---

**Book Section:**
Son, S.A. orcid.org/0000-0002-3045-7939 (2021) South Korean national identity and inter-Korean relations since 1945. In: Lim, S. and Alsford, N.J.P., (eds.) Routledge Handbook of Contemporary South Korea. Routledge , pp. 241-257. ISBN 9780367458201

https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003026150-15

---

CHAPTER 15

# South Korean National Identity and Inter-Korean Relations since 1945[1]

Son, S. A., 2021. "South Korean National Identity and Inter-Korean Relations Since 1945", *Routledge Handbook of Contemporary South Korea,* London: Routledge.

Sarah Son

## Introduction

The Korean Peninsula began the 20th century as a single political unit and ended it as separate entities of extraordinary, if not mutually illustrious distinction. Towards the last days of the *Chosŏn* dynasty (1392-1910), the Peninsula was gradually departing from the moniker of the "Hermit Kingdom", earned due to its historical resistance to opening its borders to Western traders (Cumings, 2005: 87), and it held promise as an important strategic location in the region. It was subsequently colonised by imperial Japan for over three decades (1910-45), before its geopolitical division in 1945, which was the result of foreign actors competing for supremacy in the region as part of an emerging Cold War (Cumings, 2011). While many Koreans thought it would only be a matter of time before the unity of the Peninsula would be restored, how this would happen was less clear. Re-unification by force was tried and failed in the form of the Korean War (1950-53).[1] As the Cold War ended some 45 years later, it was hoped that some form of mutually agreeable process towards peace and unification would be found, but this ambition has remained elusive (Bleiker, 2004). The two Koreas have thus developed over the past seven decades as independent political, economic and social entities, while two autonomous and ideologically antagonistic systems have raised a generation of people who have never met the Koreans of the opposing side.

The growth of the Republic of Korea (ROK or South Korea) from an insignificant, war-ravaged backwater into an economic, cultural and political powerhouse in the region and the world has won it global praise. At the time of writing, it is the world's 15th largest economy (World Bank 2020) and has successfully transitioned from an aid recipient to a contributor to the International Development Association (IDA) of the World Bank. It was the first former aid recipient to become a member of the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and has hosted a soccer World Cup, two Olympic Games and a G20 Summit (South Korea Overview, 2020). It now ranks as the world's 16th best country for business by Forbes (Forbes, 2020) and boasts a world-famous pop culture industry with fans across the globe (Kelley, 2019).

Yet South Korea's identity still remains inexorably tied to its northern neighbour – the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK or North Korea). The coverage of inter-Korean relations in scholarship, policy discourse and the media is vast. Predictions about impending war and the nuclear, human rights and humanitarian crises that have emerged from North Korea have prompted much discussion and debate about the role of South Korea as a key part of the

solutions to these problems, and this association continues to overshadow the South's many independent achievements (Rozman, 2009; Shin and Burke, 2008; Son, 2007 & 2018). Analytical reflection has emerged over the years on South Korea's struggle to define an identity untarnished by North Korea and set apart from its neighbours in the region (Bleiker, 2005; Cho, 2010; Rozman, 2009; Shin, 2006; Son 2015). In the policy arena, since the late 2000s, much energy has been spent on debating, defining and promoting South Korea's independent "brand" in a world where "marketing" a state's image and reputation is an increasingly important imperative (Browning, 2015; Schwak, 2016). However, analysis that explores the causal mechanisms driving the negotiation of national identity and its connection to foreign and domestic policy, situated in the context of global trends in state image-making, is limited. Exploring policies and practices targeted specifically at nation-building and projecting a state's image to both internal and external audiences, provides meaningful insight into what matters to states as social actors in a rapidly globalising world.

This chapter explores South Korea's identity as it has emerged and evolved since 1945, when Japan's colonisation of the Peninsula ended, and the Cold War began. It begins by discussing conceptually the formation of national identity and its dynamic relationship with domestic and foreign policy. We then trace the evolution of South Korean national identity chronologically since 1945 with a particular focus on the role of inter-Korean relations in the negotiation of that identity over time. We concentrate on the way external and internal events, individuals and state-to-state relationships have exerted influence on South Korea's perception of itself and its place in the world over its short history. In doing so, we unpack the nature of South Korea's identity connection with the North as both "sibling and enemy" (Choo, 2003), and the many social pressures that compete with this connection, particularly in the present era of unprecedented global connectedness. It is argued that despite periods of positive engagement, long-running negative identification with North Korea positions reunification as a source of multi-faceted insecurity for South Korea, and that this will need to be overcome if concrete steps towards a permanent peace or the political-economic integration of the Peninsula are to be realised.

## What Is National Identity and Why Does It Matter?

The last three decades since the end of the Cold War have seen an increasing focus on the significance of 'identity politics' as drivers of contemporary conflicts, both conventional and less conventional. Observing these developments, international relations theorists working from a constructivist perspective have sought to challenge the Hobbsian realist paradigm of international relations centred on survival, power and peace as the only motives for state behaviour (Buzan, 1983: 31–34; Waltz, 1979: 129–131). Instead, they have argued that much like individuals, states also seek *ontological* security, or a "stable sense of self" (Giddens, 1984; Mitzen, 2006: 342). Ontological security necessitates a need for states to feel secure not only in their material or physical integrity, but also in who they are as identities or selves. According to this interpretation, the terms of states' engagement with the world are set by interests that are defined by the identities they hold (Hopf, 1998: 175). These interests are more complex and multi-layered than the interests arising from physical or territorial survival alone.

Scholars examining identity and social relationships between states borrow from social psychology, and specifically Social Identity Theory, to understand how identity, or a sense of 'self' takes shape not in a vacuum, but in relation to "significant others" (Wendt, 1999). For example, humans tend to feel the need to attach themselves to a broader collective through

sharing their environmental circumstances and meaningful experiences (Bloom, 1990: 23–53). Moreover, once formed, a group may unite in specific opposition to another group, with whom they do not identify or from whom they perceive a threat of some kind. The circumstances and experiences a group shares are usually articulated in a narrative which, at the state level, is typically found in the narrative of the nation. This narrative describes the boundaries of that nation in its various dependent dimensions: geographical, temporal, ideological, cultural, ethnic and historical. In describing who 'we' are, as part of a story that is uniquely 'our' own, the national narrative provides the national 'self' with an essential degree of knowledge and certainty about its place in the world (Berenskoetter, 2012: 9). This is the case even though most members of that nation have never met each other. In these ways, a nation as a group of people subscribing to certain identity parameters is, in the words of Benedict Anderson, an "imagined community" (Anderson, 2006).

National narratives are typically constructed by and disseminated to the public by those voices that exert the most ideological influence on society: politicians; journalists; scholars; teachers; and artists (Berenskoetter, 2012: 18). However, to be successful, national identity narratives must be also carried and reproduced by citizens at the grassroots. This requires state practices that socialise citizens through everyday expressions of nationalism that embed the national narrative to the extent that it becomes each person's own story, whether they lived through it or not (Billig, 1995; Peters, 2002). Citizens thus "inherit and grow into an existing social world" that is replete with institutions, an agreed-upon cultural heritage and pride in a collective culture that comes with collective commitments to its continuation (Peters, 2002: 14).

