Wrobel, Ralph

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South Korea's Reunification Think Tanks: The Development of a Marketplace for Ideas

Ralph M. Wrobel*

Summary
In contrast to Germany South Korea has for years been continuously preparing for national reunification. As a result, alongside the Ministry of Unification a number of think tanks, research institutes, and other organizations have also been established in South Korea. After years of the dominance in the country of state-run, security-orientated think tanks in the wake of German reunification, a new structure of reunification think tanks has recently evolved. Nowadays, besides the 22 Korean think tanks themselves, seven foreign think tanks are also active in this field of research. Therefore, the market of ideas concerning reunification research can be described as a broad but open oligopoly. Additional restrictions on the competition of ideas are generated by the two different overlapping subsystems of society: science and politics. South Korean reunification think tanks compete with each other on two fronts: the market of ideas and the market of financial resources. Because the South Korean government is the main financial donor to reunification research in South Korea, several think tanks have only limited independence. However, a growing pluralistic structure within reunification-oriented think tanks gives us reason to expect increasingly pluralistic research results as well.

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Introduction

While Germany was surprised by the opportunity for reunification presented in 1989–1990, South Korea has been preparing continuously for national reunification. Especially since German reunification, research into opportunities and strategies for reunification, as well as into the problems and costs of it, has intensified. Therefore, further to the Ministry of Unification many think tanks have also been established in South Korea. A priori — and especially looking at the German case — this strategy of preparation for reunification seems to be a useful approach to take. In a democracy, however, think tanks belong to two different overlapping subsystems of

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society: science and politics (Fischer 2002, 2006: 16). Therefore, they compete with each other on two fronts: the market of ideas and the market of financial resources. Sometimes these two markets overlap, especially if those demanding research output are also financial donors to it (McGann and Weaver 2000: 13). Thus, the market of ideas is sometimes restricted. The main thrust of this article is hence to analyze and evaluate the competition of ideas in the South Korean market of reunification studies, based on an institutional analysis of the scientific market. Is South Korean reunification research an organized, pluralistic, and competitive structure or is it monopolized? Are research results open or already predetermined?

To answer these questions, the different notions and types of think tanks will be described in brief. In the course of this, the importance of ideological perspectives, different sources of funding, and the staffing of think tanks will be analyzed and a theoretical framework of the marketplace of ideas will be prepared. On this basis, the institutional structure of reunification research in South Korea will be scrutinized. First, it will be asked which think tanks have been established to prepare the country for reunification over time. Following on, the current structure of think tanks in South Korea will then be described. In this way, a typology of South Korean reunification think tanks will be elaborated. Last but not least the situation of South Korean reunification think tanks in overlapping systems (science and politics) will be closely investigated, in order to describe more fully the marketplace of ideas in the field of South Korean reunification studies.

Think tanks and political markets

Think tanks: Concepts and research

Following McGann and Weaver (2000: 4–5), think tanks can be described as non-profit organizations that give advice in the process of policy decision-making on the basis of their own independent research. While the genesis of think tanks started centuries ago, the term “think tank” first entered into the public lexicon after World War II. Especially, RAND (short for the Research and Development Corporation) became an acronym for research and development. A widespread diffusion of think tanks followed in the developed Western countries (Brandstetter et al. 2010: 26–36). In recent years, think tanks have been on the rise once again. Currently, more than 6,600 think tanks exist worldwide. While the largest number are concentrated in North America (1,919) and Europe (1,836), Asia is lagging behind (with only 1,194 in 2012) — not to mention the rest of the world (McGann 2013: 32).

Think tanks can be studied from different perspectives. They may be seen as elite organizations that rely on their expertise and close ties to policymakers advancing political agendas or alternatively be regarded as one of the many groups existing within an increasingly crowded marketplace of ideas. However, in respect to their

importance in the sciences. no consensus currently exists. While some scholars assume them to play only a modest role in shaping public policy, others argue that think tanks actually control and manipulate the process of public policy formulation (Abelson 2002: 49–50). Until the 1990s research into the history and function of think tanks was quite underdeveloped (Gellner 1995: 37), but during the last years research into the development and structure of think tanks has evolved rapidly. Foundational work has been done by Stone, Denham, and Garnett (1998), McGann and Weaver (2000), Abelson (2002), Stone and Denham (2004), Goodman (2005), Ladi (2005), Hellebust and Hellebust (2006), Stone (2007), and Müller and Mulsow (2009), for instance. But the vast majority of think tank research focuses either on the history of specific think tanks or on the evolution of think tanks in particular countries and regions.[1] Moreover, many different definitions and distinctions of the term "think tank" can be found in the literature. Therefore, in this paper think tanks will be understood as actors operating in a marketplace of ideas as public policy is seen as the outcome of group competition. Abelson (2002: 77) emphasized already that think tanks are developing and promoting ideas. And, like corporations in the private sector, they pay particular attention to the marketing of their products. In contrast to private corporations, they cannot measure their success in terms of financial profit but only by the degree of influence that they have in shaping public opinion as well as the choices of policymakers.

