The German-Polish Reconciliation Policies: Insights for the Koreas

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Abstract

The purpose of this review paper is to briefly examine why and to what extent the demographic factor is important for the process of the reunification of a divided country, and what the current state of the art in the subject literature with respect to this field is available in English. The analysis is carried out on the example of the German case in the early 1990 s, and it serves as a reference point for deliberations about Korea, which still remains divided.

Keywords: German unification, German reunification, Germany, Korea, Federal Republic of Germany, German Democratic Republic, North Korea, South Korea, demographic factor, population

Introduction

The purpose of this review paper is to briefly examine why and to what extent the demographic factor is important for the process of the reunification of a divided country, and what the current state of the art in the subject literature with respect to this field is available in English. The analysis is carried out on the example of the German case in the early 1990s, and it serves as a reference point for deliberations about Korea, which still remains divided.

This paper is a kind of an intellectual exercise as it draws on the experience of the recent past in Europe for discussions about a possible situation in Northeast Asia

in an undefined future. What connects the two countries at the same time enabling us to compare their situation? Germany from 1949 to 1990 was divided into two states, which stands for more than 40 years in total. After the Second World War, there were two German states, i.e. the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG), also known as West Germany, and German Democratic Republic (GDR), called East Germany. The latter was a communist state and a part of the Eastern bloc. In this way, the actual and symbolic boundary of the Iron Curtain ran through Germany.

In turn, Korea became divided in 1948, and the end date is unknown and difficult to determine, assuming there will be one before other processes come into play. In the case of Korea, the two countries – North Korea (Democratic People's Republic of Korea, DPRK) and South Korea (Republic of Korea, ROK) – declared their independence separately in 1948, while claiming the right to administer the territory of the whole country. It led to the Korean War between 1950 and 1953. The situation between the two Koreas remains unsettled even today.

The German Case from the Past

So far, when researchers talked about the reunification of Germany from the early 1990 s, they were often interested in the political and socio-economic circumstances and consequences of this process at different levels – national, regional and international (see e.g. Bibow 2001; Ghaussy, Schäfer 1993; Heitger, Waverman 1993; Leibfritz 1990; Siebert, Burda, Obstfeld 1991; Welfens 1992). However, it is also worthwhile to take a closer look at the demographic situation which, as it turns out, can matter a lot. For example, it determines the total population of the country, and the population structure by sex and age (according to the biological and economic age groups), which defines such important issues as the share of women of childbearing age and the share of the population of working age. Demographic determinants are also linked to migratory flows: within the territory of a given country (internal/domestic migration) and across its borders (external/international migration). In addition, demographic conditions have far-reaching effects on the socio-economic situation of any state. The unification of Germany was a great demographic challenge, as evidenced not only by the first years after this event but also the uneven socio-economic development of the country still visible today. Bearing in mind this historical experience, it could be useful to anticipate certain factors and developments in the event of a (re)unification of Korea.

In 2016 Germany with 82 million inhabitants was the most populated country in the European Union, representing 16% of the whole EU population (Eurostat 2017a). However, the German society has now been struggling with demographic ageing for more than a decade and this phenomenon will be intensifying in subsequent years. Moreover, according to a long-term population projection provided by Eurostat and based on the numbers from 2015, the country's population will rise to 84 million people in 2040, then it will fall to 81 million people in 2060 and in 2080 decline further to 78 million. It means that in the long run, Germany will experience a depopulation by approximately 6 million people (Eurostat 2017b). What is interesting, the analysis of the main scenario of the previous Eurostat's long-term population projection from 2013 (EUROPOP 2013) for the 28 EU Member States, led to the conclusion that Germany would be one of the countries with the largest population losses between 2015 and 2060, i.e. by 9,7 million inhabitants (–12%) (Pachocka 2015, p. 64). In this context, immigration is seen as one of possible ways to face this phenomenon.

