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INTRODUCTION – THE NORTH KOREAN PROBLEM¹

North Korea occupies a strange niche in contemporary political studies in which the strategic jostles with the divinatory. On the one hand, there are the strategic reports on North Korea's maneuvers and counter-maneuvers – for example, studies of the implications for regional stability and the global order of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's (DPRK) pursuit of nuclear weapons, and its transfer of nuclear technology to Third World countries. On the other hand, there are those analyses which seem to consist of reading the smoking entrails left by the at times aggressive, at times perplexing behavior of this recalcitrant state – for example, the analyses of the significance of the latest attempt at ballistic missile testing, Kim Jong Il's recent weight loss, or the vacillation over the status of the Kaesong Industrial Complex. Such treatments of North Korea, frequently labeled rogue, or sometimes an unrepentant, retrograde rogue state,² it might be argued, are not unwarranted given its past and present mode of behavior and the lack of transparency in the relations and structure of power within the regime. The DPRK, even more so than other nation-states designated as rogue states, such as Cuba or Iran, seems to be of a different order. The normalization of North Korea and its variant, the rehabilitation of North Korea, appears as a dominant theme in much of the literature on this country, ranging from the normalization of diplomatic relations with other states, such as Japan and the United States, to the normalization of its economic system via deepening and irreversible processes of marketization.³

The North Korean problem, as Gavan McCormack has argued, “may be better understood as a code-word for the accumulated residue of problems left over from an unhappy modern history – Korea's unresolved nationalism, Japan's imperialism and militarism...the Cold War, and of the rise and incipient decline of the United States as a regional and global hegemon.”⁴ Along similar lines, Kathryn Weathersby has observed that building a peace regime and achieving normalization and postwar reconciliation on the Korean peninsula will require confrontation and engagement with, as well as the joint investigation of the Korean War from all sides and participants, beginning with the experience and lasting effects of the three-year bombing of North Korea during the War.⁵ Scholars like McCormack and Weathersby rightly emphasize that the current geopolitical confrontation and tensions between North Korea and its near and far neighbors are burdened by the weight of history, the legacy of the past.

I want to examine in this paper, however, another salient yet underrepresented dimension of the North Korean problem: the question of post-unification Korean national identity. While much of the debate about the future of the Korean peninsula has taken shape around the uncertainties surrounding the succession of Kim Jong Il and portended changes in political structure, the future of Korean national identity remains an underexamined subject. In this paper, I will address the following questions: what will be the contours of national identity after North Korea and South Korea have unified; what will constitute the core of this identity; and what form will Korean national consciousness take on a unified peninsula? The outline of the paper is as follows. In Part I, “Mapping National Identity in South Korea: Continuity and Change,” I present a brief review of some recent surveys that represent changing South Korean perspectives on key political issues of unification and nationalism. Part II, “The Ethnic Deficit,” lays out the unification based upon homogeneous ethnicity logic utilized by policymakers on both sides of the DMZ and also found in popular understandings of unification. In this section, I consider the premises and political promise of ethnic nationalism in Korea. Part III, “Post-Unification World: Minoritization, Resistance, and the North Korean Surfeit,” draws upon continuing ethnographic research on North Korean defectors and uses the experiences of North Korean refugees' assimilation and integration into contemporary South Korean society to suggest possible trajectories of national identification formation in a post-unified era. In Part III, I also use the unified Korea case to consider how different theoretical accounts of nationalism are and are not applicable. The paper concludes by examining the artwork of Sun Mu, the North Korean defector artist residing in South Korea, and the ways in which some of his work gestures toward the ambivalence of a North Korean identity stripped of its state underpinnings.

PART I – MAPPING NATIONAL IDENTITY IN SOUTH KOREA: CONTINUITY AND CHANGE

RAND's, "The Shape of Korea's Future" survey (1999), the East Asia Institute-*Joongang Daily's* "Korean National Identity" survey (2005), and the Chicago Council on Global Affairs/East Asia Institute "Soft Power in East Asia" survey (2008) together offer a productive basis from which to introduce the question of national identification in South Korea. All three surveys in varying ways point to different dimensions of perceptions of national self and other, understandings of nationness in South Korea. Interpreted jointly, these surveys, as they span nearly a decade, are also able to chart patterns of continuity and change in attitudes and understandings of nationhood relevant to our questions here.

The 1999 "The Shape of Korea's Future" survey asked South Koreans questions concerning unification and long-term security issues. Regarding the possibility of North Korean invasion, nearly 50% responded that invasion was somewhat likely, while over 30% responded that invasion was somewhat unlikely. South Korean respondents' enthusiasm for unification seemed to show a shift, with more people becoming less eager (down from 54% in the eager category in 1996 to 38% in 1999) and more cautious about Korean unification (over 59% describe themselves as cautious about unification in 1999, up from 43% in 1996).⁶ These attitudes of caution and increased hesitancy towards unification were matched by expectations that unification would not happen in the near future but anywhere from five to ten or more than ten years (the majority fall within this group). When unification does occur, however, the types of problems South Koreans anticipated were predominantly economic (50%) rather than political (25%) or social (15%). Upon unification, a majority (72%) preferred the government to pay for unification mostly by reducing military spending and yet, a majority (over 60%) was willing to pay taxes to pay for unification if the tax burden was manageable. Finally, regarding desired state policies after unification, South Koreans responded thusly: a majority agreed that North Koreans should have full political rights to vote for the national government; that teachers and state officials from the North should be given equivalent jobs and salaries in the unified government; that retired soldiers from the KPA should receive the same pensions as soldiers from the ROK army; and that retired workers in the North should receive the same state pensions as their Southern counterparts. As the authors noted, such South Korean leniency and generosity toward North Koreans in the event of unification is noteworthy in light of the continued belligerence of the North against the South, suggesting "a striking degree of maturity and self-assurance."⁷

Although the 2008 "Soft Power in East Asia" survey was designed to measure Asian attitudes to different aspects of soft power, in particular, the extent of China's rising influence and soft power, the survey presents interesting findings regarding understandings of national security, pride, and identity. A majority of South Koreans surveyed considered themselves first and foremost in terms of their nationality, that is, their South Korean national identity constituted their primary form of identity. As well, while there seems to be some ambivalence towards the achievements of the economy for the national welfare and citizenry (only 25% of South Koreans were in the very proud and somewhat proud category, 74% in the not very proud and not at all proud grouping), 84% of South Koreans were proud of their country's scientific and technological achievements, 87% were proud of their achievements in sports, 66% proud of their achievements in the arts and literature, and 72% were proud of their history.⁸ The other interesting findings concern attitudes toward North Korea. Asked to rate their feelings toward North Korea, 15% felt very warm, favorable feelings, 21% somewhat favorable, 31% not particularly warm or cold feelings, 6% somewhat cold, and 25% very cold feelings. As well, when asked how worried they were that North Korea could become a military threat to South Korea in the future, 30.4% responded very worried, 47.9% somewhat worried, and 18.2% not very worried.⁹ The Asian soft power report concludes by emphasizing the gap between China's great power and lack of corresponding soft power, the region's potential for stability and integration, and also South Korea's growing diplomatic strength.

The third survey I will discuss briefly is the 2005 East Asia Institute "Korean National Identity" survey, a survey centered upon the theme of the identity of South Koreans and their understanding of Korean nationhood. Kang Won-taek introducing an edited volume based upon this survey data writes, "We have lived for a long time within the myth of the homogeneous race."¹⁰ Such a myth of racial homogeneity, of the Korean people as descendants of the same ancestor has come under challenge as the ethnic composition of Korean society has been transformed. As more and more foreign workers come to

reside in South Korea, and more Korean citizens marry foreigners and have “mixed-blood” offspring, the identity of the South Korean people, Kang argues, will continue to undergo change.¹¹ South Korean national identity in flux necessarily takes into consideration the North Korean part of their identity. North Koreans, whom South Koreans have considered as “our brothers and sisters,” continue to live in a different political system and within a peninsula rigidified by over half a century of division. Kang asks, “What is North Korea to us, for us?...Do all Koreans desire unification, do they all dream of unification?”¹² Another essay in this volume also suggests that the South Korean formation of national identity is being transformed. Lee Nae-young argues that South Korean perceptions of North Korea and unification constitute a critical component of South Korean national identity.¹³ Historically, South Korean perception of the North Korean military threat and attitudes regarding the possibility of the North provoking a war has steadily decreased: in 1992, nearly 70% believed there was such a possibility while 25% believed otherwise; in 1995, 50% believed there was a possibility of a Northern attack while nearly 50% believed there was not such a possibility.¹⁴ This 50-50 ratio has basically remained steady from the mid-1990s to 2004. Within the last twenty years, as Lee Nae-young points out, these attitudes toward North Korea have been influenced by the end of the Cold War and changing international and domestic politics.