Typology of think tanks

First, think tanks vary greatly in size — either by the number of employees or by the extent of their financial budget — and according to their specialization. In the literature they are divided into three categories: (1) large and multidisciplinary, (2) large and specialized, and (3) small and specialized (Kochetkov and Supyan 2010: 498). Additionally, the population of think tanks can be divided into four groups in terms of their ideology or source of funding: (1) "academic think tanks," (2) "contract researchers," (3) "advocacy tanks," and (4) "party think tanks" (McGann and Weaver 2000: 10). This typology is helpful for conceiving of and distinguishing between think tanks operating in the real world, but of course an abstract model. In brief, in the literature academic think tanks are mostly described as "universities without students" (Ladi 2005: 47; Weaver 1989). Indeed, they are similar to universities relative to their wide spectrum of research interests and focus on public opinion; reliable scientific research is, however, done by fellows who do not teach students (Böhning 2007: 13). University-affiliated research institutes,

1 As well, most regional analyses focus on think tanks in Canada and the United States, such as Hofmann (1999), Lindquist (2006), Böhning (2007), Weidenbaum (2009). Others focus on different regions or countries like Germany (Weilemann 2000), the Visegrad countries (Schneider 2002), East Asia (Nachiappan et al. 2010), China (Shambaugh 2002; Zhu 2009), Japan (McNamara 1996), or South Korea (Choi 2000; Mo 2005). Also, a few authors compare think tanks in the US with those in other countries (like Germany). Such works include those of Gellner (1995) and Braml (2004).

staffed with professors and other graduate scientists, are also academic think tanks in a broader sense because they match the definition of think tanks as nonprofit organizations, ones that give advice in the process of policymaking on the basis of independent research. Contract researchers are think tanks that compile surveys commissioned by the government, private institutions, and/or foundations to investigate certain topics. As a result, they receive a large part of their funding from the state or from corporations. In contrast, advocacy think tanks focus on nonscientific activities and thus ideology. Contrary to academic think tanks, they are characterized by the strong marketing of their ideas. Their main goal is not the preparation of knowledge with a solid research base but rather to compete with other ideas for supremacy (Böhning 2007: 24–36). Also, the activities of political party think tanks are influenced by a particular ideology. While they are formally independent from their party they are nevertheless still interlinked with them and share their basic tenets. Collectively, these think tanks are the protagonists in the marketplace of ideas.

In line with McGann and Weaver's (2010) research, therefore, agenda-setting and ideology — as well as staffing and financing — can be identified as the main discriminatory variables that distinguish the types of think tanks currently in existence. From an ideological perspective, academic think tanks and contract researchers try to portray a centrist image, maintaining a balanced one in a political sense, while advocacy and party think tanks favor certain ideas and want to be known for the political values that they stand for (Braml 2004: 294). Of course, party think tanks are from an ideological and legalistic viewpoint aligned with their parties.

Think tanks differ also in terms of their funding. Academic think tanks in the US are mainly financed by private foundations and institutional endowments, supplemented with support from contracts and corporations. In countries like Germany, meanwhile, they are mainly funded by the government through general sustenance. University-affiliated research institutes are also financed by the tuition fees received from their students. While contract researchers receive their money mainly from government contracts, with some supplemental support coming from foundations, advocacy think tanks principally rely on financial support from individuals, corporations, and foundations. In contrast, party think tanks' funding depends on their parties' electoral fate (Braml 2004: 337–338). The typology of all this is shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Typology of Think Tanks and Discriminatory Variables: An Overview

Type of think tank	Ideology	Source of financing
Academic	Centrist image	Private foundations/general government sustenance/tuition fees
Contract		Government contracts
Advocacy	Political values	Support from individuals, corporations, and foundations
Party		Political parties or government, depending on party's electoral fate

Source: Author's own compilation

The marketplace of competing ideas

In contrast to the real influence of think tanks on public policy, it can be evaluated if a market of ideas is open for the free development of competing notions. In this context it must be emphasized that only a free market of political ideas will help to improve policymaking. Therefore, it is of the highest interest to analyze the openness of the market for ideas concerning:

(1) concentration versus pluralism in the structure of the market

(2) freedom or independence of think tanks to produce a product (idea) without political or other restrictions

The degree of pluralism in a market of ideas may be quite simply evaluated by the number of active think tanks, the variation in their type, and the openness of the market of ideas to input from other think tanks abroad. In this way, a monopolistic or oligopolistic structure can be identified as a market restriction. In contrast, an evaluation of the freedom of the suppliers of ideas is problematic. As Ladi (2005: 50) points out, it is not easy to ascertain the independence of think tanks. Terms like "organizational independence" or "self-determination of the research agenda" may be helpful. From an economic point of view, the academic independence of a think tank depends both on where it receives funding from (financial independence) and on the formal as well as real independence of its staff (personal independence).