German reunification from 1990 brought some domestic challenges rooted in demographic conditions, among which the main ones could be identified as it follows:

1. Internal migrations from the Eastern provinces to the Western ones for various reasons, including among others: family reunification, psychological need to experience full freedom of movement after 40 year-division and its expression by changing the place of work or residence, and socio-economic reasons – a higher level of socio-economic development and better living conditions;
2. The lack of complete and detailed statistical data about population to get the whole picture of the demographic situation of the united country as a basis for formulating different policies;
3. "A wave of racist violence against immigrants and asylum seekers" (Castles, Haas, Miller 2013, pp. 279, 284).

Prior to the official reunification, the population of West Germany in 1989 was 62.7 million people who were living in eleven regions – states, called *Länder*. At the same time East Germany, composed of five regions, was inhabited by 16.4 million people. A year before, these figures were 61.7 and 16.7 million people respectively. In turn, in 1990 – the year of reunification – these numbers were 63.7 million people for former West Germany and 16 million people for East Germany. Thus, the inhabitants of New *Länder* and Berlin-East constituted 20% of the total population of 80 million people of the united Germany. A decade later, in 2000,

the contribution of the population of former GDR (15 million) to the whole population of Germany (82 million) dropped to 18%, while in 2010[1] it was again 20% (FSO 2017d). It means that the inhabitants of the former GDR accounted for about 1/5 of the entire country's population.

However, it's not only numbers in absolute and relevant terms that are important. What matters are multidimensional implications of the numbers for the demographic structure of the society, indicators, patterns and trends. This in turn has an impact on the economy, affecting i.e. economic growth, the labour market, pension system or public finances. In the unified Germany "most of the negative impact of demographic change in a spatial context started with reunification in 1990 and lead to specific geographic problems that are the much more imminent for the country, as they led to a considerably changed population landscape" (Hennig 2012). What do we mean by that? "East Germany is smaller and therefore has a smaller population, but especially when leaving Berlin out there are stark differences between the two parts: In 2010 West Germany was much more crowded with an average of 261 people per square kilometer, opposed to 121 persons living in the same space in East Germany. […] The spatial implications of internal migration combined with demographic trends towards an ageing population and economic trends of less prosperous regions that are most affected by out-migration of young as well as skilled people are the real challenge in today's Germany" (*ibidem*). These are mainly the regions in East Germany that have been the least densely populated in recent years, and are struggling with depopulation. These circumstances could inhibit the development potential of this part of Germany at the very beginning. However, one must remember that the condition of having fewer inhabitants in absolute terms, especially of working age, could be compensated by their greater work productivity.

Another important issue of a demographic nature was migration from the former GDR to West Germany that started even before the official reunification. A threat of mass migration was expected due to many reasons, including the wealth gap in favour of the Western lands. As Soltwedel stresses (1998, p. 7), there was no government effort to counteract migration from East to West physically or legally. Instead, the German authorities focused on implementing an appropriate

[1] However, one must remember that since 2001 data for Berlin-West have been included in the numbers for New Länder and Berlin-East. It means that since 2001 there is no difference between Berlin-West and Berlin-East and the capital city is considered as a whole.

economic policy and providing important investments into public infrastructure in East Germany (*ibidem*).

Researchers underline two waves of migration from East to West during and after the reunification period: the first wave of 1989–1990 was directly linked to the political developments in East Germany and the reunification process along with the associated opportunities and risks, while the second migratory wave since 1997 resulted probably from the worsening job prospects in the East after 1995 and improving employment conditions in FRG (Heiland 2004, p. 177). "Between 1989 and 1990, almost 600,000 East Germans, roughly 3.7% of the population in the region of the former GDR (excl. East Berlin), emigrated to West Germany (incl. West Berlin)", while "from 1991 until the mid-1990 s, the pace of East to West migration cooled off substantially — the annual outmigration rate in 1994 was 1.04%, which is about half its 1990 level" (*ibidem*, p. 176). One exception was Berlin, the capital city of the united Germany, which was recording a steady increase in immigration over the examined period. The way how migrants from five East German regions were distributed across the West German Länder between 1989 and 2002 could be explained by different factors, including economic conditions such as unemployment rates and wages by region, the proximity to the destination region and population size (see: *ibidem*, pp. 178–188).