The sections of the 2005 East Asia Institute “Korean National Identity” survey that are of interest here concern the South Korean respondents’ attitudes and views concerning the constituency of the nation, North Korea, and unification. When asked whom they thought belonged to the Korean race/ethnic nation, 79.7% responded that North Koreans belonged and 71.1% that overseas Koreans belonged.¹⁵ Along similar lines, when asked “How do you think of North Koreans?”, 30.5% answered “us,” 25.2% “brothers,” 21% “neighbors,” 10% as “other,” and 8% as “enemy.”¹⁶ At the same time, when asked if they trusted the nation-state of North Korea, 31.1% responded that they neither trusted nor distrusted while 61.6% responded that they did not trust North Korea.¹⁷ As for their opinion on what constituted the territory of the South Korean nation (*Taehan Minguk*), 25.8% responded that it is the current South territory, 47% that it is contemporary North Korea and South Korea (the entire peninsula), and 25.2% that it includes the peninsula and the Manchurian region.¹⁸ To the question, “What do you think about unification?”, only 17.4% responded “We must reunify soon,” while 82.1% of South Koreans expressed cautionary attitudes about future reunification.¹⁹ Greater hesitancy about the prospect of unification was matched with an interest in slowing down or rather, not speeding up the pace of unification. As well, when asked about the method of unification, 52.9% responded in favor of unification by maintenance and coexistence of each different system while 35.3% were in favor of a South Korean system-style of unification. More specifically, when asked, “In the event unification occurs, what do you think will be the biggest concern?”, 43.5% answered that it would be the economic burden of unification, 26.8% the differences in value systems, and 15.6% the political disorder associated with unification.²⁰ As to South Korean citizens’ interest in North Korea and North Koreans, 61% responded that they were interested and 36.9% not interested; as well, to the question of “What should be the government response in the event of large numbers of defectors coming to the South,” 46.2% answered “Because they are fellow Koreans, we should accept the refugees and let them live in the South”, 38.8%, “Accept the defectors according to our economic means and the diplomatic burden posed by them,” and 8% “Don’t accept the defectors because of the big societal burden.”²¹ Lastly, when asked if they thought there existed a big difference between the North Korean way of thinking/worldview and the South Korean way of thinking/worldview, 91.2% responded yes, while 7.6% responded no.

Because the history of confrontation between the North and South has become naturalized and sedimented into South Korean political culture, the contradictions between attitudes toward North Korea and attitudes toward reunification have received muted notice. Rather, as the authors of the RAND survey noted, South Koreans remained “emotionally committed” to the objective of reunification even as they became increasingly hesitant about the prospect and still feared the possibility of a North Korean attack. Or as Lee Nae-young has observed, there exists a contradiction between South Korean perceptions of the DPRK and their attitudes toward unification. On the one hand, North Korea is a separate, independent nation-state, a country with a wholly different political-economic system in competition with South Korea.²² On the other hand, the North is, at the same time, a partner with whom the South must be ready at any time to unify because they share the same blood and are fellow kinsmen.²³ This “two-faced” attitude towards North Korea continues to trouble South Korean national iden-

tity. Thus, North Korea functions as both friend and enemy for South Korea.

While the *Korean National Identity and Korean Politics* volume stresses the change in South Korean national identity within the last ten years, I would like to bring out the dimension of continuity in these attitudes. Even as these numbers shift, the contradiction still remains. These two sets of views – one set reveals fear, loathing, distrust, or ambivalence about North Korea while the other set expresses emotional commitment to and desire for unification with North Korea – pose a contradiction that can be explained in various ways. However, my argument here is that this paradox discloses an important dimension of the peninsula's unresolved nationalism; to understand more fully this paradox requires a conceptualization of nationness at two different levels and temporalities. On the one hand, present-day attitudes toward North Korea reside in the existing structure of national identification in South Korea and maps onto the current geopolitical configuration of separate nation-states on the peninsula: this is the contemporary structure of nationhood in the Republic of Korea that operates within historical time and is thus subject to change. Thus, South Korean citizens' views about the North have changed over time, depending upon the international political order, government policy toward the North, configuration of ideological forces and political structure in the South, media coverage of the North, and level of interaction and exchange with the North. Increasingly, North Korea has moved away from being the communist enemy par excellence and more to an erratic, bizarre state whose economic and political failures imperil the stability of the region and the prosperity of the peninsula. North Korea's nuclear brinkmanship makes the evening television news and dominates newspaper editorials, but this too plays less into the framing of North Korea as the gravest danger to the security of South Koreans and more into the construction of North Korea as a peculiar state. It displays its peculiarities as it attempts to normalize relations with the United States by playing its nuclear card or to demonstrate North Korea's prosperity and unity to the world by staging the extravagant spectacle of the mass games.

On the other hand, a certain component of South Korean attitudes toward unification and North Korea (this component remains stable and appears not to shift radically irrespective of the latest developments in North-South relations) stands apart from the existing structure of national identification in South Korea: this is the second level of nationness, the conception of the ideal, unitary, originary Korean nation. This conception of Korean nationness is not contingent upon the shifting dynamics of North-South relations and exists at a level of abstraction, removed from the empirical realities of the existing political order. This latter conception of nationness resides outside of historical time; it leads a hermetic existence, relatively immune to changes in state policy and behavior and shifts in popular discourse. It is this conception of Korean nationness which is helpful in explaining the enduring desire for and commitment to unification. In the two Koreas, nationalism at official and popular levels, has been informed by this conception of the ideal, originary nation.

PART II: THE ETHNIC DEFICIT

The enigma of Korean nationness partly resides in this double existence of antagonistic nationalism in the North and South and sustained existence of the conception of the originary, unitary nation. Foundational to the competing forms of nationalism in the two Koreas is the presupposition of homogeneous ethnicity. Eric Hobsbawm, for instance, has argued that the composition of most nation-states is too heterogeneous to claim a common ethnicity and furthermore, ethnicity has “no historical relation” to the formation of the modern nation-state. However, Korea constitutes one of the “extremely rare examples of historic states composed of a population that is ethnically almost or entirely homogeneous.”²⁴ Gi-Wook Shin's work on the formation of ethnic nationalism in Korea is illuminating here. Shin begins with the observation that most Koreans believe in their ethnic unity, in a homogeneous ethnicity that has existed since ancient times; moreover, this belief of shared ethnicity is held on both sides of the division.²⁵ But the understanding of ethnicity held by most Koreans overlaps with an understanding of shared ethnicity as constituting the same race, same blood. In part due to the entrenched nature of this dominant belief, the historicity of homogeneous ethnicity undergirding Korean national identity has not been adequately studied. The book, as Shin writes, “seeks to identify the historical processes through which Koreans came to develop national identity based on shared bloodline and to specify the ways in which this ethnic national identity has played out in Ko-

rean politics and society.”²⁶

In Shin’s argument, the ethnicization of Korean nationhood can be traced to the period of the late 1920s where it developed in response to the colonial racism of the Japanese empire and the pressures of international socialism. Thus, the historical origins of ethnic nationalism are located in this political-ideological matrix: “In its formative years, civic, political, and individualistic elements competed with ethnic, cultural, and collectivistic ideas in determining the ideological basis of the new modern Korean nation.”²⁷ Deepening contradictions of colonial rule in the peninsula resulted in the triumph of the particularistic-ethnic over the universal-liberal elements of nationalism. After national division, the policies of the authoritarian Northern and Southern governments only strengthened this sense of organic, ethnic homogeneity of the nation, and even the democratization movements of the 1980s within South Korea did not challenge this central foundation of Korean nationness.²⁸ Looking beyond the present to the unification future, Shin suggests that “unification efforts solely based on the precondition of ethnic homogeneity and nationalism may similarly be divisive and politically dangerous...Koreans need to promote a more democratic national identity rather than appeal to the sort of ethnic nationalism that preaches a false sense of uniformity only realizable through demands of conformity and a violent process of exclusion.”²⁹