Opinions about how independence can be guaranteed also differ. While researchers in the Anglo-Saxon world prefer private funding as the criterion for independence, in Germany being government funded serves as a benchmark for the same independence. Similarly, in the same country the close link of "professors" in academic think tanks to scientific activity in universities, along with their entitlement to a salary from the public sector, are seen as indicators of their independence (Braml 2004: 296; Böhning 2007: 9). However, independence of a think tank and its staff will be limited if there exist only a small number of donors — or a single source —

financing the think tank. This criterion can be applied to the state as well as to a single or small group of private donors, who are also patrons of the product and thus interested in concrete research outcomes. The problem becomes even more evident when considering mainly government-funded short-term contract research. If think tanks are supported by the government through general financial sustenance a quite high degree of independence may be maintained in spite of the single source of funding. But in the case of contract research that is funded by grants awarded for special research projects, a quite low degree of independence must be assumed because the applicants will from the outset have to behave in a certain way if they wish to receive the grant.

Reunification think tanks in South Korea

The historical development of reunification studies

Following the definition of think tanks proposed by McGann and Weaver (2000), South Korean reunification ones can be characterized as nonprofit organizations that offer advice in the process of policy decision-making in South Korea. This they do on the basis of their own independent research into North Korean affairs, North Korean human rights, inter-Korean cooperation, reunification policy, and other related issues. In this paper, all organizations dealing with research into these topics will be seen as actors in the market of ideas regarding Korean reunification. Nowadays, many organizations in South Korea — state-run ones as well as university departments and both private and foreign think tanks — meet this definition. It was, however, a long and drawn out process to establish such a structure of reunification think tanks in the country.

In the aftermath of the Korean War, reunification was seen more as a military issue than as a political one. Therefore, the initial steps to support public policy and especially foreign affairs were only taken when President Park Chung Hee ruled the country as a dictator from 1961 to 1979. In the beginning, bureaucracy was the main source of policy advice in South Korea. Military and security issues led to the establishment in 1963 of the Educational Institute of Foreign Service Officers (EIFSO) under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which formed a research unit on foreign affairs in 1965. It was subsequently renamed the Research Institute for Foreign Affairs (RIFA). A National Unification Board was convened in 1969, but it took more than 20 years to transform it into the Ministry of Unification. Independent think tanks were not on the agenda at that time.

In the early 1970s, as industrialization accelerated and industrial infrastructure developed, a change also took place in the nature of the policy advice being demanded. Therefore, it is not surprising that the history of South Korean think tanks and public policy research began in 1971 with the foundation of the Korea Development

Institute (KDI) under the Economic Planning Board. The KDI has maintained its position as the leading center of excellence ever since it was first founded. Nowadays, it consists of three departments and several working groups, one of them being the North Korean Economic Research Team. During the 1970s other government agencies created their own think tanks, narrowing the scope of the KDI (Mo 2005: 186–188). Within the National War College (founded in 1955), the Research Institute on National Security Affairs (RINSA) was established in 1972 — nowadays, it researches North Korean affairs with one division. Not conceived of as a think tank but rather as a way to strengthen national consensus on reunification in the same year, a center for reunification training was also established (later renamed the Institute for Unification Education in 2000). Then, in 1977 the Research Institute for International Affairs (RIIA) was founded. After several mergers and renamings, in 2007 it became the Institute for National Security Strategy (INSS) — existing as a government-funded public research institute addressing policy alternatives related to diplomacy, security, and inter-Korean issues. The aforementioned RIFA was, in addition, reorganized in 1977 and renamed the Institute of Foreign Affairs and National Security (IFANS) with its focus being on research activities, including therein a Department for National Security and Unification Studies. In this way, it became the research and training arm of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MOFAT) until the Diplomatic Academy was established.

Some developments could also be observed in the university sector during this crucial decade. In 1972 Park Jae Kyu founded the Institute for Far Eastern Studies (IFES) as a research arm of the private Kyungnam University in Changwon, close to Busan, to further promote peace and the reunification of Korea. Also at Yonsei University, Seoul, an Institute of East and West Studies was established in the same year so as to launch comprehensive research programs on Korea and its immediate neighbors — including therein the economic and social reunification of North and South Korea. All these research institutes — the public as well as private ones — focused on the dimensions of security and peace. The economic and social problems of reunification were not taken into consideration at that time. This explains also the name chosen by The Institute for Peace Affairs (IPA), founded in 1983 as a non-profit organization under the National Unification Board with a focus on reunification research issues. Also The Sejong Institute — a private research institute founded in 1983 as the Ilhae Foundation, being renamed in 1988 — dealt with security and peace; nowadays, though, one specific division focuses on reunification on the Korean Peninsula.