Finally, for Germany the period of division meant a serious break in collecting reliable and verified statistical data on the population, its structure and main characteristics. Since 1990 they have been collected by the Federal Statistical Office covering all states.

The German division during the cold war and the sudden reunification in 1990 resulted in creating the country that could be considered as a demographic patchwork. Some substantial differences in the demographic situation and trends are still observed between the so-called old federal states (Baden-Württemberg, Bavaria, Bremen, Hamburg, Hesse, Lower Saxony, North Rhine-Westphalia, Rhineland-Palatinate, Saarland, Schleswig-Holstein) and new federal states (Brandenburg, Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania, Saxony, Saxony-Anhalt and Thuringia) (FMEAE 2015, p. 5). "Whilst the population in the old federal states increased in the period from 1990 to the end of 2013, the number of inhabitants in the new federal states has dropped distinctly (by some 15%)". Even if "the natural population development is declining both in eastern and in western Germany", only "old federal states are able to largely compensate for the deficits in births through migration" (*ibidem*, p. 70).

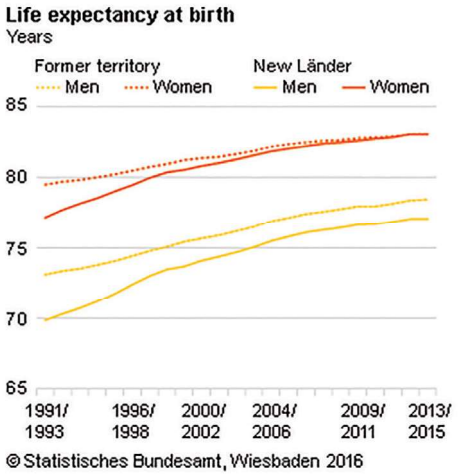
To have a general picture of the demographic situation in Germany after the reunification and today, let's look at some selected demographic indicators provided by the Federal Statistical Office for Germany, former territory of the Federal Republic (FTFR) (since 2001 without West Berlin) and New Länder (since 2001 without Berlin-East) and data discussed in the "Annual Report of the Federal Government on the Status of German Unity in 2015" published by Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Energy (see: FMEAE 2015).

In 1990 the total fertility rate (TFR) was 1.45 for the former territory of the Federal Republic and 1.52 – a bit higher – for New Länder. TFR indicates the average number of children per woman. In 1995 TFR dropped in both cases to 1.34 and 0.84 respectively, which means a much more severe decline for New Länder. At the same time TFR for Germany was 1.25. A decade later, the scores have almost levelled off: the average number of children per woman in FTFR was 1.36 while in New Länder it was 1.30. As of 2015, we observed a similar situation but with higher values of 1.50 and 1.56, what means that the total fertility rate was a little higher for New Länder (FSO 2017a). Also, the mean age of women at birth calculated on the basic of all livebirths was comparable for both territories – in 2015 it was 31.1 years for former Federal Republic (excluding Berlin) and 30.3 years for New Lander (FSO 2017c).

What also matters is the average life expectancy at birth (Figure 1), which has been systematically increasing since early 1990s for women and men living both in the old and new federal states. In eastern Germany women live almost just as long as in western Germany, i.e. approximately 83 years as of 2013/2015. In turn, men in eastern Germany live on average one year shorter (77 years) than men in the old federal states (78 years) (FMEAE 2015, pp. 71–72; FSO 2017b). In general, women live longer than men.

The change in relationships between the main age groups in Germany is also worth mentioning. In 1990 the population under 20 years of age represented 25.2% of the total population in the new federal states and it dropped to 15.3% in 2013, while the proportion of the inhabitants aged 65 and over increased from 13.8% to 23.9%. At the same time, the respective population of the youth in the old federal states diminished from 20.9% in 1990 to 18.7% in 2013, and the population of older people rose from 15.3% to 20.3% (FMEAE 2015, pp. 71–72). Regardless of the specific values, both territories have experienced the aging process from the top and bottom of the population pyramid, with the increase in the share of the older people and the decline of the young. However, this process was faster in the new *Länder.*

Figure 1. Life expectancy for women and men at birth in Germany (former territory versus New Länder) in 1991–2015



Source: FSO 2017b.