I will return to Shin’s point later on in the essay, but first it may be productive to turn from this particular explanation of ethnic nationalism to broaden the focus and consider another level of explanation of nationalism. Anthony Smith’s argument about the premodern ethnic roots of modern nations is helpful here. By investigating the “pre-history” of nationalism and nations, Smith provides a critique of the modernist position, that nationalism is contingent upon multiple modernizing (or in other versions, industrializing or capitalist development) forces and that nations are wholly modern phenomena.³⁰ In contradistinction to modernist arguments like Ernest Gellner’s and Benedict Anderson’s, Smith argues that ethnic, or ethnic community, provides the pre-existing framework for most nations – it is these premodern ethnic roots that determine and constrain the development of nationalism and the formation of nations,³¹ and to understand the sociological reality of a nation and the political potency of nationalism, one must consider the persistence, durability, and lasting importance of ethnic ties, ethnic memories, and premodern ethnic identities. Smith defines the core of ethnicity as residing in a historical configuration of myths, memories, values and symbols: ethnicity is primarily mythic and symbolic.³² The six components of ethnic are: a collective name; a common myth of descent; a shared history or a sense of common shared history; a distinctive shared culture; an association with a specific territory; and a definite sense of solidarity and identity.³³ In particular, the second criterion of ethnic community is of interest here: the common myths of origin and descent which Smith calls “the *sine qua non*” of ethnicity. These myths of origin and descent, which provide the “means of collective location in the world and the charter of the community which explains its origins, growth and destiny,” however must be differentiated from race and belonging in blood – thus, it is neither actual descent nor genetic ancestry or blood ties with which Smith is concerned, but imputed common ancestry.³⁴ Offering a further explication of the difference between race and ethnicity, Smith states: “For our purposes, ‘race’ in the *social* sense of an attribution (by self or others) of certain ‘innate and immutable physical characteristics,’ is treated as a sub-type of wider ethnic phenomena. But the ‘myth of common ancestry’ is purely subjective and should *not* be equated *tout court* with this attribution of innate and immutable *physical* or *genetic* characteristics.”³⁵ In theory, an ethnic community’s myths of common ancestry and origin are non-aligned with physical or biological notions of race. In practice, especially in the Korean case, the self-understanding of common origins and descent can prey upon a notion of racial belonging or shared blood ties.

Part of the logic of Korean unification draws upon precisely the presumption of a pre-existing, pre-historic ethnic community and the notion of shared blood ties, and it is a logic that is used on both sides of the thirty-eighth parallel. In the arguments and proposals for reunification of the North and South, it is difficult to separate analytically the two when ethnic and racial belonging are so closely intertwined with each other. Even a cursory examination of past and present rhetoric, speeches, or policy writings on the subject reveals the prevalence of the importance of shared blood ties, irrespective of the changes in official unification policy and the actual state of inter-Korean relations at any point.³⁶ South Korean president Lee Myung-bak opened his administration with an inaugural speech that necessarily addressed the question of unification: “The unification of North Korea and South Korea is a long-cherished desire of seventy million Koreans.”³⁷ President Lee’s unification

policy stresses pragmatism over ideological principle, a 'result-oriented' approach to achieving denuclearization and a new peace structure on the peninsula, as well as prosperity for all Koreans, including the economic development of North Korea up to US\$3000 GDP per capita within ten years. Irrespective of differences in ideology, political system, market society, and world-view, President Lee Myung-bak, like South Korean presidents before him, has argued that South and North must/should unify because they are brothers, they are fellow Koreans, sharing common origins and descent: they form, across the most heavily militarized border in the world, one ethnic community. Nearly sixty years earlier, the Syngman Rhee regime had utilized a similar argument for persuading North Koreans in Haeju to rise up against the Soviet domination and the newly established Kim Il Sung regime. "Your bloodline has the 'blood' of the great Han nation. Your 'blood' and the 'blood' of our national army are the same 'blood.' How come you are going to sacrifice your precious 'blood' to become Soviet slaves? We know that you have no choice but to be subordinate to the Soviets and the Kim Il Sung clique. Gentlemen, however, your bleeding 'blood' is not a sacrifice for the nation...please come back as soon as possible to the national army that has a young 'blood'...Our beloved brethren, who is the one who pushed you to fight against the same nation?"³⁸

In parallel to the South's rhetoric, past and present North Korean propaganda has also advocated unification based upon the presumption of ethnic homogeneity (ethnic in the mytho-symbolic sense described by Smith) but also homogeneous as a result of their shared bloodlines. Unlike much of the external propaganda writings of Kim Il Sung which turned into sterile iterations of dogma or slogans of the party-state,³⁹ the unification writings, one might argue, do not suffer in the same way; the unification writings are repetitive but what they reiterate and expand upon is the myth of common origins and ancestry behind the sense of ethnic belonging binding all Koreans of the peninsula. They help to provide answers to the questions of "Why are we all alike? Why are we one community?"⁴⁰ As rearticulated by Kim Jong Il in 1988, "The question of national unity is all the more urgent in view of the unique traits of our nation and the characteristics of the historical development of our country. Our nation, as a homogeneous one with time-honored history and culture, is highly patriotic and strong in *esprit de corps*...It is not two different nations that stand in confrontation in the north and south of Korea, but it is one nation on the same land that is divided artificially by foreign forces. The Korean nation is a homogeneous nation that has inherited the same blood and lived in the same territory speaking the same language for thousands of years. All the Koreans in the north, south and abroad belong to the same nation with the blood and soul of the Korean nation and are linked inseparably with the same national interests and the common national psychology and sentiments. No force can forever split into two the single Korean nation that has been formed and developed through a long history, nor can it obliterate our nation and national traits."⁴¹ It is the prehistoric, pre-existing ethnic community of all Koreans that share blood, common history, historical memories, culture, and territory that overrides everything else: it reigns supreme in a sense.

A recent publication by a South Korean civic organization promoting national unification, *North Korea, Past and Present, and Unification* is illustrative here. The introduction opens by describing how our hearts were moved by the sight of Kim Dae-jung shaking hands with Kim Jong Il during the 2000 historic summit meeting: we were overwhelmed with emotion.⁴² Why? *North Korea Past and Present* offers the response that our emotions were roused because we share one bloodline, one root, because we are one ethnic nation that feels its oneness.⁴³ It continues that unification is not "forming one out of two, but that we were one and then divided into two. It is thus returning to the original state."⁴⁴ Therefore, unification of the two Koreas is the uniting of all seventy million descendants of Tangun and the recovering of the homogeneity of the nation. After discussing such topics such as the national sorrow of the Korean War, North Korea's natural environment, politics, economy, and state system, as well as the customs and cultural life of the North's residents, the book addresses more closely the logic and path toward unification. In the "Dream of Unification" chapter, the authors state, "When unification occurs, the life of our citizens will change greatly. Citizens will be able to travel without worry through all parts of the North and South. Within those places, we will be able to experience vividly the interesting different dialects."⁴⁵ After explaining how the North and South will be able to join forces to create a unified political and economic system, it continues: "Unification is not the simple combining of the countries but involves the peaceful reconciliation of the nation. To that end, the North and South must meet more frequently. When unification occurs, since we have lived different lives and within different environments, there will most likely be societal conflicts. But we must not let this impede the course of unification because unification is the path

to restoring the ethnic nation.”⁴⁶

Another perspective on the future of unification can be found in the position laid out by a former senior South Korean Ministry of Unification (MOU) official. When asked about how unification may pose potential challenges to national identification in a post-division peninsula, the MOU official replied: “The difficult part of unification resides in the road to unification, in the process, in the mechanics of unification.”⁴⁷ The MOU official stressed that what the South Korean government and citizens need to be concerned with is how to get to the endpoint of unification, not with what happens afterwards. The idea that national identity could constitute a problem once unification has been achieved or during the process of being achieved was readily dismissed. In his words: “We share the same language, same blood. Whatever differences in national feeling exist at that point will fade away once we live together this way. Once they are outside of the North Korean system, of course there will be time of adjustment, integration, and learning how to live well together, but there will not be those kinds of problems.”⁴⁸ Essentially, the core of this former senior MOU official’s argument is that once North Koreans cease to live under the system of oppressive state control and propaganda, once they have become liberated from the disasters and failures of North Korean rule, they will, the argument goes, become like their South Korean brothers: they will realize their true Koreanness, freed, as it were, from the distortions caused by years of living under the North Korean yoke. Moreover, the potential problems of the economic, cultural, and political integration of South Koreans and North Koreans and the assimilation of the North Koreans into a democratic capitalist society will be eased and ultimately overcome by ethnic belonging and through the ethnic ties and sentiments which already link the people. In the future, ethnic homogeneity will be effective in forming national unity and identity.