The situation changed during the years of German reunification. Already in 1990 the National Unification Board was raised to the level of becoming the Vice Prime Ministerial Ministry. In the early 1990s it became common in South Korea for each ministry to be backed by multiple different think tanks (Mo 2005: 188). Therefore, in 1991 the Korea Institute of National Unification (KINU) was founded, under the auspices of the Ministry of Unification, as the leading institute for the support of the

government's North Korea and reunification policies. Since then, the KINU has grown into an "advanced think tank for North Korea and unification issues," as it describes itself. Also, the 1990 government-founded Korea Institute for International Policy (KIEP) — which focuses on international economic issues — holds an International Cooperation for Korean Unification department.

A multiparty representative democracy emerged in South Korea in the course of the 1990s. This period saw also a flourishing of civil society organizations (Nachiappan et al. 2010: 11). Reunification research, however, would be boosted only in the new millennium under the auspices of the "Sunshine Policy" (1998–2007) introduced under the presidency of Kim Dae Jung as a means of political convergence between South and North Korea, including therein the establishment of the Kaesong Industrial Complex, measures of family reunification, and so on (Wrobel 2010). For instance, in 1998 the Korean Council for Reconciliation and Cooperation was founded in order to facilitate national reunification. After his time as president had come to an end, Kim Dae Jung-related materials were donated to the eponymous library founded in 2003. Belonging to the Yonsei University, this library includes a museum and, since 2005, the research-oriented Peace Institute as well. The library and Peace Institute collect, analyze, and research historical records related to Kim Dae Jung and the Sunshine Policy. In 1991 the idea of an "Island of World Peace" was inspired by the Korea–USSR meeting in Jeju Island, and was furthered by a series of other summits held between major countries here. Jeju Island was pronounced the Island of World Peace by the Korean Government in 2005. To fulfill the goals that accompanied this announcement, the Jeju Peace Institute was opened in March 2006 as a nonprofit research organization under the Korea International Peace Foundation, being officially affiliated with the MOFAT.

South Korean universities also established reunification institutes during this period. The state-managed Seoul National University established a Unification Forum in 2000, which became the Steering Committee for Unification Studies in 2003. Three years later it was restructured as the Institute for Unification Studies, and in 2008 was renamed the Institute for Peace and Unification Studies (IPUS). In the same period (2005 specifically), Ewha Women's University in Seoul established the Ewha Institute of Unification Studies (EIUS) as the research center of the Graduate School of North Korean Studies. Other universities subsequently followed suit.

The supervision of public research institutes changed at the end of the 1990s. Because of the proliferation of ministerial think tanks, the new Kim Dae Jung government made a serious effort to reform the policy research system in 1998. The status quo in terms of the number of think tanks ultimately prevailed, however. Critics of the attempted reforms argued that it was important to make alternative views available to the country's policymakers. Therefore, rather than having separate boards for each think tank the government decided instead to create a single board — the Korea Council of Economic and Social Research Institutes — to super-

vise all ministerial think tanks (Mo 2005: 190). In 2005 this council was replaced by the National Research Council for Economics, Humanities, and Social Sciences (NRCS). As a result, all ministerial think tanks came to be supervised by this new research council.

After the abandonment of the Sunshine Policy in 2008, reunification think tanks in South Korea started to hone their focus on special issues like the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ). In Spring 2010 thirteen DMZ specialists were appointed as organizing members of the Korea DMZ Council on the recommendations of eleven ministries and provinces — including the Ministry of Unification, the Ministry of Public Administration and Security, the Ministry of Environment, Gyeonggi Province, and Gangwon Province. Its inaugural meeting took place in August of the same year. About 40 research institutes and other organizations belong to this council, among them Korean reunification think tanks like the KINU and the IPA as well as several German foundations. Nowadays, additional small private and public Korean research institutes deal with Korean reunification and accompanying issues like regional security, human rights in North Korea, and so on. In this way, during the last 50 years a very particular structure of institutionalized reunification research has developed in South Korea. It is complemented by the involvement of several foreign think tanks, whose contributions enrich the market of ideas.