In 2014, the share of the people aged 65 an over in the total population "was higher in eastern Germany (24%) than in western Germany (just under 21%)" (FSO 2016, p. 12). "Between 1990 and 2014, the number of people in Germany aged 65 and over rose by approximately 5.2 million to 17.1 million. This represents an increase of 43%. At the same time, the total population grew by only 1.8%. Whilst the number of inhabitants in eastern Germany (excluding West-Berlin) decreased by a total of 15% between 1990 and 2014, the number of older people increased by 48%. In the former territory of the Federal Republic (excluding Berlin), the ageing process was mitigated by immigration from the eastern part of the country as well as from abroad: from 1990 to 2014, the total population increased by 6%, whilst the number of senior citizens rose by 43% during the same period" (*ibidem*).

In the case of Germany, the phenomenon of internal (domestic) migration is very important. "The new federal states (including Berlin) lost some 1.1 million citizens to the old federal states between 1991 and 2013 through migration alone". "The relocation trend with respect to eastern Germans continues to be high. However, east-west migration is no longer the key issue but rather migration from the economically less developed and peripheral rural regions to the towns and cities". In the field of international migration, it "remains lower in the new federal states than in the old ones" (FMEAE 2015, p. 72).

It should be remembered that to face demographic developments and challenges across the country some key steps were taken in Germany. In 2012 the Federal Government proposed its comprehensive demographic strategy "Every Age Counts". The same year the demography portal of the Federal Government and the federal states (Demografie Portal des Bundes und der Lander) was implemented "on the initiative of the eastern federal states. It is the first joint platform which advances the exchange of information across all levels, invites dialogue and shows examples of best practice" (FMEAE 2015, p. 73). It shows that for the sustainable socio-economic development of the whole country, the multidimensional development of its regions, also in demographic terms, should be as balanced as possible. These are not only top-down actions that are crucial (e.g. strategies at the federal level), but also bottom-up initiatives in the eastern regions.

The Korean Case in the Future?

Korea has now been divided for over 65 years. Political and socio-economic conditions in both countries are nowadays extremely different, and it is hard to directly compare this situation to the German case. Even if the possible date of reunification is unknown, it is usually assumed that it is South Korea that would become the engine of internal unification of the Korean Peninsula and compensation of development differences due to its strong and modern economy, developed democratic institutions and a significant international position.

In May 2016, *The Economist* published a blog post exploring the possible gains for both North and South Korea after their reunification. The conclusions were that South Korea would have to provide access to the social-security system for more than 25.3 additional million people from the North (with own current population of 50.5 million people), including those that were brutalised and malnourished, as well as take care of new 120,000 political prisoners (in comparison to only 700 political prisoners on its territory nowadays, including conscientious objectors and followers of the North). It would also mean that the South Koreans would be reunited with a younger population characterised by higher fertility rate, but with much lower average life expectancy at birth. Without doubt, this would affect the population aging (slowdown of the process) and the economy (more people of working age, including those recruited from North Korea's army, but with lower levels of education) (*The Economist* 2016).

Table 1 presents key demographic indicators for the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the Republic of Korea gathered by the United Nations Population Fund. In 2016, the population of South Korea amounted to 50.5 million people, which is almost double of North Korea's population. DPRK's population was much younger with 21% of children and 9% of old people, while the South Korean society was abundant in people of working age (73%). The total fertility rate was higher for North Korea (1.9), what brought this country closer to the threshold of simple generation renewal. At the same time, the South Koreans were expected to live much longer than the citizens of DPRK: women 86 years and men 80 years in comparison to 75 and 67 years respectively.