I would like to suggest, however, that it is precisely this argument that may pose potential political hazards in the post-unification world. Using Anthony Smith’s theoretical model, it is not difficult to explain the persistence of the ethnic on the divided Korean peninsula. The Republic of Korea and the DPRK, although they exist at the empirical level as separate nation-states, share the same prehistory of the nation, a prehistory that lies in deep ethnic “myths, memories, values, and symbols.” Hence, the ethnic community not only precedes the establishment of a capitalist South and a communist North but outlives them. Given Smith’s argument about the durability of the ethnic, we may, like many South Korean policymakers and intellectuals do, argue not only that the ethnic serves as the basis of the normative argument about unification, but also that the pre-existing ethnic will help to ensure the successful transition from ethnic identity to a later unified collective identity driving post-unification national integration.⁴⁹ That is, we must unify because of this shared ethnicity, and we can unify and do so successfully because we constitute the same ethnic community. In fact, one may make the case that according to the criteria set out by Smith, the Koreans are the ethnic *par excellence*.

In part, as I have already mentioned, it is Shin’s point that ethnic nationalism itself cannot guarantee a democratic future on the peninsula and may “be divisive and politically dangerous.”⁵⁰ Taking off from this point, I would like to argue that unification will further expose the divergence of ethnic and nation on two levels. On an analytical level, ethnicity and nationalism, as argued by Benedict Anderson, can be differentiated according to their different types of seriality, bound and unbound. Unbound seriality is open and unnumbered: it “is exemplified by such open-to-the-world plurals as nationalists, anarchists, bureaucrats, and workers.”⁵¹ Bound seriality, with its origins in governmentality, is closed and numbered, and is figured by institutions such as the census.⁵² The essentialist and identitarian political trajectory of ethnicity-based collective subjectivity is set apart from the universalism of nation-based modern subjectivity, and to ground the future unified nation upon shared ethnicity risks the realization of the former rather than the latter form of political practice. On another level, the conception of shared bloodline and ethnic homogeneity should entail the presence of identity as these ethnic ties, memories, values, and symbols are already shared within the collectivity, but contemporary nationalisms in the North and South admit the existence of the non-identity of the putative members of the ethnic community. The project of realization and ‘restoration’ of this imagined prehistoric ethnic community, after the establishment of two separate, independent nation-states and over sixty years of oppositional co-existence, endangers the political future of a unified Korean nation. The dependence upon the notion of ethnic homogeneity to ensure future national unity and a unitary national identity may result in three kinds of unintended consequences – minoritization, resistance, and the persistence of North Korean nationness – all of which portend

serious difficulties for the post-unification state and society.

PART III: THE POST-UNIFICATION WORLD: MINORITIZATION, RESISTANCE, AND THE NORTH KOREAN SURFEIT

The ethnicity-based form of national belonging may be undesirable or insufficient to generate the collective sentiment or the national attachment necessary for a unified Korea. National identification in a new nation, of course, will be dependent partially upon the process and method of unification: the step-by-step concrete measures which must be taken toward the end goal and the different stages of unification will influence the post-unification forms of nationalization and identity. One study⁵³ of the different scenarios of Korean unification presents four scenarios: peaceful integration and unification; collapse and unification through absorption; unification through conflict; and disequilibrium with potential for external intervention. While this work is mostly concerned with examining post-unification dynamics and its implications for the U.S.-ROK alliance and the U.S. Army in South Korea, the hypothetical case laid out by the authors is useful to examine for the types of changes necessitated by and for unification and to see why the question of national identity does not figure as a central one in the unification debate.

The authors present the first scenario of peaceful unification and integration as the least probable scenario given the present realities of the peninsula and the history of animosities and “zero-sum thinking”⁵⁴ held by the North and South. The scenario would be characterized by the following sets of indicators. The political indicators: mutual recognition across political institutions, cessation of all political propaganda by both sides, routinized high-level exchanges, release of all political prisoners in North and South, abrogation of national security and espionage laws, extensive exchanges between political parties, and ability to engage in political activities in the South and North. The social and economic indicators: more freedom of movement and travel within and between the two Koreas, cessation of government censorship, removal of restrictions on dissemination of print and electronic media, ability to enroll freely in schools and educational institutions, decoupling of economic exchanges from reciprocal political measures, constitutions and legislatures that allow for unconstrained economic activities between the South and the North, including the flow of people, goods, services, capital, and technologies, upgrading of joint venture laws in the North, full convertibility of the currencies of South and North. The military and security indicators: unconditional North Korean participation in the four-party talks, cessation of diplomatic competition between the two Koreas and establishment of diplomatic ties between United States and North Korea and Japan and North Korea, replacement of the Armistice Agreement with a permanent peace treaty, full North Korean compliance with IAEA and NPT provisions, cessation of all military activities construed as provocative or offensive.⁵⁵

This first scenario’s implausibility stems, in part, from the difficulty that a kind of preliminary unification must have already been accomplished before official unification can occur: “agreement and compliance must be in place before, during, and after unification and that agreement must be reached at all levels of both systems in order to create a functioning, unified government...The two Koreas not only have to come to terms politically at the highest level, but mutual confidence and agreement must be reached at all other levels before creating a unified government.”⁵⁶ The three other scenarios posit varying levels of the disintegration and collapse of the North Korean regime and unification occurring in the aftermath; nevertheless, all four scenarios assume that unification will be a Seoul-driven process. Even upon examination of the security, political, and economic challenges of unification (as outlined above), it is still, as the authors comment, difficult to see how the two Koreas will get from here to there. And it is not surprising that the question of post-unification national identity does not appear as a serious problem to address in a unified peninsula, given the other thorny and complex issues at hand.

Yet, the question of the formation of a new national identity is not an insignificant one given the universality of nationalism globally and in particular, given its salience in the East Asian context. It may be, as the South Korean unification ministry official averred, that once North Koreans begin to live and work within a South Korean type of society, the existing markers of difference will be erased: North Koreans will adjust to capitalism and become essentially South Koreans so that one population will integrate into the other population in seamless fashion. This type of socio-cultural assimilation argument can be

extended to the political level. Michael Billig's argument about the daily reproduction of nations and the ideological means of the production of nationness is relevant here. Billig terms this process "banal nationalism" which he defines as: "the ideological habits which enable the established nations of the West to be reproduced."⁵⁷ Banal nationalism's terrain is the quotidian: it operates at the levels of habit, practice, and belief. The nation is "'flagged,' in the lives of its citizenry... In so many little ways, the citizenry are daily reminded of their national place in a world of nations. However, this reminding is so familiar, so continual, that it is not consciously registered as reminding."⁵⁸ Banal nationalism is neither extraordinary nor driven by emotional outpouring or collective passion: it consists in the mundane and repetitive reminding and indicating of nationhood in the lives of ordinary citizens so that they do not forget their national identity. This is a process which involves both a forgetting of the past (as Renan reminded us) but also a forgetting of the present – "national identity in established nations is remembered because it is embedded in routines of life, which constantly remind or 'flag' nationhood. However, these reminders or 'flaggings,' are so numerous and they are such a familiar part of the social environment, that they operate mindlessly, rather than mindfully... remembering, not being experienced as remembering, is, in effect, forgotten."⁵⁹

For Billig, it is less the national flag waved in moments of crisis or celebration but the national flag hanging silently in public places passed by numberless citizens on a daily basis that is of sociological interest. Forgotten reminding, banal flagging of nationhood is productive of national identity because it is able to exercise its ideological power quietly, under the radar as it were. If Billig's basic argument is tweaked to apply to a non-established (and yet in the eyes of many Koreans, an "old" nation) and non-Western case, banal nationalism in a post-unification peninsula could also work to reproduce the new nation. The unobtrusive ideological means to produce and sustain a unified national identity may be found in the most ordinary routines and practices of contemporary social life: listening to radio shows, checking the weather forecasts online, or watching the evening television news broadcasts. Will the outcome of such continual and pervasive flagging of the new nationhood be, as implied by the unification ministry official, the forgetting of the past and the forgetting of the present by the North Koreans?