Typology of Korean reunification think tanks

As already mentioned, think tanks can be classified by their size, type, ideology, and source(s) of funding. These criteria are also applicable to South Korean reunification think tanks. According to size, in this paper large and specialized think tanks are defined as such by their division into several reunification research departments, while small and specialized are those that are not structured; as a result, the latter consist of less renowned researchers. In contrast, large and multidisciplinary think tanks are split into several departments but have only a single reunification one. As such, large and specialized reunification think tanks are scarce in South Korea. Only three research institutes match the necessary criteria: first is the KINU, which consists of five research departments (Center for International Relations, Center for Unification Policy Studies, Center for North Korean Human Right Studies, Center for Inter-Korean Cooperation Studies, and Center for North Korean Studies) and which was staffed with 32 research fellows in 2011 (including senior, visiting and honorary ones). The IPA and the IFES also belong to this grouping. While the research team at the IPA is structured into four different divisions (Division of North Korean Affairs, Division of North–South Korean Affairs, Division of International Affairs, and Division of Social Development) employing 10 to 20 researchers in recent years, the IFES consists of a Research Department as well as an International Affairs Department employing more than 10 research staff members, thus being on the borderline of being a small and specialized think tank.

Other large Korean think tanks deal with broader themes, but only one division within each of them focuses on North Korea and reunification. Ten think tanks can be placed into this category, including the NRCS-supervised KDI and the KIEP. In both cases reunification studies account only for a very small part of the research output. This is also the case for the private Hyundai Research Institute, run by the large Korean *chaebol* of the same name. For Hyundai, North Korea is of relatively high interest because of the investments it has made in the country (such as the Kaesong Industrial Complex). In contrast, a private nonprofit organization like The Sejong Institute consists of four divisions, with one of them focusing on reunification and the other three on security strategies, regional issues, and international political economy studies respectively. The IFANS has a Department for National Security and Unification Studies (six researchers) as one of its five research units. Moreover, it is interesting to note that four of these ten think tanks deal with security issues. In contrast, the group of ten listed small but specialized think tanks is dominated by university research institutes (four). Altogether, 23 South Korean reunification think tanks can be identified — but, of course, the number of small and specialized think tanks will be larger than a brief investigation like this one can unveil.

The funding of South Korean reunification think tanks is quite multifarious; that said, government dominance herein must be noted. As a result, the overwhelming number of reunification think tanks in South Korea are academic in nature and characterized by their projection of a centrist image. Those fully funded by the government are the security-orientated think tanks like the INSS, which seems to be linked to the South Korean Secret Service, as well as the IFANS or the Korea Institute for Defense Analysis (KIDA). They can thus be characterized as purely academic think tanks under the direct control of the government. Those belonging to a university are also classifiable as solely academic think tanks. Regardless of whether they are state or private universities, these think tanks are mostly financed by the tuition fees paid by their students. For the most part, the small and specialized reunification ones belong to this grouping.

Other think tanks are also academic in nature, but tend toward additionally being classifiable as advocacy think tanks or contract researchers because of their mixed financing sources. For instance, the Kim Dae Jung Peace Institute belongs to the Kim Dae Jung Library, which is itself currently financed by the Nobel Peace Prize award (300 million South Korean won) that the former president bestowed to the Library Development Fund as well as by a government grant for the library's commemorative business (pursuant to the Act for the Respectful Treatment of Former Presidents). Quite similarly, the Jeju Peace Institute derives its budget from a KRW 25 billion fund raised from the MOFAT, the Jeju Provincial Government, and from private donors. To encourage such donations, it was decided that Jeju resident-owned corporations would be given the opportunity to spearhead the private sector fundraising campaign. While the IPA was formerly state financed, it suffered from political differences during the Sunshine Policy years and thus nowadays has to be

characterized as part advocacy think tank and part contract researcher. The institute's private donors live not only in South Korea but are also native Koreans resident in Japan and the US. In contrast, the three large think tanks — the KINU, KDI, and KIEP — belong to the NRCS management system, which essentially let tend academic think tanks strongly to contract researchers. All 23 government-funded research institutes under management of the National Research Council for Economics, Humanities, and Social Sciences (NRCS) are awarded only 50 percent of the research projects by their home ministries by way of exclusive contracts. The think tanks have to finance the other 50 percent of work from other sources, in open competition with other research institutes — including university and private sector think tanks.

Indeed, pure advocacy think tanks with a political image are scarce in South Korea with regard to reunification research. As a lone actor, the Hyundai Research Institute — operating under the guidance of one major business conglomerate — focuses partly on reunification. Only a few think tanks — like the East Asia Institute, The Sejong Institute, The Peace Foundation and the Korean Council for Reconciliation and Cooperation — have organized an association of supporters in order to help meet their respective financial challenges. In contrast, party think tanks do not exist in South Korea. Therefore, most of the South Korean reunification think tanks can be categorized as being academic and projecting a centrist image, because of a high degree of government dominance in the sector (for an overview see Table 2).