Table 1. Demographic profile of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the Republic of Korea

Category	Democratic People's Republic of Korea	Republic of Korea
Total population in millions, 2016	25.3	50.5
Population aged 0–14, per cent, 2016	21	14
Population aged 15–64, per cent, 2016:	70	73
Population aged 65 and older, per cent, 2016	9	14
Total fertility rate, per woman, 2015–2020	1.9	1.3
Life expectancy at birth (years), 2015–2020: women	75	86
Life expectancy at birth (years), 2015–2020: men	67	80

Source: own elaboration based on UNFPA 2017.

In the case of the Koreas, the analysis of demographic conditions should go much deeper. The scenarios of the demographic development of the state must take into account not only pure demographic indicators but also the qualitative dimension of the North Korean population (e.g. health issues). For example, the North Koreans are malnourished due to long-term chronic food shortages in the country, the lack of preventive care policies, and especially health-care policy. Malnutrition considerably affects the health of the population. It leads to people being underweight as well as to mental retardation, osteoporosis, organ failure, and tooth illnesses (Fuqua 2011, pp. 124–125). WFP assumes that 70% of 25.1 million population are food insecure and ¼ of children are stunted (WFP 2017). So far, the total amount of humanitarian assistance from the South to the North since 1995 when it started is estimated at USD 3.04669 billion (KRW 3.2868 trillion) and it encompasses

aid provided directly by the government, through NGOs (e.g. Korean Red Cross), and through international organizations (e.g. WFP, UNICEF, WHO). An important component of this assistance is food and fertilizer aid (MOU 2017b).

So far, several well-known authors have dealt with the demographic context of Korea's reunification or with its selected aspects such as the threat of domestic migration from the North to the South. Some of these studies have taken into account the case of Germany, e.g.: Eberstadt and Banister (1992), Soltwedel (1998), Kim (2010), Fuqua (2011), Michener (2012), Stephen (2013) and Choi (2015). The main conclusions from the subject literature review (available in English) from different years are as follows:

- The Republic of Korea needs to design "reunification-friendly" policies to make its social welfare program fiscally viable after the reunification, and it needs better reintegration programs for the North Koreans than the integration package currently offered to defectors and refugees from the North (Michener 2012, p. 129);
- Reunification could contribute to two contradictory pressures: "in the South, reunification will create a younger population, a higher population growth rate, and a more even gender ratio; whereas in the North, reunification will likely lead to a larger pool of elderly citizens without a social safety net, a drop in total population, and greater gender disparity. Reunification can bring positive benefits to the South, but the North may need to bear the cost. If sufficient preparations are not made to ensure that the two states are reintegrated in a fair and balanced manner, then Korea may remain two separate societies even after they unify into one country" (Michener 2012, p. 129);
- "a reunification will not change the age restructuring already underway in South Korea, and to a slighter extent in North Korea (…) approximately a third of the population will be elderly, with a vast decline in the number of children aged 0–14. Mortality will depend in large part on the ability to bring medical facilities and professionals in the North up to the standards of the South, and to confirm an equitable food-distribution system. Migration will be a wild card. One could imagine massive population shifts within the country, and if so, a potential for high unemployment rates around city centers where migrants would congregate" (Stephen 2013, p. 21);
- "the demographic structure of North Korea is one of the most important variables that could influence economic growth or unification cost in the processes of transition and integration with South Korea". Moreover, "North Korea, which

had already completed its demographic transition before the 1990 s, is unlikely to enjoy the demographic dividend effect in the future even if it attempts to embark on reform and opening-up. Meanwhile, the population integration between North Korea, whose the youth population ratio and total fertility rate (TFR) are higher, and South Korea can delay entering into an aged society by 4 years. It is also expected to make the share of the working-age population increase by up to 4.3%p by 2065, compared to that of South Korea. However, the speed of population aging of an integrated Korea is expected to be faster than that of the reunified Germany" (Choi 2015, p. 27).