Whether the South Korean expectation that North Koreans in the future will become like their South Korean compatriots through the workings of banal nationalism or through the solvent of ethnic homogeneity, I would like to suggest that in the post-unification period, the North Korean form of national identification may persist long after the demise of the Kim Jong Il regime or the end of the DPRK as we know it. We can differentiate at least three different but related possible trajectories for the transformation of national identification: the integration of North Koreans into a South Korean-style new unified peninsular nation-state may result in either the minoritization of North Koreans and their resistance; the integration of the two populations may end in the growth of North Korean minority political consciousness and minority nationalism; or the persistence of North Korean nationness. Although this argument is tentative, and dependent upon the manner, timing, pace, and dislocation of unification, recent experience of North Koreans within the South suggests that neither banal nationalism nor national integration and the production of a single national identity via the integrative forces of ethnicity is sufficient. Consider the following incident which illustrates some of the potential dangers in relying upon the potency of shared race and shared bloodline to form the foundation of a future national identity.

In April 2007, the Ministry of Unification announced that it had denied the request made by the Committee for the Democratization of North Korea (*Bukhan Minjubwa Uiwonhoe*)⁶⁰ to discontinue the use of the term "*Saeteomin*" (literally, new residence seekers or newly landed immigrants) to describe North Korean defectors (*Talbukja*).⁶¹ The two hundred members of the Committee for the Democratization of North Korea had met and decided unanimously to request the group name change from the government. According to the organization, "We are not *Saeteomin*. We are North Korean defectors who have escaped from the oppression and dictatorship of North Korea."⁶² In response to the formal request, the MOU responded that it had switched to the term *Saeteomin* to counteract the negative image of *Talbukja* and thus would not revert to the older term because of its negative connotations. As the organization argued, the term *Saeteomin* ignores the very meaning of and political intention and will at the crux of the term *Talbukja*: the new term as it implies that the defectors are simply new immigrants is inappropriate and unsuitable.⁶³ In 2005, because of the sense of disapproval and feeling of shame evoked by the term *Talbukja* and in an attempt to improve the social prejudice against the defectors, the MOU (under Minister

Chung Dong Young) changed the term it used to designate this population to *Saeteomin* a neologism which means “a person with hope for a new life in a new place.”⁶⁴ Reiterating their rationale for rejecting the new term, the committee stated, “It is because the new term ignores the subjectivity of those who rejected dictatorship and came in pursuit of freedom; it is an offensive term naming us as those people who only came here to eat and live.”⁶⁵ Calling the change to *Saeteomin* (attacked as a depoliticized term) a clumsy attempt, the North Korean Democratization group also criticized the South Korean government for using the neutral term as a way to avoid antagonizing the Kim Jong Il regime. Another objection to *Saeteomin* voiced by the group was that the new term did not include all the North Korean defectors residing in other countries such as China. By the end of 2008, the MOU reversed its decision and announced that hitherto, the government would cease to use the new term to describe those North Korean defectors residing in the South.

By successfully lobbying for the return to the older name – to be called North Korean defectors – these defectors argue that *Talbukja* reflects and retains the core of this identity. In essence, these North Koreans object to the anodyne term, *Saeteomin*, because it gives South Koreans the impression that they immigrated to the South for better living conditions, to fulfill basic economic needs. Their rejection of the new term is based on three reasons: *Saeteomin* conceals the meaning of their defection; nullifies and diminishes their separate identity; and excludes other members of their collectivity. In this return to defectorhood, it is not difficult to discern that the political subjectivity of the North Koreans is very much like a national form of identification outside the framework of the state. These North Koreans have asserted that the retention of the South Korean state classification is a part of the recuperation of their North Koreanness. Other North Korean refugees, however, may view the term as inaccurate, unsuitable, or insulting, but they do not fight the government and instead, prefer to be absorbed quietly into the mass of South Korean society. The various defectors whom I have interviewed have said that the new term is “misleading” or “incorrect,” but also that the North Korean defector term is a burdensome label and sometimes too politically charged to allow them to assimilate and accomplish precisely the very business of living that others have decried.⁶⁶ Thus, some defectors prefer to mask their cultural otherness as stemming from their origins as Chinese-Koreans from the Yanbian region.

Official and NGO estimates of the number of North Koreans residing in the South hover around 15,000⁶⁷ while as many as 100,000 to 400,000 North Koreans are thought to be residing outside the DPRK. The fact that today, the majority of the North Korean refugees⁶⁸ who come to reside in South Korea experience numerous problems assimilating into Southern society is well-known in the South Korean public and recognized by Seoul. Although the defectors receive assimilation training at the Hanawon center, life-long monthly state subsidies, and a lump sum settlement payment, the minimal training and instruction they receive at the beginning are insufficient for enabling them to integrate into the South’s capitalist society.⁶⁹ With the exception of certain elite defectors who are able to find a niche for themselves or have the ready skills to capitalize on their status, the majority of North Koreans lack the linguistic, cultural, and technical skills required to get by. Upon being “set free” to live on their own, many refugees, as one defector stated, “wander around lost not being able to understand what everyone else is saying or what’s really, really going on.”⁷⁰ The complexities, nuances, and quickly changing trendy words and phrases of the modern Korean used in the South mean that North Korean newcomers suffer from a kind of illiteracy, and we may add, an illiteracy that extends to social and cultural levels. Assimilation eludes many of the North Korean refugees, and in its stead we find processes of marginalization and alienation at work.⁷¹ In addition to having to relearn the vernacular and to adjust to operating within South Korean society, many defectors are unable to gain steady employment, and struggle to keep whatever job they may have found: the defectors’ lack of marketable skills in the hyper-competitive South Korean society means that they cannot compete in the marketplace. As one South Korean broker put it, “A lot of the men can’t keep a job, they move around a lot from this to that job. Some just give up altogether and end up hanging out with other North Korean defectors, getting into trouble. They hang out, play cards, drink, etc...”⁷²

Will Kymlicka’s discussions of minority nationalism in Western, post-communist Eastern and Central European (ECE) countries are useful to consider at this juncture. Minority nationalism, Kymlicka argues, is a universal phenomenon and can be found in countries of all continents, sizes, wealth levels, and political regimes. “In all these countries [e.g., United Kingdom, France, New Zealand, Romania, Ethiopia, Sri Lanka, and China] national minorities are battling with the state – peace-

fully or violently – over issues of political representation, language rights, self-government, control over resources, and internal migration.”⁷³ Whereas in the Western nation-states, there has been a general acceptance of the legitimacy of minority nationalism and accommodation of some form of territorial autonomy for certain minorities, in the ECE countries, minority nationalism continues to be viewed by the state as illegitimate and dangerous to state security and stability.⁷⁴ The divergence between the two can be explained by the different criteria used by the state to judge minority claims – the framework of justice or that of security. It is Kymlicka’s argument that the discourses of justice and security/loyalty which provide the frameworks for assessing minority claims pull in contrary directions and that the more the lens for evaluating minority issues is securitized, the more difficult it becomes “to ensure justice and tolerance for minorities.”⁷⁵ Of particular interest are the minority nationalism debates within the ECE countries in transition from communist dictatorship to liberal democracies, planned economies to market economies. The challenge of minority rights for these states is how to fit their claims within the context of rapid and great transformation of state and economy: priority is given to the transformation of economy and state while the minority rights issue is deferred until a later post-transition date.⁷⁶ As well, the recognition of minority nationalism is understood to pose a security risk upon the assumptions that minorities tend to be disloyal, a strong and stable state necessitates weak minorities, and the treatment of minorities is fundamentally a question of national security.⁷⁷