Table 2: Main South Korean Reunification Think Tanks

Think tank	Founded	Type	Source of financing
a) Large and specialized (structured into several reunification research departments)			
Institute for Far Eastern Studies (IFES)	1972	Academic	Kyungnam University
Institute for Peace Affairs (IPA)	1983	Advocacy/ Contract	Private donors, contract research
Korea Institute of National Unification (KINU)	1991	Acad./Contr.	NRCS
b) Large and multidisciplinary (structured into several departments, only one reunification dep.)			
East Asia Institute (EAI)	2002	Advocacy	Private donors
Hyundai Research Institute	1986	Advocacy	Hyundai Corporation
Institute for Foreign Affairs and National Security (IFANS)	1963/77	Academic	Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade
Institute for National Security Strategy (INSS)	1977	Academic	Government
Institute of East and West Studies (IEWS)	1972	Academic	Yonsei University
Korea Development Institute (KDI)	1971	Acad./Contr.	NRCS
Korea Institute for Defense Analysis (KIDA)	1979	Academic	Government
Korea Institute for International Economic Policy (KIEP)	1990	Acad./Contr.	NRCS

Think tank	Founded	Type	Source of financing
Korea National Strategy Institute (KNSI)	2005	Advocacy	Private donors
Research Institute on National Security Affairs (RINSA)	1972	Academic	Korea National Defense University
The Sejong Institute	1983	Advocacy	Private donors
c) Small and specialized (not structured into research departments)			
Ewha Institute of Unification Studies (EIUS)	2005	Academic	Ewha Women's Univ.
Institute for Peace and Unification Studies (IPUS)	2008	Academic	Seoul National University
Institute for the North Korean Studies	2000	Academic	Dongguk University
Institute of DMZ and Unification	2009	Academic	Kyungdong University
Jeju Peace Institute (JPI)	2006	Acad./Advoc.	International Peace Foundation
Kim Dae Jung Peace Institute	2005	Acad./Advoc.	Kim Dae Jung Library
Korean Council for Reconciliation and Cooperation (KCRC)	1998	Advocacy	Political parties and private donors
Korea Peace Foundation	2007	Advocacy	Private donors

Source: Author's own compilation.

Besides these Korean think tanks, several foreign ones are also involved in the pursuit of reunification research in South Korea. In this regard, German and US think tanks have to be especially highlighted. The German Konrad Adenauer Foundation, Friedrich Naumann Foundation, and Hanns Seidel Foundation — established by the respective political parties of the Christian Democrats (CDU), Liberals (FDP), and Christian Socialists (CSU) — all have representative offices in South Korea, where they deal, among other things, with reunification issues. As such, they must be categorized as having multiple focuses. The Konrad Adenauer Foundation was in 1978 the first German party foundation to support rapprochement between North and South Korea. Each opening an office in Seoul in 1987, the Friedrich Naumann and Hanns Seidel foundations are very active in North Korean issues, organizing conferences and workshops in North as well as in South Korea. Of course, all three German think tanks are interlinked with their parent party and share their basic ideology. Financially, they are funded by the German government but are also allowed to apply for grants to raise their research budget. Therefore, they are typical party think tanks with a political image.

Besides the German foundations, several US institutions are also active in research on Korean reunification issues. First up is the private advocacy think tank the Nautilus Institute for Security and Sustainability (established 1992), with its offices actually being situated in South Korea. Further to this body, the US–Korea Institute at John Hopkins University, Washington D.C., the Institute for North Korean Studies (INKS) at the University of Detroit Mercy (established 2004), and the Korea

Policy Institute (KPI), Los Angeles all deal with reunification issues but are, in contrast, located in the US itself. There are, of course, other international think tanks interested in the Korean Peninsula and reunification problems but they are not sufficiently important according to staff size to merit being listed here.

Table 3: Main Foreign Think Tanks dealing with Korean Reunification Issues

Think tank	Founded	Type	Source of financing
German (in South Korea)			
Friedrich Naumann Foundation, Seoul Office	1958/87	Party	German govern.
Hanns Seidel Foundation, Seoul Office	1967/87	Party	German govern.
Konrad Adenauer Foundation, Seoul Office	1958/78	Party	German govern.
US (in South Korea)			
Nautilus Institute for Security and Sustainability	1992	Advocacy	Private donors
US (domestic)			
Institute for North Korean Studies (INKS)	2004	Academic	Univ. of Detroit
Korea Policy Institute (KPI)	2006	Advocacy	Private donors
US–Korea Institute	2006	Academic	John Hopkins Univ.

