Jong Un im strukturellen Verhältnis zu sozialistischen Ländern eine weitgehende Selbstständigkeit bewahrt hat. Zweitens führt der Mangel an externen Dialog- und Kooperationsrahmen dazu, dass Nordkorea eine konfrontative und provokative innerkoreanische Politik verfolgt. Drittens ist das Kim Jong Un Regime aufgrund wirtschaftlicher Schwierigkeiten infolge von Sanktionen gegen sein Nuklearprogramm derzeit nicht in der Lage, eine aggressive Außenpolitik zu verfolgen, wie sie mit der frühen Kim Il Sung Ära assoziiert wird, als Nordkorea wirtschaftlich überlegen war. Viertens deutet das aktuelle internationale Klima, das durch Isolation, Druck und diplomatische Niederlagen gekennzeichnet ist, darauf hin, dass das Regime seine Bemühungen auf die Stabilisierung des eigenen Staates durch nationale Normalisierung konzentrieren wird, anstatt eine aggressive, ethnisch begründete Wiedervereinigungspolitik zu betreiben. Fünftens wurde analysiert, dass Kim Jong Un eine geringere Wahrnehmung der Wiedervereinigung besitzt als seine nordkoreanischen Vorgänger. Sechstens hat das Kim Jong Un Regime, ähnlich wie in der Ära Kim Il Sung, durch seine militärische Überlegenheit seine strategische Position gestärkt. Mit der Vervollständigung seines Nuklearwaffenprogramms hat das Regime seine „neue strategische Position“ betont und diese mit rhetorischen Äußerungen wie „Vereinigungskrieg“ öffentlich zur Schau gestellt. Schließlich betrachtet das Regime die Beziehungen zwischen Nord- und Südkorea als feindselig und unternimmt keine Anstrengungen zur Verbesserung dieser Beziehungen, wie es noch unter Kim Il Sung der Fall war. Folglich weist die Wiedervereinigungspolitik

des Kim-Jong-Un-Regimes vier „Zwei-Staaten-orientierte“ und zwei „Ein-Staaten-orientierte“ Elemente auf, was darauf hindeutet, dass die derzeitigen politischen Leitlinien eine Zwei-Staaten-Lösung bevorzugen. Mit anderen Worten: Der aktuelle Weg des Kim Jong Un Regimes zur Wiedervereinigung konzentriert sich darauf, das eigene System zu stabilisieren, indem es sich defensiv von Südkorea distanziert. Es wurde jedoch bereits erwähnt, dass dieses Ergebnis auf einen bestimmten Zeitraum und eine spezifische geopolitische Lage beschränkt ist. Die Wiedervereinigungsausrichtung Nordkoreas kann sich ändern, wenn sich die sieben Faktoren der Konstellationsanalyse wandeln. Ein extremes Beispiel wäre, wenn Nordkorea das militärische Ungleichgewicht mit Südkorea durch sein Nukleararsenal überwinden oder seine wirtschaftliche Macht durch eine rasche Entwicklung wiederherstellen könnte. In diesem Fall könnte Nordkorea eine aggressivere Wiedervereinigungspolitik verfolgen. Ebenso könnten eine stärkere Zuversicht in das eigene Nukleararsenal oder der Versuch, die Wiedervereinigung unter dem Vorwand zu steuern, dass das Nukleararsenal die Sicherheit der gesamten Nation gewährleistet, alle Faktoren in Richtung eines Ein-Staat-Modells verschieben und eine aggressive Wiedervereinigungspolitik wahrscheinlicher machen. Solange diese Bedingungen jedoch nicht erfüllt sind, wird Nordkorea voraussichtlich seine Zwei-Staaten-Orientierung und den „Status quo“ in der Wiedervereinigungspolitik beibehalten. Diese Studie versucht zudem, politische Implikationen abzuleiten, indem sie die Situation analysiert, in der die „Ein-Staat-Theorie“ und die „Zwei-Staaten-Theorie“ als Wiedervereinigungsdiskurse in der südkoreanischen Gesellschaft diskutiert wurden. Angesichts der Tatsache, dass es weder einfach ist, einen einzigen einheitlichen Nationalstaat zu schaffen, in dem eine Seite absorbiert wird, noch ein föderales System für zwei Länder mit unterschiedlichen politischen und ideologischen Systemen zu etablieren, könnte die Möglichkeit einer „konföderativen Struktur“ als alternative Maßnahme zur Wiedervereinigung geprüft werden. Da verschiedene Formen von Staatenverbindungen, wie nationale Konföderationen und föderale Systeme, in der

Realität existieren, kann die Flexibilität solcher Strukturen die Vorstellungskraft über eine friedliche Koexistenz hinaus erweitern. Allerdings bedarf es in diesem Bereich weiterer vertiefender Forschung.

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