Another discussion of minority nationalism by Kymlicka attempts to consider how Western models of liberal multiculturalism may apply in the Asian context. Within the West, there have been two ways in which an internationalization of the discourse on minority rights and multiculturalism has become manifest: international standards for minority rights have been codified and adopted by organizations such as the United Nations and the World Bank; and ideas of minority rights centered upon principles of liberal tolerance and democratic justice have become more widely accepted and now circulate globally.⁷⁸ Examples of minority nationalism in the West include the Quebecois in Canada, Scots and Welsh in Britain, Catalans and Basques in Spain, Flemish in Belgium, and Puerto Ricans in the U.S.⁷⁹ In all these cases, historically, the state has attempted to suppress the substate minority nationalism and attenuate or destroy the minority’s distinct sense of nationhood. Today, as Kymlicka points out, Western countries have “accepted the principle that these substate national identities will endure into the indefinite future, and that their sense of nationhood and nationalist aspirations must be accommodated in some way or other.”⁸⁰

For Asia, the relevance of the Western experience of multiculturalism and the accommodation of and engagement with minority rights within the larger framework of human rights, and liberal-democratic constitutionalism must be considered by looking at the preconditions of minorities’ push for rights and dominant majorities’ acceptance of their claims. Of the three factors identified by Kymlicka which help to explain the rise of minority mobilization (increasing numbers, growing rights-consciousness, and greater, safer access to arenas of political participation),⁸¹ the third, democracy, is most salient. In consolidated democratic societies, elites are constrained by the democratic framework of politics in what they can do to silence minority nationalism or crush political movements. Kymlicka states, “there is no option but to allow minority groups to mobilize politically and advance their claims in public. As a result, members of minority groups are increasingly unafraid to speak out. They may not win the political debate, but they aren’t afraid of being killed, jailed, or fired for trying. It is this loss of fear, combined with rights-consciousness which explains the remarkably vocal nature of ethnic politics in contemporary western democracies.”⁸²

In light of Kymlicka’s observation of the internationalization of norms for states regarding minorities, it is interesting to consider that the legal status of North Korean refugees rests in part on South Korean official nationalism and the presumption of ethnic homogeneity. The UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) has grounded its assessment of the protection needs of North Korean refugees on the 1955 Convention on Refugees which states: “In the case of a person who has more than one nationality, the term ‘the country of his nationality’ shall mean each of the countries of which he is a national, and a person shall not be deemed to be lacking the protection of the country of his nationality if, without any valid reason based on well-founded fear, he has not availed himself of the protection of one of the countries of which he is a national.”⁸³ As the ROK Constitution states, “The territory of the Republic of Korea shall consist of the Korean peninsula and its adjacent islands,” ROK citizenship is intended to include North Koreans (North Korean refugees, in effect, have dual citizenship) and

thus, “the clause excludes most North Koreans from international protection...”⁸⁴

The complexity of the post-unification world and the current challenges of North Korean defectors and refugees’ assimilation into South Korean society suggest that North Koreans in a unified peninsula could be likened to an ethnic minority. Such a suggestion may appear, at first glance, to be paradoxical – how can people of the same ethnic constitute a minority within that very same ethnic community? In fact, as the UNHCR assessment of the status and protection needs of North Korean refugees shows, North Koreans are already citizens of the ROK and thus could not constitute a group in need of special state or international protection. Their formal, juridical inclusion into the South Korean nation-state precludes that possibility. But I would argue that the experience of North Korean integration into the South and extrapolation from that experience for the post-unification world point us in the direction of a substate/minority nationalism, the political mobilization of the minority around an alternative conception of nationhood. Kymlicka has argued that the trend in Western democratic states is away from the older model of assimilation/exclusion and state-nation congruity to a newer multicultural model that recognizes “the existence of ‘peoples’ and ‘nations’ within the boundaries of the state.”⁸⁵ In this respect, Seoul lags behind the prevailing trend as it maintains the presupposition of same blood-same race as the foundation of the Korean nation and seeks to realize the older nationalist principle of congruity. Furthermore, the further development of democracy in the ROK ensures that an important political precondition for ethno-political mobilization is present. Even in the pre-unification period, the defectors’ claims for political voice and representation are heard, albeit not readily accepted by the majority of South Koreans. Certain segments of the North Korean population do speak out and are not afraid to make their as yet moderate claims, though there is still much space in the political system for the use of coercion and violence to suppress minority claims. In this sense, the conditions of minority nationalism, in some ways, already exist.

CONCLUSION: THE FUTURE OF CHOSON

In response to Anthony Smith’s address in the Warwick Debates on the origins of nations and nationalism, Ernest Gellner posed the question, “Do nations have navels?” Lkening the ethnic community to the navel, Gellner argued that some nations have navels, some do not; on the whole, the navel is inessential. What matters is the greatly transformed role of culture in human life and the functionality of nationalism for modern industrial society; nationalism is “the organization of human groups into large, centrally educated, culturally homogeneous units.”⁸⁶ Following Gellner, whether the two Koreas share one navel or not is inessential; pre-modern ethnic community or ethnic consciousness is, in a sense, redundant. What really matters, therefore, in a post-unification peninsula will be “their incorporation and their mastery of high culture” which will permit context-free communication in capitalist society. Only the central state can accomplish and control such a great task, and official nationalism will produce the unified nation to meet the structural requirements of capitalist society. A Gellnerian view of post-unification nationalism would point us in this direction.

Sun Mu’s artwork points faintly in another direction. I will focus my conclusion on the following four paintings: “*Naneun jeongmal hangbok halkka?*” (“I am truly happy?”) 2006, “*Beotda?*” (“Disrobing”) 2007; “*Igae moya?*” (“What is this?”) 2007; and “*Choson eui shin?*” (“The God of Choson”) 2007. All four works simultaneously indict the North Korean regime – its political authoritarianism, failed economic system, and oppressive social collectivism – and question the future of democracy and capitalism, the vision of prosperity and happiness promised by the prospect of a capitalist North and currently offered within the South.⁸⁷ The artist’s marginal notes to the portrait of Kim Jong Il in “The God of Choson” state, “Without you we are nothing. Without you our nation is nothing. . . We sang this song as we ate, went to work, and now that I have left your bosom, I ask again, where is Choson going, how far must we go? Your flag waves mistakenly.” Where is North Korea going? What will become of our nation? Who will we become? Through the questions raised within Sun Mu’s artwork, we can discern not only ambivalence towards South Korean national subjectivity but also the outlines of a form of North Korean national belonging that does not neatly or clearly disappear. North Koreanness does not erode, segue, or dissolve into Korean-ness, it does not assimilate into the form of national belonging dominant in capitalist South Korea. It lingers; it perturbs.