Source: Author's own compilation

As Tables 2 shows, at least 22 Korean think tanks deal with reunification studies. Only three of them, however, are large and specialized, while ten are large but multidisciplinary think tanks dealing with reunification only alongside other issues. Besides that, we also find nine specialized but small Korean think tanks in this field of research. An overwhelming majority of 16 of these Korean reunification think tanks can be classified as academic with a centrist image (73 percent), with three of them being in part contract researchers (14 percent), and two tending to be political advocacy think tanks (9 percent). Only a small residual of six Korean reunification think tanks are politically orientated (27 percent), in terms of concrete type of advocacy think tanks, while no real party think tank can be observed here. Because academic think tanks in South Korea are mainly publically financed, one can state that reunification research is first and foremost governmentally organized in South Korea. This picture changes only slightly when foreign think tanks are also taken into consideration. Four foreign think tanks in South Korea focus on reunification issues — three of them German and one a US advocacy think tank. Three other think tanks situated in the US complete the picture. Therefore, altogether at least 29 think tanks act in the South Korean market of reunification ideas.

The reputation of these think tanks seems to be high, as the results of the "2012 Global Go To Think Tanks Report and Policy Advice" shows. Herein, three out of the 22 South Korean reunification think tanks belong to the group of the top 100 think tanks worldwide (non-US): the KDI (Rank 15), the KIEP (Rank 49), and the East Asia Institute (Rank 85). The German Konrad Adenauer Foundation is

ranked herein in 16th place. Furthermore, the KINU, the KIDA, and The Sejong Institute are among the top 45 think tanks in Northeast Asia (China, South Korea, and Japan), while the IFANS is ranked among the top 70 security and international affairs think tanks worldwide (McGann 2013: 42–57). Therefore, in the Korean market of reunification ideas, eight out of 29 think tanks are internationally recognized actors in the field of policy advice.

The competition of ideas in Korean reunification research

Concerning the openness of the market of ideas, first, quantity of suppliers and pluralism in the structure of this market is important. With 22 think tanks from South Korea itself, the market of ideas can be described as a wide oligopoly dominated by a few large specialized think tanks like the KINU, IPA, and IFES. Additionally, it must be emphasized that the overwhelming majority of Korean reunification think tanks are politically centrist (purely academic or academic but tending toward contract research respective to advocacy think tanks). There exist only six relevant Korean advocacy think tanks, but no party think tank at all in the field of reunification research. Therefore, South Korean reunification research is ultimately not that pluralistic. However, this result has to be relativized because the market is open to foreign suppliers. Not only three important German party think tanks enrich the market of ideas but several US advocacy and academic think tanks are active in this arena of idea production as well. With the presence of foreign reunification-related think tanks, the market of ideas becomes more pluralistic and the oligopoly at least less fixed. As long as the research sector in South Korea is open for these foreign suppliers we can still talk of a porous market of ideas at least.

The freedom or independence of think tanks to produce a product (idea) without political restrictions is also an important question. In this context, it is of the upmost interest that Article 4 of the Constitution of the Republic of Korea prescribes that the "Republic of Korea shall seek national reunification and shall formulate and carry out a policy of peaceful reunification on the principles of freedom and democracy." Therefore, in South Korea reunification education plays an important role in establishing a degree of national consensus on this topic. A Unification Education Support Act, promulgated in February 1999 with the inception of the Sunshine Policy, defined this as an "education which helps the people foster the sense of values and attitudes required to achieve reunification of South and North Korea, based on the belief in free democracy, consciousness of the national community, and sound awareness of national security" (Ministry of Foreign Affairs undated: 173). he institute offers educational courses for social group leaders, school teachers, civil servants, and the like (Institute for Unification Education undated: 4–11). In 2000 a Cyber Unification Education Center (www.uniedu.go.kr) was created by the Ministry of Unification, with it also serving as the website of the Institute for Unification (Lee 2003: 74).

But why has reunification education become more and more important for the South Korean government during the last few years? With those that experienced the Korean War slowly bowing out of public life, the younger generation has less knowledge about the causes of division and the events of 1950–53 (Hanns Seidel Foundation 2011). According to recent surveys, almost 50 percent of South Korean teenagers have "no interest in unification issues" (MOFAT 2010: 189). How important reunification education in South Korea has become in recent years is indicated by the figures given in Table 4. As one can observe, the number of people in South Korea who received reunification education increased tenfold between 2001 and 2011.