In the interests of creating the 'right' national narrative, society's elites will tend to downplay certain aspects of the past, emphasise other parts, choose the right heroes and villains and glorify the national community in its preferred dimensions. In this way, the narrative paints the nation in the right light to those both inside and outside its boundaries. It is not only important that the narrative disseminated among citizens holds resonance and appeal, but it must also maintain consistency and stability. Sudden changes to the national story can have a destabilising effect, and so can only take place within acceptable boundaries of the existing patterns of language, culture and national customs (Waever, 1993: 23; Theiler, 2003). The structure of a national narrative as both coherent and consistent is therefore crucial, as without an acceptable sense of self and a degree of certainty about its position relative to others, the nation risks insecurity, or anxiety, as Giddens and others describe (Giddens, 1984: Mitzen, 2006). National anxiety may, of course, manifest over traditional concerns such as the stability of state borders or the ethno-cultural homogeneity of society. Yet in our globalising world, anxiety is increasingly also connected to less tangible identity parameters, such as the state's reputation among other states, its ability to claim expertise in certain areas of statecraft, and in its contribution to the resolution of global problems (Browning, 2015: 197). This expansion in the diversity of parameters meaningful to a state's sense of security is connected to the increasing salience of what Joseph Nye first defined as "soft power": "arising from the attractiveness of a country's culture, political ideals and policies" (Nye, 2004: 256). As we will see in the later sections of this chapter, this trend has manifested in the emergence of 'place branding' as a key aspect of national governance since the end of the Cold War. Moreover, place branding has now moved beyond marketing locations to attract foreign tourists and investment, to a situation where states now vie for political authority and loyalty in an ever-more competitive global marketplace of states, aimed at winning the *esteem* of people both at home and abroad (Browning, 2015; Van Ham, 2008: 128). This is evident in the growing relevance of international indexes ranking countries according to the success of their national

"brand", or according to whether they constitute a "good country" (Good Country, 2020; Van Ham, 2008).

When new states are declared, such as South Korea was in 1948, their national identity is not created on a blank slate. Rightly or wrongly, there is always a foundation for their existence: an ethnic group; an ideological persuasion; a colonial ambition; or a mixture of these and other factors. Yet at the time of foundation, a state's identity narrative may be weak and confused. The task of those charged with administering a state's birth is one of rapidly consolidating its ideational parameters – those things its citizens carry in their minds as markers of the state's identity distinct from all other states in the world. Faced with the then irreconcilable differences sponsored by their Cold War allies, a people's desire to finally reassert their independent agency after decades of colonial oppression, and the opportunity to step on to a development trajectory that would modernise and strengthen the state, both Koreas from 1948 launched aggressive nation-building campaigns replete with state propaganda to paint a narrative that necessarily described certain aspects of North and South 'Korean-ness' as resolutely different from each other. The Cold War concurrently provided impetus for consolidating nationhood based on opposition to 'what we are not', both in relation to opposing ideological blocs, but specifically in relation to the 'other' Korea. Today, South Korea is negotiating its identity in spaces where new opportunities are arising to gain international recognition. In the next section, we look first at those early years of South Korean nation-building, as its new leaders sought to consolidate power, fend off the North, and build an economy that would provide an improved quality of life for its citizens.

## A Nation in Flux: Division and War

It is difficult to underestimate the impact of Japan's occupation of the Korean Peninsula on Korean identity. During the colonial period from 1910-1945, Japan not only physically occupied Korean territory, but also imposed an assimilation policy aimed at "reforming (Koreans') antiquated and evil customs and manners", claiming that Korea and Japan had once been one, "and that Korea should therefore be 're-joined' to Japan as the… superior civilisation" (Buzo, 2017: 50; Caprio, 2009). The various branches of the Korean independence movement responded by reviving and also reconstructing aspects of the narrative about the origins of the Korean race and the unique history of the Korean people (Pai and Tangherlini, 1998: 20–21). This response was not entirely new. Korea had experienced multiple episodes of foreign invasion over the centuries, which Yang argues fostered a "nativistic resilience", transmitted down the generations during the *Chosŏn* dynasty (1392-1910) (Yang, 1989: 426). During the later period of Japanese colonisation, nationalist historians worked to reinstate an authentically Korean historical consciousness (Allen, 1990: 789). The withdrawal of Japan in 1945 then, offered sudden hope of being able to live out this largely primordial interpretation of Korean-ness. In 1947, Korean historian *Son Chin-t'ae* wrote:

> The history of Korea is the history of the Korean nation (*minjok*). Since the beginning of history we have been a single race (*tongil han hyŏlchok*) that has had a common historical life, living in a single territory… sharing a common culture and carrying out countless common national struggles under a common destiny (quoted in Duncan, 1998: 336).

Yet this hope of reasserting Korean-ness under an independent Korean administration was short-lived, as the tragedy of the inter-Korean division was then imposed upon the Peninsula.

The division into two separately administered entities came in August 1945, immediately after the Japanese surrender in the World War II. The Soviet Union had troops positioned in Manchuria and northern Korea, a situation to which the United States (US) felt it needed to respond in order to assert its position over the future of the region. On 10 August 1945, two officers based in Washington D.C. were tasked with carving out a US occupation zone in Korea. It was thus proposed – and later agreed with the Soviet Union – that US troops would occupy the territory south of the 38th parallel and Soviet troops would occupy the territory to the north (Oberdorfer, 2001: 6-7). The division took place without consultation with any Korean representatives, and by 1948, Soviet and US administrators had facilitated the installation of Korean leaders sympathetic to their respective ideological positions in each of their territories – Syngman Rhee in the South and Kim Il-sung in the North.

When the ROK was established in 1948, its new Constitution asserted the government's claim to rule over the entire peninsula by stating "the territory of the ROK shall consist of the Korean peninsula and its adjacent islands" (*Constitution of the Republic of Korea*, 1948: art 3). The Constitution established that the mission of the state was democratic reform and peaceful unification, stating that "national unity belongs with justice, humanitarianism and brotherly love". It also noted, "the state shall strive to sustain and develop the cultural heritage and to enhance national culture" in an environment where "no privileged caste shall be recognised or ever established" (*Constitution of the Republic of Korea*, 1948: art. 9 & 11(2)). These claims were poignant references to the legacies of the experience of the Japanese colonisation, the intention to reassert an indigenous identity, while pointing to the assumed impermanence of the Korean division through unification as a central objective.