- ¹ I would like to thank Lee Nae-young and Kang Won-taek for their generosity in sharing the data from the 2005 “South Korean National Identity” survey.
- ² See Kate Gordy and Jee Sun E. Lee, “Rogue Spectres: Cuba and North Korea at the Limits of U.S. Hegemony,” 2008, unpublished paper.
- ³ On the political consequences of the processes of irreversible marketization in the North Korean economic system see Soo-Ho Lim, *The Rise of Markets within a Planned Economy* (Seoul: Samsung Economic Research Institute, 2009). Those who excessively tax North Korea for being a non-normal nation-state may well consider North Korea’s lack of normalcy in a regional-comparative perspective. In East Asia: China seeking to hold together and rearticulate nation and empire or continuing as Benedict Anderson has put it, to stretch “the short, tight, skin of the nation over the gigantic body of the empire,” Japan attempting to reestablish a fundamental right of sovereign nation-states, the dispossession of which has led, amongst other things, to what Marilyn Ivy has called the constitution of postwar Japan as an abnormal, improper nation centered upon the vicissitudes of capitalist production and economic prosperity, and of course the two Koreas fitfully pursuing the resuturing of the divided peninsula. Normal nation-statehood in this region may prove to be more anomaly than norm. Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, Revised Ed. (London: Verso, 1991), 86. On Japan as an improper nation-state see Marilyn Ivy, “Revenge and Recapitulation in Recessionary Japan,” *The South Atlantic Quarterly* 99: 4 (2000).
- ⁴ Gavan McCormack, “Japan and North Korea: the Long, Twisted Path towards Normalcy,” *U.S.-Korea Institute Working Paper Series*, 2008.
- ⁵ Kathryn Weathersby, “Ending the Korean War: Considerations on the Role of History,” *U.S.-Korea Institute Working Paper Series*, 2008. See also Charles Armstrong, “Necessary Enemies: Anti-Americanism, *Juche* Ideology, and the Tortuous Path to Normalization,” *U.S.-Korea Institute Working Paper Series*, 2008.
- ⁶ Norman Levin and Yong-Sup Han, *The Shape of Korea’s Future: South Korean Attitudes Toward Unification and Long-Term Security Issues* (Santa Monica: Rand, 1999). Levin and Han also noted, however, that South Koreans were still “emotionally committed” to the end goal of unification.
- ⁷ *The Shape of Korea’s Future*, 16.
- ⁸ Chicago Council on Global Affairs and East Asia Institute, *Soft Power in East Asia* (Chicago: Chicago Council on Global Affairs, 2008). This survey index of soft power, “the ability to wield influence by indirect, nonmilitary means” draws upon Joseph Nye’s definition of soft power, “the ability to get what you want through attraction rather than coercion or payments.” Joseph S. Nye, Jr., *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics* (New York: Public Affairs, 2005), 10.
- ⁹ 74% of those polled were worried that China could become a military threat to South Korea in the future; 49% that U.S. could become a military threat, 66% that Japan could become a military threat in the future.
- ¹⁰ Kang Won-taek, “Introduction,” *Hanguk-in eui gukka jeongcheseong gwa hanguk jeongchi* (Korean National Identity and Korean Politics), Ed. Kang Won-taek (Seoul: East Asia Institute, 2007), 5.
- ¹¹ Kang Won-taek, “Introduction,” 5.
- ¹² Kang Won-taek, “Introduction,” 6.
- ¹³ Lee Nae-young, “Korean Perceptions of North Korea and Unification and National Identity,” 186-7.
- ¹⁴ Lee Nae-young, “Korean Perceptions,” 196.
- ¹⁵ East Asia Institute/*Joongang Ilbo* “Korean National Identity” Survey, 107.
- ¹⁶ East Asia Institute/*Joongang Ilbo* “Korean National Identity” Survey, 233.
- ¹⁷ East Asia Institute/*Joongang Ilbo* “Korean National Identity” Survey, 275.
- ¹⁸ East Asia Institute/*Joongang Ilbo* “Korean National Identity” Survey, 115.
- ¹⁹ East Asia Institute/*Joongang Ilbo* “Korean National Identity” Survey, 199.
- ²⁰ East Asia Institute/*Joongang Ilbo* “Korean National Identity” Survey, 209.
- ²¹ East Asia Institute/*Joongang Ilbo* “Korean National Identity” Survey, 229.
- ²² 77.7% of people were of the opinion that South Korea and North Korea were in actuality separate, independent nation-states while 20.7% responded that they were not. East Asia Institute/*Joongang Ilbo* “Korean National Identity” Survey (2005).
- ²³ Lee Nae-young, “Korean Perceptions,” 187.
- ²⁴ Eric Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism Since 1780* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 66. In a footnote, Hobsbawm mentions that Japan and the two Koreas are 99% homogeneous.
- ²⁵ Gi-Wook Shin, *Ethnic Nationalism in Korea: Genealogy, Politics, and Legacy* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2006), 3.
- ²⁶ Shin, *Ethnic Nationalism in Korea*, 3.
- ²⁷ Shin, *Ethnic Nationalism in Korea*, 115-6.
- ²⁸ Shin, *Ethnic Nationalism in Korea*, 135.
- ²⁹ Shin, *Ethnic Nationalism in Korea*, 165.
- ³⁰ Anthony D. Smith, *The Ethnic Origins of Nations* (New York: Basil Blackwell, 1986), 11. Other articulations of this argument can be found in Anthony D. Smith, “The Myth of the ‘Modern Nation’ and the ‘Myths of Nations,’” *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 11:1 (1988), 1-26; Anthony D. Smith, *National Identity* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1991); Anthony D. Smith, *Nations and Nationalism in a Global Era* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1995).
- ³¹ Smith, *The Ethnic Origin of Nations*, 18.
- ³² Smith, *The Ethnic Origin of Nations*, 16.
- ³³ Smith, *The Ethnic Origin of Nations*, 22-32.
- ³⁴ Smith, *The Ethnic Origin of Nations*, 24.
- ³⁵ Smith, *The Ethnic Origin of Nations*, 231.
- ³⁶ The authors of *The Making of a Unified Korea* for example have categorized the different periods of policies and proposals for unification in this way: 1945-1953 – the consolidation of Korea’s division and the formation of the unification debates; 1953-1970 – the first period of unification debates/the vacuum period; 1971-1987 – the second period of unification debates/the thawing period; 1988-present – the third period of unification debates/the blossoming period. Jinwook Choi and Sun-Song Park, *The Making of a Unified Korea: Policies, Positions and Proposals* (Seoul: Korea Institute for National Unification, 1997).