Table 4: Provision of Reunification Education

Year	Number of people who have received education
Prior to 2000	365,125
2001	12,774
2002	16,711
2003	17,087
2004	20,804
2005	26,420
2006	25,865
2007	34,045
2008	32,039
2009	71,944
2010	68,946
2011	119,736
Total	**811,496**

Source: http://eng.unikorea.go.kr/CmsWeb/viewPage.req?idx=PG0000000541 (accessed: 2013-10-14)

It must be assumed, therefore, that state-run as well as government-financed think tanks have to support the administration's political goals regarding national reunification. Not surprisingly, most of the South Korean reunification think tanks promote a reunification process unconditionally. The KINU, the leading reunification think tank in South Korea, describes its purpose for instance as being "to present a future blueprint for a unified and advanced Korea and [to] promote the value of unification" (KINU 2011). The IPA, meanwhile, wrote already in 1998 that: "The primary goals of the IPA are to develop a perspective on Korean unification through various researches and public information activities on the materializing of North Korea and unification affairs." In addition, the IPUS focuses on "intellectual competence for the reunification of two Koreas, recognizing that reunification is one of the most significant problems to be solved by our nation." Obviously, the clear focus on reunification as the ultimate political goal of the South Korean think tanks is a result of an imperfect market because of the overlapping of the scientific and political

systems. This is the only possible explanation for the huge gulf that exists between governmental goals and the level of public awareness in South Korea today, due to the different experiences of the current generation to those of their predecessors. But reunification will become reality at some point in the future for sure. Therefore, determination of research in this direction seems to be useful in the same way that the determination of a central bank with regard to price stability is. As a result, the restriction of goal-setting on the part of the South Korean think tanks should not be overestimated.

Crucially important with regard to the overlapping subsystems of society is the funding of the centrist South Korean reunification think tanks. As noted, many think tanks in South Korea are affiliated either with the government or with the country's universities. Therefore, it is not surprising that Nakamura (2005: 10) labels South Korean think tanks "quasigovernmental," with 100 percent of their endowments coming from government funds. For instance, the case of the IPA during the Sunshine Policy years starkly highlights the problem. While the IPA was mainly state funded in that period, more recently its government funding has been sharply reduced because of the political differences now existing between the institute and the government. Nowadays, the IPA is dependent on private donors in South Korea and abroad to finance its work — it has, however, lost its previously prominent position in reunification research. As one can imagine, the independence of researchers is extremely limited under such circumstances.

As already mentioned, from a German perspective the status of being government funded would fulfil the criterion of independence, while most Anglo-Saxon scientists would instead prefer to be privately funded. However, it is obvious that temporary contract research places limitations on an individual's freedom, mostly because the independence of researchers financed only in the short term is minimal. From an Anglo-Saxon point of view the South Korean government controls too many think tanks in the reunification sector. However, from the German side contract research reduces the independence of all the think tanks who (partly) depend on research grants from the government. In this way, the independence of those think tanks operating under NCRS management especially has decreased as a result of the 50/50 system. On the other hand, new competitors have had a chance to enter the market of ideas with new and interesting projects. As Mo (2005: 202) points out, in this way other actors have also become important sources of ideas while the influence of home ministries still remains significant in South Korea. Therefore, not only the rising number of advocacy think tanks but also the international openness of the Korean market of ideas concerning reunification issues is of the highest importance. While South Korea has gradually built up government-dominated education and research systems in the field of reunification ideas, the presence and influence of foreign think tanks nevertheless prevent this market from being completely monopolized.

Conclusion

During the past half a century a remarkable number of reunification think tanks have been established in South Korea. After decades of the dominance of state-run, security-orientated think tanks in the country, with the example and precedent of German reunification a new structure of reunification think tanks evolved as a result of the foundation of the KINU as South Korea's largest reunification think tank in 1991. Since then, other such institutes have also gradually emerged. Simultaneously, with the democratization of Korean society advocacy think tanks have also entered the market of reunification ideas — as have several foreign institutes, especially from Germany and the US. In the last decade a number of university institutes have sprung up to enrich the market of ideas too. Now, alongside the 22 Korean think tanks active in this field of research exist seven foreign think tanks, whose presence is helping widen the oligopoly.

While the goals of the South Korean Government are defined by Article 4 of the constitution, which demands a peaceful reunification, younger Koreans are becoming increasingly dismissive of the idea of reunification. As a result, reunification education became very important in the last decade. In this way, all government-related think tanks in South Korea are limited in their independence vis-à-vis setting their own research agendas. However, because reunification will inevitably become reality at some point in the future, the setting of research goals in this direction seems to be nevertheless useful.

Unfortunately, most of the Korean reunification think tanks are amenable to being influenced by the South Korean government because they are dependent on research grants from its public institutions. The 50/50 system in particular fundamentally limits the financial and personal independence of the larger South Korean think tanks. From a German point of view, the broad and unconditional financial sustenance of government-run think tanks would be preferable. This could be combined with competition for research projects being open for everybody. Additionally, the establishment of privately financed advocacy think tanks should be more intensely promoted in South Korea. Foreign competitors are in this way of key importance for the market of ideas, as their input helps to keep it open to innovation.

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