When Syngman Rhee was appointed as President with the backing of the US in 1948, he faced a mammoth challenge in terms of nation building, alongside the urgency of needing to legitimise his own rule, which rested on only 55 of the 200 seats in the National Assembly at that time (Buzo, 2017: 109). To encourage citizens to rally around his leadership, he appealed to an ethno-cultural version of nationalism in state rhetoric and policy. According to Rhee's policy of *ilminjuŭi*, or "One People-ism":

> Nation was understood in organic and collectivistic terms, being considered a natural being or fate characterised by shared bloodline and ancestry. Koreans were also regarded as belonging to a unitary nation and expected to have the same thoughts and behaviours… nation was considered natural, indivisible, and immortal, and all individual interests and thoughts should be subordinate to those of the whole, the nation (Shin, 2006: 102).

Concurrently, however, the geopolitical imperatives of the time necessitated firm ideological differentiation of the South from the North. Rhee both fostered and capitalised on anti-communist sentiment, engaging in widespread surveillance of citizens and barring from civil service roles anyone suspected of being a communist sympathiser. He oversaw the authorities' violent response to the Jeju Island (*Chejudo*) Uprising beginning in April 1948,[2] accusing North Korea of fomenting the rebellion, as well as continued state violence nationwide against suspected communists (Cumings, 2005: 219–222). The communist threat was fully realised with the outbreak of the Korean War in 1950 and the devastation that ensued. With no clear victory for either side, along with the lack of a permanent peace agreement to follow the 1953 armistice, the need to defend against the 'red peril' was never more salient.

Rhee was re-elected three times before stepping down in 1960 following widespread public demonstrations over electoral fraud, his coercive approach to governance and for authorising police violence against street protestors (Cumings, 2005: 349–350). However, the place of anti-communism as a central feature of South Korea's new state identity had been set, providing an unprecedented challenge to the notion of pan-Korean national unity. When Rhee left office in 1960, another leader was already waiting in the wings. Then Major General Park Chung-hee and his military co-conspirators took control of the government by force in a coup in May 1961. They ruled as a military junta while allowing the sitting president, *Yun Po-sŏn*, to stay in his post until Park was elected President in 1963 on a platform that promised to both alleviate the military threat posed by North Korea, as well as a rising sense of "industrial and technological backwardness", prompted by the rapid economic recovery of neighbouring Japan (Buzo, 2017: 145). Park also oversaw a new era of nation building that was unlike anything the South Korean people had previously encountered.

## Nation-Building under Military Dictatorship

On assuming the presidency, Park Chung-hee launched an ambitious programme of economic development through his "Modernisation of the Fatherland (*choguk kŭndaehwa*)" policies aimed at pushing for rapid economic growth. Citizens were mobilised to take part in a nationwide effort to build both industrial and military capacity. The focus was on building the internal strength that would finally allow South Korea to demonstrate that it had superseded the North in its economic recovery and military strength due to its superior governing model. Park's "Modernisation of the Fatherland" policy, as well as his 1972 *Yusin* (renewal) constitution, limited opposition to his rule and drew heavily on ethno-nationalist rhetoric to legitimise his economic programmes, as well as his autocratic deployment of power. He proclaimed, "Ideology changes, but the nation stays and lasts", and emphasised the eternality of the "great Han race" (quoted in Shin, 2006: 99-100). When his leadership was threatened in 1971 by the challenge of progressive opposition candidate Kim Dae-jung, Park moved to consolidate popular support by calling for "loyalty to the nation" and "love and loyalty to the country" (Park, 1973: 185).

Over the course of his Presidency, Park also continued to remind citizens of the communist threat just over the border, which only heightened following an assassination attempt on Park by North Korean forces in 1968. Watching the Vietnam War going badly for US forces during the 1960s and early 1970s added to Park's concern that a communist neighbour presented a clear existential threat to the South. Concerned that the US under President Jimmy Carter was not providing enough of a buffer against the North, and in response to the knowledge that North Korea's military capacity now exceeded that of South Korea, in the 1970s, Park pushed for "self-reliant national defence (*chaju kukpang*) " under the notion of "rich nation, strong army (*puguk kangbyŏng*)" to legitimise the parallel development of both the economy and South Korea's military capacity. With memories of the Korean War still fresh in their minds, the public largely complied with the demand to mobilise. These developments further consolidated the national image of North Korea as the ever-present threat to the South's progress and the enemy that must be outdone in the fierce Cold War competition for supremacy. However, Park's intolerance towards rising domestic opposition to his style of governance was to be his undoing, and in 1979 he was assassinated by Korean Central Intelligence Agency Chief Kim Jae-gyu during a heated debate about Park's plans to authorise violent means to stamp out public protests calling for democracy.

Following Park's assassination, over the next decade, the strengthening democracy movement drew heavily on the Korean nationalist imaginary to legitimise their efforts, in terms that departed from the staunchly conservative, anti-communist message that had dominated public discourse for so long. This added significant complexity to the state narrative. Before its democratisation, and despite the hardship many experienced under Park Chung-hee as a result of his limits on many personal freedoms and the mass mobilisation of the citizenry, South Korea nevertheless had a fairly distinct and uncontested understanding of itself from a domestic perspective: the homogenous nature of the population, shared confidence in the country's "economic miracle" and joint antipathy towards Japan's revisionist history (Rozman, 2009: 68–69):

> Anti-communism; pride in premodern symbols such as King Sejong…; determination to preserve an insular society; and gratitude to the US (were) defining elements of a South Korean overall identity (Rozman, 2009: 68–69).

However, with democratisation came a host of voices that had long been supressed and that sowed division over the South Korean national narrative, particularly concerning North Korea. Progressives now formed a credible opposition to the long-ruling, anti-communist, conservative right and facilitated contestation over how engage with or respond to North Korea (Rozman, 2009: 68–69), as we will see in the next section.

Throughout the early post-Korean War presidencies we thus saw an assertion of Korean national identity that was at once staunchly anti-communist, but which also sought to assert the purity of the Korean nation and bloodline and to stake South Korea's claim as the legitimate governing entity over the Peninsula. Calls to glorify the fatherland were used to mobilise civic compliance with ambitious economic and military development plans. In addition, state discourse facilitated the omnipresence of ethnic nationalism as a guiding force for government policy at all levels. When applied to policy on North Korea, and coupled with little public information about life inside North Korea to provide evidence to the contrary, a "myth of unity" and "a master narrative of homogeneity" were also perpetuated (Grinker, 1998: 73–98; Shin, 2006). However, as Bleiker argues, this imagined unity was doomed to failure precisely because it ignored "the reality of existing antagonistic identity practices" (Bleiker, 2001: 128) that are a natural consequence of the inter-Korean division. As this myth of unity stood in such stark contrast to reality, the narrative instead perpetuated the inter-Korean division by prohibiting discussion of identity differences and how to approach them (Grinker, 1998: 77). In practical terms, ethno-nationalist rhetoric under Park Chung-hee centred on his specific constituents, his partners in a nation building project that demanded total commitment for the benefit of the whole, defined in South Korean, rather than pan-Korean terms. Furthermore, the delivery of his policies put unification as a 'national project' firmly on the backburner in favour of a focus on domestic national development to overcome its weaknesses in economic and military capacity. While Park's assassination in 1979 did not bring an immediate end to authoritarian rule, it marked the beginning of greater freedom to articulate Korean-ness and nationhood in more diverse terms, not least in relation to North Korea, in public and political discourse.