German reunification is often mentioned as a reference point for the discussions about the Korean case by politicians, experts and researchers. This was the case of the speech entitled "An Initiative for Peaceful Unification on the Korean Peninsula. Dresden – beyond division, toward integration" delivered by Park Geun-hye, then the President of South Korea, in Dresden, the city in former East Germany, in March 2014 (*The Korea Herald* 2014). Part of her speech was devoted to the issue of German unification and the dream of Korean unification, just to invoke as an example the following words: "Years of preparation by the people of East and West Germany eventually succeeded in turning the great dream of unification into reality and, ultimately, even transformed the future of Europe. A reunited Germany took its place at the heart of Europe. […] These are the images of one Germany that encourage those of us in Korea to cement our hope and our conviction that unification must also come on the Korean Peninsula" (*ibidem*). The case of Korea is definitely more difficult than the German one. As Fuqua (2011, p. xiii) points out "bringing the halves of the peninsula together […] will be a complex, multi-staged and multi-dimensional process, buffeted by multiple variables". Although the date, scenario and conditions of the (re)unification are difficult to predict, studies on the possible reunification of North and South Korea and on the future of the reunified country have been carried out both by the South Korean government and independent researchers from various academic institutions and think tanks (e.g. in South Korea, USA or Germany).

The idea of unification has been present in the Republic of Korea for a long time. It is well reflected in the government body responsible for all inter-Korean issues, South-North relations and unification policy, called the Ministry of Unification, which has its roots in the National Unification Board opened in late 1960 s (MOU 2017a). Its consecutive "White papers on Korean unification" were published in 1996, 2001, 2005, 2010, 2013, 2014 and 2016 (MOU 2017e). In 2010 the

ROK Ministry of Unification and the German Federal Ministry of the Interior established the Korea-Germany Joint Consultation Committee on National Unification to support the systematic preparation for Korean unification based on the German experience. It is worth to note that since then the joint meetings have been held yearly and Germany shared its official documents (65 volumes) from the reunification period with the ROK authorities (MOU 2016, p. 54). The volumes transferred to South Korea have been translated and published systematically under the "German Reunification Series". For example, in 2015 five volumes were released concerning among other things the pension system, social welfare, labour and employment that all are strongly conditioned by the demographic situation. In 2017, the translated volumes will be devoted to the issues including internal integration (*ibidem*, p. 56). Moreover, in 2014, the Presidential Committee for Unification Preparation (PCUP) was established in the Republic of Korea with three main tasks ahead, i.e. "to set out a blueprint and roadmap for unification; to build a national consensus; and to establish a system of cooperation among government agencies and NGOs" (Noland 2015).

Waiting for an unknown date of unification, the government can prepare and test various actions and policies that will allow for a better reunification in the future and could be implemented immediately in the new reality. This also applies to demographic conditions and related public policies such as population policy, family policy, health policy, education policy, and labour market policy. These policies must be designed in such a way as to take into account a large number of "new citizens" and their specificities resulting from them having long lived in an authoritarian and communist country. On the one hand it is necessary to prepare new citizens for everyday life in a state based on democracy and market economy, and on the other it is important to make sure that the Koreans from the North and the South accept each other. The task is not so much to unite the two societies as to integrate them in many dimensions, so that North Koreans do not become an underclass or a second class. Of course, there are fears that, even if policies are properly prepared, national technical infrastructure and institutions may be insufficient to suddenly absorb around 25 million people. This applies to the number of schools, clinics, apartments, and retirement centres. A separate issue is the need to provide the appropriately qualified staff in the right numbers so that the systems (e.g. education or health care) do not collapse and their activity could be multiplied to serve much more people.

The strategy of developing and testing policies in advance is possible thanks to the presence of migrants that have fled from North Korea, who in some way represent the population of this country. The ROK government considers them to be South Korean citizens, but they are also referred to as new settlers, s*aeteomin*, defectors and refugees (Fuqua 2011, pp. xvi). Contrary to the apparent expectations, it is not and would not be easy to successfully immerse the Koreans from the North in the new South Korean reality. This is not just about the skills needed on the job market, but also the broadly understood culture, including the language and the value system. To understand the existing political and socio-economic environment and develop social relations, the new citizens have to learn the South Korean language and purge their mind of the *Juche* ideology, acquired in the previous system (see more: Fuqua 2011, pp. 11–12; MOU 2014b).