- ³⁷ Lee Myung-bak, Inaugural Speech, February 25, 2009. See also Cho Min, "Lee Myung-bak Jeongbu Daebuk, Tongil Jeongchaek Chujin Banghyang" (The Vision and Direction of the Lee Myung-bak Administration's North Korea and Unification Policy), *Tongil Jeongchaek Yongu (Unification Policy Studies)*, 17, 1, 2008.
- ³⁸ Cited in Shin, *Ethnic Nationalism in Korea*, 153. Originally found in Pak Myongnim, *Han'guk Jeonjaeng Ui Balbal Gwa Gwon (The Outbreak and Origins of the Korean War)*, (Seoul: Nanam Press, 1996), 2.
- ³⁹ For example, the repeated critiques of the South Korean puppet governments at the mercy of the U.S. imperialists or the exhortatory speeches on carrying forth the tasks of the great socialist revolution, or the innumerable didactic explanations of the *juche* idea that have appeared in the writings directed towards the outside world are lifeless in a way that writings about the collective desire for unification and memories of ethnic community are not. They still speak to and carry the capacity to evoke emotion, one could argue, from both Southerners and Northerners.
- ⁴⁰ Smith, *The Ethnic Origins of Nations*, 24.
- ⁴¹ Kim Jong Il, *Let Us Reunify the Country Independently and Peacefully Through the Great Unity of the Entire Nation*. <http://www.korea-dpr.com/users/banzeminzon/KIM%20JONG%20II.htm>
- ⁴² Hanguk Tongil Gyoyuk Yonguhoe, *Bukhan, Eojae, Oneul, Geurigo Tongil (North Korea, Past and Present, and Unification)* (Seoul: Green Korea, 2008), 16.
- ⁴³ *North Korea, Past and Present*, 17.
- ⁴⁴ *North Korea, Past and Present*, 8.
- ⁴⁵ *North Korea, Past and Present*, 238.
- ⁴⁶ *North Korea, Past and Present*, 239. Take, for example, one of South Korean historian Kang Mangil's books on unification in which he points out that the imperative of unification is being reconsidered by those from the left and the right, in light of the consolidation of democracy and changing debates about inter-Korean relations within South Korean society. Furthermore, that we are the same people/ethnic nation, Kang argues, does not provide the necessary rationale for unification, either internally for South Korean citizens or externally. There are other cases of one ethnicity living in different nation-states, as well as the opposite case of different ethnicities living together in one nation-state. We must, Kang stresses, provide a better justification of unification today. Kang Mangil, *Uri Tongil Eoteokkae Halkkayo (How Should We Unify)* (Seoul: Dangdae, 2003).
- ⁴⁷ Interview with South Korean Ministry of Unification official, February 28, 2009.
- ⁴⁸ Interview with South Korean Ministry of Unification official, February 28, 2009.
- ⁴⁹ Smith, *The Ethnic Origins of Nations*, 32.
- ⁵⁰ Shin, *Ethnic Nationalism in Korea*, 165.
- ⁵¹ Benedict Anderson, *The Spectre of Comparisons* (London: Verso, 1998), 29.
- ⁵² Anderson, *The Spectre of Comparisons*, 29.
- ⁵³ Jonathan Pollack and Chung Min Lee, *Preparing for Korean Unification: Scenarios and Implications* (Santa Monica, Rand, 1999).
- ⁵⁴ Pollack and Lee, *Preparing for Korean Unification*, 49. Pollack and Lee argue that two preconditions must be met before this highly unlikely model of peaceful unification could be realized: "that both governments (and public opinion in the South) will undertake profound changes in attitudes and assumptions about each other and...that a series of interim steps can be instituted that ultimately allow the far larger changes posited under this model," 49-50.
- ⁵⁵ Pollack and Lee, *Preparing for Korean Unification*, 52-4.
- ⁵⁶ Pollack and Lee, *Preparing for Korean Unification*, 54-5. It also stems from the precondition of two functioning governments working in concert over an extended period of time towards the ultimate goal.
- ⁵⁷ Michael Billig, *Banal Nationalism* (London: Sage Publications, 1995), 6.
- ⁵⁸ Billig, *Banal Nationalism*, 6-7.
- ⁵⁹ Billig, *Banal Nationalism*, 38.
- ⁶⁰ This is an organization of North Korean refugees.
- ⁶¹ *Talbukja* is the term used in the South (and meaningful in some ways only within South Korea) to describe North Korean defectors. With the further deterioration of political, economic, and social conditions in the North, however, the term *Talbukja* has come to carry another meaning of defector/refugee. *Talbukja* generally still carries negative connotations in the South.
- ⁶² Kim Song-a, "Tongilbu, 'Saeteomin' Myeongching Sayong Jungdan Yogu Geobu (Ministry of Unification Refuses Request to Discontinue Use of Saeteomin Term)," *The Daily NK*, May 11, 2007.
- ⁶³ Kim Song-a, "Tongilbu, 'Saeteomin' Myeongching Sayong Jungdan Yogu Geobu.
- ⁶⁴ Jeong Jae-seong, "Tongilbu, 'Saeteomin' Iran Yongeo Gageubjeok Anssel Geot (Ministry of Unification Decides to Not Use the Term Saeteomin)," *The Daily NK*, November 11, 2008. The term *Saeteomin* was chosen from an online survey of substitutes for the North Korean defector term. The three new terms and the positive votes garnered by each were: "jayumin (free people) 29.4%; immigrant 16.0%; and saeteomin (new residence seekers, newly landed immigrants) 14.1%. *Saeteomin* was chosen amongst other reasons because it carried no political color or connotations.
- ⁶⁵ Kim Song-a, "Tongilbu, 'Saeteomin' Myeongching Sayong Jungdan Yogu Geobu.
- ⁶⁶ Interview with North Korean defector from Haeju, March 2009.
- ⁶⁷ In 2006, there were approximately 8,741 North Korean refugees living in the South. The overwhelming majority of North Korean refugees choose (over 90%) to resettle in South Korea after their escape from the North. *Perilous Journeys: The Plight of North Koreans in China and Beyond*, International Crisis Group Asia Report 122, October 2006, 26.
- ⁶⁸ The changing social composition of the North Korean defectors residing in the South, that is, more defectors from socially and economically disadvantaged groups, portends greater challenges for their assimilation. See the 2004-5 International Crisis Group interviews with 1,346 North Korean refugees living in China, and Yoonok Chang with Stephan Haggard and Marcus Noland, "North Korean Refugees in China: Evidence from a Survey," *The North Korean Refugee Crisis: Human Rights and International Response*, Eds. Stephan Haggard and Marcus Noland (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Committee for Human Rights in North Korea, 2006).
- ⁶⁹ For a discussion of the North Korean defector community in South Korea see Andrei Lankov, "Bitter Taste of Paradise: North Korean Refugees in South Korea," *The North Korean Refugee Crisis: Human Rights and International Response*.
- ⁷⁰ Interview with North Korean refugee from Chongjin, March 2009.

⁷¹ As one student defector commented on the challenge of integration, “You have to change enough so that you don’t stand out, always drawing attention to yourself. . . so that other people don’t notice you.” Interview with North Korean refugee from Haeju, March 2009. Lankov also notes that many defectors experience alienation from the dominant South Korean society as they “find out that the attitudes and values of South Korean society pose barriers as well.” Lankov, “Bitter Taste of Paradise,” 65. One South Korean broker suggested that compared to those who come directly, the North Koreans who come through China and spend some years living in China have a more difficult time assimilating into the South. Interview with South Korean broker in Seoul, March 2009.

⁷² Interview with South Korean broker in Seoul, March 2009. Lankov cites a 2003 survey of 780 defectors in which only 19% had regular full-time employment, 42% described themselves as unemployed. Lankov, “Bitter Taste of Paradise,” 63.

⁷³ Will Kymlicka, “Justice and Security in the Accommodation of Minority Rights,” in *Ethnicity, Nationalism, and Minority Rights*, Ed. Stephen May, Tariq Modood, and Judith Squires (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 144.

⁷⁴ Kymlicka, “Justice and Security in the Accommodation of Minority Nationalism,” 144.

⁷⁵ Kymlicka, “Justice and Security in the Accommodation of Minority Nationalism,” 145.

⁷⁶ Kymlicka, “Justice and Security in the Accommodation of Minority Nationalism,” 150.

⁷⁷ Kymlicka, “Justice and Security in the Accommodation of Minority Nationalism,” 156.

⁷⁸ Will Kymlicka, “Liberal Multiculturalism: Western Models, Global Trends, and Asian Debates,” in *Multiculturalism in Asia*, Eds. Baogang He and Will Kymlicka (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 22. This internationalization is present in the treatment of the North Korean refugee problem. Haggard and Noland, for example, argue that the North Korean issue should be framed as a human rights issue: the framework of universal human rights offers a position from which to critique existing state behavior regarding defectors and also make normative arguments about their treatment. Stephan Haggard and Marcus Noland, “Introduction: The North Korean Refugees as a Human Rights Issue,” *The North Korean Refugee Crisis: Human Rights and International Response*.

⁷⁹ Kymlicka, “Liberal Multiculturalism: Western Models, Global Trends, and Asian Debates,” 22-3. As Kymlicka describes the central features of these cases of minority nationalism, “In all these cases, we find a regionally concentrated group that conceives itself as a nation within a larger state, and mobilizes behind nationalist political parties to achieve recognition of its nationhood, either in the form of an independent state or through territorial autonomy within the larger state.” 23.

⁸⁰ Kymlicka, “Liberal Multiculturalism: Western Models, Global Trends, and Asian Debates,” 23.

⁸¹ Kymlicka, “Liberal Multiculturalism: Western Models, Global Trends, and Asian Debates,” 33.

⁸² Kymlicka, “Liberal Multiculturalism: Western Models, Global Trends, and Asian Debates,” 33.

⁸³ *Perilous Journeys*, 35.

⁸⁴ *Perilous Journeys*, 35.

⁸⁵ Kymlicka, “Liberal Multiculturalism: Western Models, Global Trends, and Asian Debates,” 28.

⁸⁶ Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1983), 35. On the functional relationship between the nationalism and industrial society, Gellner states forcefully, “So the economy needs both the new type of central culture and the central state; the culture needs the state; and the state probably needs the homogeneous cultural branding of its flock, in a situation in which it cannot rely on largely eroded sub-groups either to police its citizens, or to inspire them with that minimum of moral zeal and social identification without which social life becomes very difficult.” 140.

⁸⁷ For critical essays on Sun Mu’s work see *Sesangae Buleom Eopda (Nothing to Envy in the World)* (Seoul: Preparat, 2008).