## Democratisation and the End of the Cold War

South Korean perceptions of North Korea in the early 1980s rested on three decades of state rhetoric that presented the communist threat to South Korea's achievements as real and ever-

present. In 1980, Chun Doo-hwan, who had taken power in 1979 by military coup and was working to remove political opposition in order to secure his path to the Presidential Blue House, oversaw the massacre of up to 2,000 civilian residents of the city of Kwangju, who were protesting against martial law and Chun's rule. The authorities branded the protest a rebellion instigated by the "hidden hand" of North Korea (Oberdorfer, 2001: 122–126), demonstrating that deploying anti-communism as a rationale for heavy-handed responses to opposition had carried over from the previous regime. In 1983, North Korea made an assassination attempt on Chun while he was on a state visit to Rangoon (Yangon). In 1987 North Korean forces bombed Korean Air Flight 858 and killed 115 mostly South Korean passengers. These events only consolidated the 'enemy aggressor' image of North Korea. However, at this time, an urgent incentive to explore improved relations with North Korea was looming – Seoul's hosting of the summer Olympic Games in 1988.

The Olympics were a crucial opportunity for South Korea to show the world who it was and what it had achieved, and the government needed to minimise the potential that the North would seek to disrupt the games. Under another military conservative elected in 1987, Roh Tae-woo, the South thus sought to accelerate moves towards improving relations with the North, as well as with the Soviet Union and China, under Roh's *Nordpolitik* policy. Modelled on former West German Chancellor Willy Brandt's *Ostpolitik* initiative of the 1960s, *Nordpolitik* also included encouraging South Korea's allies to engage with North Korea, to which the US and Japan responded positively (Buzo, 2017: 197–198). The Seoul Olympic Games went ahead without incident on North Korea's part. The end of the Cold War in 1989 then made way for inter-Korean talks at the prime-ministerial level for the first time, which led to the two sides signing the historic Agreement on Reconciliation, Non-aggression and Exchanges and Cooperation (also called the Inter-Korean Basic Agreement) in 1991 (Buzo, 2017: 197). The agreement focussed on mutual respect between the two nations, the renunciation of armed aggression, and plans for cooperation and exchange of people between the two countries. This agreement and the dialogue that preceded it laid the groundwork for greater inter-Korean socialisation and allowed a subtle adjustment of the narrative on North Korea for South Koreans, who had spent over four decades mired in a view of North Korea as a fundamental threat, and little else.

Building on these developments, as democratisation advanced with the 1993 election of South Korea's first civilian president, Kim Young-sam, the larger presence of opposition voices in Korean politics opened the space for the revival of unification as a national project (Rozman, 2009: 72). The 1990 unification of East and West Germany had instigated new hope in the possibilities for overcoming the divide. Having been largely ignored and politically supressed under successive authoritarian regimes, now that a tangible precedent existed, unification became a topic of meaningful discussion and investment in the form of institutional research on the various scenarios that might be attempted. This prompted public and academic discourse that grappled with the uncomfortable interdependence of North and South Korea (Choo, 2003: 32), and demanded a reckoning with narratives of distrust and animosity that had characterised the attitude towards North Korea for so long. Yet while conservatives saw the German precedent as evidence that the downfall of the North Korean regime and the North's absorption into the South was possible, progressives focussed instead on inter-Korean peace and reconciliation as primary objectives.

Progressive President Kim Dae-jung (1997-2002)'s "Sunshine Policy" sought to challenge established relations with North Korea in a way which was unprecedented. Kim's Sunshine Policy was designed to project warmth onto North Korea, in the hope of encouraging the North

to remove some of its defensive layers and allow moves towards reconciliation. While unification as an end point was central to the political discourse of the time in a rhetorical sense, the implication of regime change associated with the absorption of one Korea into another in a unification scenario meant that the primary goal of the Sunshine Policy was reconciliation rather than unification, at least in the near-term. This ensured the North Korean regime would be willing to engage in dialogue. The Sunshine Policy included generous funding packages, the first inter-Korean Presidential summit in the history of the two states in 2000, the resumption of North-South family reunions, and the construction of the *Kaesŏng* joint industrial manufacturing complex. North Korea was positively disposed towards these initiatives, particularly as it was emerging from the economic and social ravages of a years-long famine overseen by Kim Jong-il, son of North Korea's founding leader, Kim Il-sung, who had died in 1994. South Korean society appeared cautiously open to and encouraged by the thaw in tensions and was also curious to learn more about its Northern brethren (Cho, 2009: 230–231). Kim Dae-jung's rhetoric at the time drew again on the perceived unifying power of ethnic oneness to rally the people to the cause of reconciliation, saying, "We are standing in the shadow of our 5,000-year history; the spirit of our forefathers is urging us on" (Kim, 1998).

Yet the Sunshine Policy era also presented a fundamental contradiction to the established parameters of South Korean national identity. On the one hand, the security alliance bond with the US, in direct opposition to the North as South Korea's primary enemy, remained both strong and important. On the other hand, the emergence of positive identification with North Korea via efforts at dialogue and engagement stood in opposition to South Korea's alliance with the US and its identity built on 50 years of nation-building seated in intense competition with, and animosity towards the North. This tension was visible in the ideological polarisation of South Korean politics and society consolidated during this period, which presented great difficulty for policymakers trying to find compromise (Cho, 2010: 122). The legitimising efforts of the post-authoritarian era progressive governments attempted to revive a popular ethnonationalism as the basis for dialogue and engagement with North Korea. Yet the concurrent mobilisation of popular identification with the modern constructs of the two separate Korean states and the political, social and military obstacles to national unity proved stronger forces (Choo, 2003: 41–43). Furthermore, the enemy image of North Korea continued to hold sway, thanks to the success of the preceding five decades of "aggressive state-building", situating North Korea indelibly as a threat to the South Korean way of life (Kang, 2012: 684). As the cross-border warmth generated by the Sunshine Policy weakened in the late 2000s, the North Korean regime began again to embody the enemy other, pushing forward with its preferred survival strategy of becoming a nuclear armed state, conducting its first nuclear test in 2006 and finalising its withdrawal from the Six Party Talks aimed at negotiating the dismantlement of its nuclear programme by 2009 (Buzo, 2017: 230).