As of 2017, the total number of North Korean defectors entering South Korea since 1998 is estimated at more than 30 thousand people, 71% of whom are women. Between 2006 and 2011, the number of defectors was higher than 2,000 persons per year, reaching almost 3,000 in 2009 (MOU 2017c). These people are referred to as "North Korean refugees" in the light of the Article 2 of the North Korean Refugees Protection and Settlement Support Act, which denotes people who have their domicile, immediate family, spouse or workplace in North Korea and who have not acquired any foreign nationality after escaping from the North (MOU 2014a, p. 5).

The ROK government guarantees different forms of dedicated support to the North Korean defectors. They are offered a 12-week comprehensive resettlement training at resettlement support facility Hanawon, operating since 1999 and managed by the Ministry of Unification, to adjust them to their new lives in South Korea. The program covers i.a. training for social adaptation, resolving cultural differences, and assistance for psychological well-being or career counselling. Between 1999 and 2013 about 24,200 North Korean refugees completed social orientation schemes offered by Hanawon. At the same time, defectors are provided with housing, vocational, educational and financial support. Assistance is also developed by the Korea Hana Foundation (North Korean Refugees Foundation) that cooperates with both the central and local governments and the private sector. For example, it has 23 regional adaptation centres called Hana Centers, 500 settlement assistants, 100 professional counsellors, and more than 1,000 protection officers (MOU 2014a; MOU 2017d; Korea Hana Foundation 2017).

Despite the resettlement support offered by the public and private bodies, key indicators concerning the situation of North Korean refugees stress the need for further efforts and point to some additional problems. It is optimistic that in 2013 among them the employment ratio was 60.4%, the school dropout rate was 3.5%, and both indicators were characterized by significant improvements (MOU 2014a, pp. 6–8). The results of the most recent "Economic Activity Survey of North Korean Refugees in South Korea" conducted by the Korea Hana Foundation (2016, p. 9) show that 51.6% of respondents were employed and 4.5% were unemployed in 2015, which totals to 56.1% of those refugees that belonged to the economically active population.

The challenge that remains is the perception and relationship between North and South Koreans. According to different research, almost 60% South Koreans do not feel close to North Korean refugees. Moreover, "new citizens" are facing social prejudice and discrimination which influence their dissatisfaction with life in South Korea (MOU 2014a, pp. 6–8). However, the results from the 2015 survey carried out by the Korea Hana Foundation (2016, pp. 5–6) indicate that 63.0% of respondents were satisfied with life in the South and 3.4% were dissatisfied. The main reasons for being dissatisfied (multiple responses) were: economic difficulties (61.3%), difficulties in adjusting to South Korean culture (42.2%) and prejudice and discrimination against North Korean refugees (30.9%).

Infrastructure, qualified staff, resettlement programs, and government money invested in the preparation of the "new Koreans" to live in South Korea are very important. However, as Director of Hanawon Kim Jung Tae underlined in 2015: "We talk a lot about how unification is coming and what we need to do to be prepared for that, but helping the current generation of defectors adjust to life here forms the basis of a model that can be used down the line. That's why it is so important to create and sustain an environment that is mutually beneficial to defectors and South Koreans. The future of unification depends on it" (Unification Media Group 2015).

Conclusion

The example of Germany is not an ideal model to be followed by Korea, as boundary conditions of (re) unification – although similar, are not identical mostly due to larger existing socio-economic differences and longer division period. Thus, Korea can draw from many aspects of German experience, but it has to look at it

critically through the lenses of its own circumstances. The Republic of Korea can be very well-prepared conceptually and in terms of unification policies that are currently developed and tested on the population of the North Korean refugees living in the South, but the greatest and the most obvious problem of the future may be the scale of the unification process, i.e. the number of people to be "absorbed" to various extents by certain national sub-systems starting with early adaption to new life, followed by the labour market, education, social welfare, public perception, etc. The threat of mass migratory flows from the North to the South also has to be considered and anticipated. Hence, it is necessary to develop a sustainable model of unification taking into account its scale.

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