In addition to the radical changes to the form and depth of inter-Korean engagement during this period, South Korea's democratisation and the achievement of greater material wealth created space for a form of reflection on its successes that emphasised the triumph of supposedly uniquely Korean cultural values. Buzo has written that this led to a "constant refrain" that all domestic schisms and problems, and even the division of Korea itself, "were solvable on the basis that 'We are Koreans together'" (Buzo, 2017: 201). This awareness from the early 1990s that citizens were now free to enjoy the fruits of their collective labours, alongside a greater sense of pride in their achievements, also formed the basis for a perceived need to engage with a rapidly integrating world economy. When Kim Young-sam was elected in 1993, one of his first actions was to introduce a *segyehwa* or "globalisation" policy, aimed at completing the work of the Park Chung-hee era in transforming Korea from an economic

backwater (Schwak, 2020). Kim's policy indicated a clear consciousness that if South Korea was to finish the developmental journey, it needed to internationally socialise to win the approval of other states in a new, Post-Cold War order. However, insufficiencies in the foundation of South Korea's "Miracle on the Han" were exposed most painfully during the 1997 Asian Financial Crisis, necessitating the largest financial bailout in the history of the International Monetary Fund (IMF). This crisis, compounded by the need to be rescued by an external actor, was a blow to South Korea's confidence in its capacity to overcome adversity. Yet this only led to a greater determination to reassert itself as a leader in the Asia-Pacific region in ways beyond boasting an exemplary economic model. To reassert itself would require adapting to new international norms positively associated with liberal democratic values. The path to such norm adaptation would require a combination of institutional change and "internationalist" foreign policies that would provide a platform on which to exhibit the right values and win recognition from the international community (Browning, 2015: 11; Lawler, 2005). This turn, from an inward focus on building the economy and consolidating South Korean national strength, towards finding ways to showcase South Korea's achievements to the world, had profound implications for the state's identity in the latter part of the 2000s.

## Nation-Building to Nation-Branding

When conservative President Lee Myung-bak took office in 2008, the Sunshine Policy had been in decline for some years. North Korea's 2006 nuclear test and its 2009 withdrawal from the Six Party Talks, the shooting of a South Korean tourist by a North Korean soldier at Mountain *Kŭmgang* resort in 2008, the sinking of the *Ch'ŏnan* naval ship (allegedly by North Korea), and the shelling of *Yŏnp'yŏng* Island in 2010 all contributed to the souring of inter-Korean relations. Following the death of North Korean leader Kim Jong-il in 2011, his son, Kim Jong-un, took the leadership and demonstrated a determination to consolidate his position through accelerating the North's nuclear weapons programme (Delury, 2017). South Korean political discourse around this time reflected on this turn of events with disappointment. North Korea had let the side down by working towards the reversal of all the Sunshine Policy had achieved and by threatening the international community by failing to pursue "normal" behaviour (Ministry of Unification, 2011: 15 & 18-19). President Lee sought to frame the South as the tolerant partner, which had done all it could to bring peace to the Peninsula (Ministry of Unification, 2011: 46). He called for pragmatism, not ideology, as the driving force in inter-Korean relations (KINU, 2008).

Concurrently, and perhaps also to counter the negative coverage domestically and globally in regard to inter-Korean relations, Lee shifted the focus to a new phase of national advancement that moved "well beyond industrialisation and democratisation" (Lee, 2010). Specifically, he claimed a need to add "a more global aspect to (South Korea's) policies and take on more of a leadership role on the international scene" (Lee, 2009). Lamenting the fact that the first images of Korea that came to the minds of observers still tended to be strikes and street demonstrations, he stated that if South Korea wanted to be "'approved' as an advanced country" then it was essential to "improve its image and reputation significantly" (Schwak, 2016: 437). Proof for Lee that this agenda was both essential and urgent was that in 2008, the Anholt-GfK Roper Nation Brands Index listed South Korea as 33rd out of 50 nations. This was both below the OECD average and behind its former colonial oppressor and rival, Japan (Kim, 2011: 148). Korea's disappointing ranking played to the nation's historical anxiety about being marginalised and left behind, and so Lee established a Presidential Council for Nation Branding

(PCNB) in 2009, which aimed to raise South Korea's ranking to 15th on the Index by 2013 (Kim, 2011: 148).

A large part of this agenda of aggressively re-shaping South Korea's image in the eyes of the world involved shaking off what is known as the "Korea Discount" – "the gap between the country's development accomplishments and its poor image in the eyes of international audiences" (Schwak, 2016: 436). Although South Korea had by that time shown "unequivocal success in borrowing, catching up and contributing to the global order" (Rozman, 2009: 70) through its efforts to develop strong capacity in manufacturing and exporting quality products abroad, hosting international sporting events and joining international institutions such as the OECD, the work of securing an international image commensurate with its achievements remained incomplete. According to the Lee administration, South Korea needed to demonstrate global competitiveness in the marketplace of state brands. It did this by using the PCNB to promote Korean popular culture (*hallyu*) and tourism, engage in appropriate middle-power manoeuvring, such as hosting the G20 summit (the first in Asia) in 2010, and by seeking to increase its commitment to United Nations (UN) peacekeeping activities, among a range of other initiatives (Son, 2018: 11).

During its short, four-year tenure, the PCNB achieved some success; however, government bureaucrats soon realised that it was not enough to just tell the world about Korea: "reputation is something you earn, not something you construct" (Williamson, 2015). Moreover, further shifts in the disciplinary power of globalisation over state image-making were soon to foster a more nuanced approach to place branding that persists today and draws on deeper, more values-oriented aspects of state identity. In essence, it was no longer enough to be competitive in the global economy. States should also strive to be "good countries", by being seen to be making positive contributions to shared global problems (Good Country, 2020). There was also a realisation that defining and promoting state identity could not be exclusively top-down: it was essential to garner a popular understanding of the state's values domestically, thus gaining endorsement for the state narrative from below (Van Ham, 2008). A large part of Korea's "internationalism" thus became an effort to socialise internationally by doing good deeds, seeking to share know-how and provide consulting for developing countries.

Events throughout the 2010s presented continuing challenges to South Korea's identity, both among its own citizens and in the eyes of the world. The 2014 sinking of the Sewol Ferry leading to the deaths of hundreds of school students shone a harsh light on inadequacies in health and safety practices nationally, and sparked questions over the integrity of then President Park Geun-hye, which led to revelations about corruption that spiralled into an historic scandal.[3] The largest public demonstrations in Korea's history in late 2016 saw Park impeached and imprisoned. Yet this victory for Korean democracy was soon overshadowed by some of the highest tensions between North and South Korea for many years. North Korea conducted a series of missile tests and a September 2017 nuclear test, signalling that its nuclear weapons capability was developing faster than anticipated. Heated rhetoric between both the US and North Korea and North and South Korea threatened to spill over into something more serious. The last bastion of the Sunshine Policy, the *Kaesŏng* Industrial Complex, had already suspended operations in February 2016 and even North Korea's closest ally, China, responded to the 2017 nuclear test by enforcing UN trade sanctions against the North to an unprecedented degree. All eyes were again on the Korean Peninsula, for all the wrong reasons. However, the new progressive president, Moon Jae-in, acted decisively to diffuse the tensions, utilising the 2018 Pyeongchang Winter Olympics (*P'yŏngch'ang Tonggye Ollimp'ik*) as an opportunity to extend an olive branch to North Korea. Yet as will be seen, even these extraordinary efforts

did little in the long-term to positively alter the narrative on North Korea in the minds of South Koreans.

This period in Korea's history was thus one of significant change and maturation in identity terms. Efforts to deal with the post-Sunshine Policy downturn in inter-Korean relations, alongside the advent of the perceived need to more proactively address South Korea's image in the world, necessitated a deeper process of differentiation between North and South Korea. This period also acted as a sobering reminder of the cyclical nature of inter-Korean relations: repeated episodes of warmth followed by cooling, which prohibited the possibility of sustained trust-building. While residual identification with North Koreans as ethnic brethren persisted, the possibility for such identification to lead to any longstanding political reconciliation was as yet out of reach.

## Contemporary Nationalism in South Korea

Nationalism in South Korea today is being negotiated in a new and evolving space, without the particular certainties of the Cold War. It is an environment where significant experiments in inter-Korean relations have failed to yield a formal end to the Korean War or a permanent, positive shift in the way the people of South Korea identify with those in the North. Korean-ness in its ethno-cultural interpretation is also shifting objectively, as a result of increasing long-term or permanent immigration to South Korea, cross-cultural marriages, as well as the return of members of the Korean diaspora who carry with them traits and attitudes that depart from the mainstream. Universities and employers are also under increasing pressure to train and deploy a "globally competent" workforce equipped to engage with the global economy effectively (Kim, 2019). At best, these conditions create a distraction from engagement efforts with North Korea for the vast majority of South Koreans, pushing inter-Korean affairs, and unification especially, down the list of collective priorities. At worst, they necessitate concerted efforts to distance South Korea from North Korea in order to avoid association with the threat posed by the North to political-economic stability in the South.

As discussed in the previous section, South Korea's efforts at constructing and disseminating a national brand in the late 2000s have evolved into a more sophisticated form of internationalism: leading by example and role-modelling 'good country' behaviour as a credible member of the liberal democratic world. This has occurred even as its leading ally, the US, has retreated into America-first policies that have done considerable damage to progress on global burden-sharing (Albright, 2018). South Korea has also mobilised industry to feed the hearts and imaginations of a global audience hungry for the cultural content of the Korean Wave (*hallyu*), which has proven long running and resilient. The shame around its colonial past, the division and war, its authoritarian governments, its struggle for democracy and the Asian Financial Crisis has diminished relative to the emergence of a new image of modern South Korea. South Korean electronic and vehicle brands are known globally for being Korean and one is as likely to see a Korean pop group on a US late night talk show as a Western celebrity. All of these factors have amplified South Korea's place in the consciousness of the global community, with an identity more distinct from North Korea than was possible in the past, and recognised more for the diversity and scale of its achievements than for its perceived weaknesses. The nation's predisposition for massive public protests has shifted from being a source of shame at the problems they seek to address, to a source of pride as a sign of more robust democracy at work (Lahiri, 2017). Even the least engaged observer cannot have missed

the additional boost provided to Korea's image as a result of its exemplary handling of the coronavirus outbreak in 2020.

The pull of South Korea away from identification with North Korea has also continued despite, and perhaps even because of the rapprochement efforts of 2018 and 2019. The many areas of difference between the North and South arguably came into starker relief for external observers as a result of the inter-Korean, as well as the US-North Korea summit meetings during this time. The contrasting leadership styles and ultimately conflicting objectives of the respective heads of state were broadcast to a global audience of historic size and diversity. While the North and South Korean state representatives involved in the first series of inter-Korean summits projected warmth and rhetorical commitment to '*t'ongil*' (unification) at meals and concerts with K-pop stars, the work of deeper, constructive cross-border dialogue proved more complicated. Soon the insults and criticisms from North Korea's state media resumed, directed primarily at the US, and hopes for reviving inter-Korean initiatives such as the functioning of the *Kaesŏng* Industrial Complex began to wane. Much analysis was subsequently dedicated to North Korea's real intentions and whether genuine opportunities existed for South Korea to make progress towards meaningful change in the inter-Korean relationship before Moon Jae-in's presidency ended. Observer consensus tended to fall on the impossibility of moving into longer-term congenial territory due to the problem for North Korea of the continuing US-South Korea alliance, North Korea's irrevocable dependence on nuclear arms, and the policy-stifling effects of continuing ideological polarisation in South Korean politics over North Korea.

At the public level, the recent rapprochement efforts also did little to force a fundamental change in the way South Korean citizens identify with North Korea. Research from Seoul's Asan Institute for Policy Studies, for example, shows surges in "favourability" towards North Korea around important meetings such leadership summits and the Pyeongchang Winter Olympics in 2018 (Asan Poll, 2019). However, the overall trend indicates continued mixed feelings about North Korea, as well as mixed satisfaction over South Korea's North Korea policy overall. Moreover, when asked which country is the most important for South Korea's economy and security, the US ranks far higher than its relationships with North Korea or China (Asan Poll, 2019). It is unsurprising then, that as inter-Korean relations settle back into contentious but largely unremarkable territory, South Korean citizens and their leaders prefer to focus on those areas of policy and action where the state is experiencing success: in international diplomacy, in designing and selling products and cultural content to approving markets abroad; and in responding effectively to certain global crises.

## Looking to the Future

Putting aside the Kim regime's foremost priority of regime survival, which prohibits meaningful structural transformation of the kind that would allow for the political integration of North and South, the failure of past experiments aimed at meaningful economic, political and/or social convergence of the two Koreas points to two imperatives. First, there is a need to recognise the salience of identity as an obstacle to the success of moves to reconcile a divided people. Second, if the conflict is to be overcome, there is a need to develop strategies that build greater coherence in South Korean discourse on North Korea. Whether that coherence speaks of unification or not is less important than acknowledging the existence of significant identity differences and finding ways to reconcile the relationship between the peoples of North and South to allow, at the very least, a formal peace agreement and the opportunity for greater people-to-people exchanges. It is likely that declaring eventual unification unnecessary or

impossible is still too unsettling a thought for most Koreans, on both side of the divide, given, for example, the importance of pan-Korean national solidarity (selectively deployed) as a key force in handling certain regional historical disputes, such as those with Japan. Identification with North Koreans as part of the 'one nation' narrative retains relevance because of their shared past, both as a single political entity and as joint victims of a colonial oppressor, but also because of the need for consistency. Unity as the destiny of the two Koreas is not a story that can be overturned in short order. Yet while the one-nation aspect of Korean identity remains salient, so too does the fact of negative identification with North Korea as the enemy other. Mitzen has written on the mystery of "enduring rivalries" such as that characterised by the inter-Korean conflict, where the apparent irrationality of a conflict can be understood as preserving the identity of a nation when that identity is defined by the conflict itself (Mitzen, 2006: 342). This perhaps points to a need to consider a different approach to the framing of inter-Korean reconciliation, one that recognises the inherent threat posed to South Korea's distinct identity by unification as a policy objective.

This chapter has explored the trajectory of South Korean identity in relation to inter-Korean relations over its relatively short, but remarkable history. We have seen how the ebb and flow of inter-Korean rapprochement and the geopolitical imperatives of the day have played a fundamental role in how South Koreans have come to identify with their brethren north of the border. The chapter also explored South Korea's own, determined journey to realise the "Miracle on the Han", eventual democratisation and new standing as a respected member of the international community. It demonstrated the deliberate, largely elite-led decisions involved in constructing national narratives as part of a nation-building process, as well as the challenges associated with overturning such narratives, once established. As a result of North Korea presenting a continual threat to South Korea's physical and material security for over seven decades, the idea of political and social unity has shifted from a being a source of hope and a sign of victory over the forces that imposed division on the Korean people, to a source of significant insecurity, on account of the ever-widening gap in the ideational parameters that make South and North Koreans who they are today. Still, the notion of North Koreans as brethren lingers in the South, most powerfully at times, as evidenced in the outpouring of nostalgic affection at the scenes of Kim Jong-un and Moon Jae-in clasping hands and stepping back and forth over the armistice line in April 2018 at the first inter-Korean leadership summit in over a decade. Yet overturning what is currently 'known' with a great 'unknown', makes unification a fundamentally insecure vision of the future for the majority of South Koreans with no living memory of what it was to be one with the North. Perhaps only by establishing sustainable initiatives that help make the unknown a little more known, such as through programmes that mandate people-to-people socialisation, might the two Koreas begin to lower the imagined divide and rediscover a sense of community.

**References**


Albright, Madeleine (2018). *Fascism: A Warning*. London: William Collins.

Allen, Chizuko T. (1990). Northeast Asia Centred Around Korea: *Ch'oe Namsŏn's* View of History. *The Journal of Asian Studies.* 49 (4): 787–806.

Anderson, Benedict (2006). *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. London: Verso.

Asan Poll (2019). *South Koreans and Their Neighbours 2019*. Seoul: The Asan Institute for Policy Studies.

Berenskoetter, Felix (2012). Parameters of a National Biography. *European Journal of International Relations*. 20 (1): 262-288.

Forbes (2020). *Best Countries for Business*. https://www.forbes.com/best-countries-for-business/list/ [Accessed 15 April 2020]

Billig, Michael (1995). *Banal Nationalism*. London: Sage Publications.

Bleiker, Roland (2001). Identity and Security in Korea. *The Pacific Review*. 14 (1): 121–148.

Bleiker, Roland (2004). Identity, Difference, and the Dilemmas of Inter-Korean Relations: Insights from Northern Defectors and the German Precedent. *Asian Perspective.* 28 (2): 35–63.

Bleiker, Roland (2005). *Divided Korea: Toward a Culture of Reconciliation*. London: University of Minnesota Press.

Bloom, William (1990). *Personal Identity, National Identity and International Relations*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Browning, Christopher S. (2015). Nation Branding, National Self-Esteem, and the Constitution of Subjectivity in Late Modernity. *Foreign Policy Analysis*. 11 (2): 195–214.

Buzan, Barry (1983). *People, States and Fear: The National Security Problem in International Relations*. Brighton: Harvester Wheatsheaf.

Buzo, Adrian (2017). The Making of Modern Korea. 3rd Edition. Oxford: Routledge.

Caprio, Mark (2009). Japanese Assimilation Policies in Colonial Korea, 1910-1945. Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press.

Cho, Young C. (2009). Security, Nationalism and Popular Culture: Screening South Korea's Uneasy Identity in the Early 2000s. *East Asia: An International Quarterly*. 26 (3): 227–246.

Cho, Young C. (2010). Collective identity formation on the Korean Peninsula: United States' different North Korea policies, Kim Dae-Jung's Sunshine Policy, and United States–South Korea–North Korea relations. *International Relations of the Asia-Pacific*. 10 (1): 93–128.

Choi, Jong K. (2010). Sunshine over a Barren Soil: The Domestic Politics of Engagement Identity Formation in South Korea. *Asian Perspective*. 34 (4): 115-138.

Choo, Yong-Shik (2003). *Rethinking Ethnic Homogeneity: A Dilemma of Reconciliation and Unification in Korea*. PhD Thesis. The John Hopkins University.

*Constitution of the Republic of Korea*, 12 July 1948. https://www.refworld.org/docid/3ae6b4dd14.html [Accessed 28 April 2020]

Cumings, Bruce (2005). *Korea's Place in the Sun: A Modern History*. New York, NY: W.W. Norton & Company.

Cumings, Bruce (2011). *The Korean War: A History*. New York, NY: The Modern Library.

Delury, John (2017). Trump and North Korea: Reviving the Art of the Deal. *Foreign Affairs*. 96 (2): 46–51.

Duncan, John (1998). Proto-Nationalism in Premodern Korea. In: San-Oak Lee and Duk-Soo Park. eds. *Perspectives on Korea*. Sydney: Wild Peony Press. 198–221.

Giddens, Anthony (1984). *The Constitution of Society: Outline of the Theory of Structuralism*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Good Country (2020). *The Good Country Website.* https://www.goodcountry.org/ [Accessed 28 April 2020]
Grinker, Roy R. (1998). *Korea and Its Futures: Unification and the Unfinished War*. London: Macmillan Press Ltd.
Hopf, Ted (1998). The Promise of Constructivism in International Relations Theory. *International Security*. 23 (1): 171–200.
Kang, Jin W. (2012). The Disciplinary Politics of Antagonistic Nationalism in Militarised South and North Korea. *Nations and Nationalism.* 18 (4): 684–700.
Kelley, Caitlin (2019). BTS Lead the Growth of Hallyu To Nearly 90 Million Fans Worldwide In 2018 *Forbes*. 11 Jan 2019. https://www.forbes.com/sites/caitlinkelley/2019/01/11/bts-lead-growth-of-hallyu-90-million-fans-2018/#215d1caa70bc [Accessed 1 June 2020]
Kim, Dae-jung (1998). Inaugural Address by Kim Dae-Jung the 15th Term President of the Republic of Korea. *Ministry of Unification, Republic of Korea*. 25 February 1998. https://www.unikorea.go.kr/eng_unikorea/news/speeches/?boardId=bbs_0000000000000036&mode=view&cntId=31906&category=&pageIdx=12 [Accessed 28 April 2020]
Kim, Joyce J. (2019). Conceptualising global competence: situating cosmopolitan student identities within internationalising South Korean Universities. *Globalisation, Societies and Education*. 17 (5): 622–637.
Kim, Regina (2011). Searchers and Planners: South Korea's Two Approaches to Nation Branding. In: US-Korea Institute at SAIS. ed. *2010 SAIS US-Korea Yearbook*. Baltimore, MD: US-Korea Institute at SAIS
Lahiri, Tripti (2017). South Korea's Protest Culture Gets Results, but its Roots Are Nothing to Envy *Quartz*. 13 March 2017. https://qz.com/931014/south-koreas-protest-culture-gets-results-but-a-political-scientist-says-its-a-sign-of-political-dysfunction/ [Accessed 20 December 2018]
Lawler, Peter (2005). The Good State: in Praise of 'Classical'' Internationalism'. *Review of International Studies*. 31 (3): 427–449.
Lee, Myung-bak (2009). Address by President Lee Myung-bak on the 64th Anniversary of National Liberation. *Ministry of Unification, Republic of Korea*. 17 August 2009. https://www.unikorea.go.kr/eng_unikorea/news/speeches/?boardId=bbs_0000000000000036&mode=view&cntId=32000&category=&pageIdx=12 [Accessed 1 May 2020]
Lee, Myung-bak. (2010). Address by President Lee Myung-bak on the 65th Anniversary of National Liberation *Ministry of Unification, Republic of Korea*. 15 August 2010. https://www.unikorea.go.kr/eng_unikorea/news/speeches/?boardId=bbs_0000000000000036&mode=view&cntId=32026&category=&pageIdx=12 [Accessed 1 May 2020]
Ministry of Unification (2011). *2010 White Paper on Korean Unification*. Seoul: Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Republic of Korea.
Mitzen, Jennifer (2006). Ontological Security in World Politics: State Identity and the Security Dilemma. *European Journal of International Relations*. 12 (3): 341-370.
Nye, Joseph S. (2004). Soft Power and American Foreign Policy. *Political Science Quarterly*. 119 (2): 255–270.
Oberdorfer, Don (2001). *The Two Koreas: A Contemporary History*. New York, NY: Basic Books.
Pai, Hyung I. and Timothy R. Tangherlini. eds. (1998). *Nationalism and the Construction of Korean Identity*. Berekley, CA: University of California.
Park, Chung-hee (1973). *The First Year of the Revitalising Task. In: Major Speeches by President Park Chung Hee*. Seoul: The Samwha Publishing.
Peters, Bernhard (2002). A New Look at 'National Identity' How Should We Think About 'Collective' or 'National Identities'? Are There Two Types of National Identities? Does

Germany have an Ethnic Identity and is it Different? *European Journal of Sociology*. 43 (1): 3–32.
KINU (2008). *Policy of Mutual Benefits and Common Prosperity: The Lee Myung-bak Administration's North Korea Policy*. Seoul: Korea Institute for National Unification
Rozman, Gilbert (2009). South Korea's National Identity Sensitivity: Evolution, Manifestations, Prospects. *On Korea*. 3: 67–80.
Schwak, Juliette (2020). Domesticating Competitive Common Sense: Nation Branding Discourses, Policy-makers and Promotional Consultants in Korea. *Global society*. pp. 1–22. Doi: 10.1080/13600826.2020.1791056 [Accessed 30 October 2020]
Schwak, Juliette (2016). Branding South Korea in a Competitive World Order: Discourses and Dispositives in Neoliberal Governmentality. *Asian Studies Review*. 40 (3): 427–444.
Shin, Gi-Wook (2006). *Ethnic Nationalism in Korea*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
Shin, Gi-Wook and Kristin C. Burke (2008). North Korea and Identity Politics in South Korea. *Brown Journal of World Affairs.* 15 (1): 287–303.
Son, Key-Young (2007). Entrenching 'Identity Norms' of Tolerance and Engagement: Lessons from Rapprochement Between North and South Korea. *Review of International Studies*. 33: 489–509.
Son, Sarah A. (2015). Unity, Division and Ideational Security on the Korean Peninsula: Challenges to Overcoming the Korean Conflict. *North Korean Review*. 11 (2): 45–62.
Son, Sarah A. (2018). South Korea's North Korean Image Problem: Human Rights Under the Spotlight. *Asian Studies Review*, 42 (4): 662-681.
World Bank (2020). The World Bank in Republic of Korea - Overview. https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/korea/overview [Accessed 29 April 2020]
Theiler, Tobias (2003). Societal Security and Social Psychology. *Review of International Studies*. 29 (2): 249–268.
Van Ham, Peter (2008). Place Branding: The State of the Art. *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*. 616 (1): 126–149.
Waever, Ole (1993). Societal Security: The Concept. In: Waever, Ole. ed. *Identity, Migration, and the New Security Agenda in Europe*. New York, NY: St. Martin's Press.
Waltz, Kenneth (1979). *Theory of International Politics*. New York, NY: McGraw Hill.
Wendt, Alexander (1999). *Social Theory of International Politics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Williamson, Lucy (2015). Selling South Korea: No 'Sparkling' Brand Image. *BBC News*. 31 January 2012. http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-16713919 [Accessed 29 April 2020]
Yang, Sung Chul (1989). The Evolution of Korean Nationalism. *Korea and World Affairs*. 13 (4): 424–470.

**Commented [SS1]:** Sojin: I replaced the reference with the broken URL with this new one. The old one has been taken down as the online journal closed, I think. I have replaced it with Juliette's most recent article, where she discusses the same point. However, it has only just been published online in July, and so it doesn't yet have a Volume and Issue number. I've put the DOI instead. Is that ok?

[1] The origins of the Korean War (1950-53) have been a topic of some debate over the years (Cumings, 1990). The War raged from 1950-1953 and saw the war front move up and down the length of the Peninsula, and ultimately involved the Chinese People's Volunteer Army and Soviet forces fighting for the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) and the United Nations Command Force (made up 21 nations, but mostly United States (US) forces) against them in support of the Republic of Korea (ROK). It resulted in the deaths of up to three million people (10 percent of the population) and the devastation of the country's infrastructure. The war ended in an armistice on 27 July 1953 (Cumings, 2011).

[2] The uprising on the southern island of Jeju arose in protest against measures by the US to "root out radical nationalist forces" who objected to the efforts of the US administration to establish an independent, anti-communist state on the southern half of the peninsula (Kwon, 2013: 162-163). From 3 April 1948, up to 30,000 civilians – whether complicit in active opposition to US policies or not – were massacred in large numbers and villages across the island were destroyed in counterinsurgency military campaigns and as a result of the responses of communist partisans that persisted in various forms up until the outbreak of the Korean War (Kwon, 2013; Robinson, 2007: 111).

[3] The Sewol ferry sank off the west coast of South Korea in April 2014, while a failed rescue operation largely looked on and 304 passengers died, including many school students on class trips. President Park Geun-hye did

not appear to address the unfolding disaster until seven hours after the news broke. In 2016, rumours began to circulate about corruption and Park's shady relationship with an external advisor. As discontent with her leadership grew, up to two million people took to the streets for weeks on end calling for her impeachment, which the National Assembly voted for on 9 December 2016 (Park, 2017).