

## **Coming Together!: Could Belgian Integration be a way for the Unified Korea?**

**Jong Yoon Doh**

This essay looks at Belgium's integration and splitting crisis in the context of political structure, so-called "Dualistic-Federalism" composed of "Communities" and "Regions." Under the minority ruling authority by the French-speaking people, the Dutch-speaking people in the Flemish region suffered from discrimination in all aspects of cultural, educational and social life, although they were a backbone of building Belgium based on the Catholicism and the bourgeoisie class. "The Flemish Movement" eventually resulted in "State Reforms" that abolished those outdated problems, and thus reconstructed federal state through dualistic-structure, in other words. The heterogeneous country, for a while, could maintain its political mechanism to ensure a unitary entity. At the same time, however, it introduced "separatism" over the political parties in the Dutch-speaking people, and consequently Belgian identity might disintegrate. Dualistic-Federalism is not the cure-all for political populism and separatism. It is necessary to consider that the task for integration lies in "People," but neither in class and group that would be a dominant force, nor in political mechanism to take care of matter as it comes. Although Belgium's case is different from the Korean unification project, it comes to be the useful reflection for the South-North Korea provided that the both Koreans together discover the way for creative evolution in national integration and crisis of the split.

**Keywords:** Belgium, Dualistic-Federalism, State Reform, Flemish Movement, Lesson for Unified Korea

## Introduction

Brussels is not only the capital of Belgium, but also more often cited as the center of the European Union. It is second only to New York a cosmopolitan city as well as the hub of multilateralism in Western Europe. Unlike Brussels — a city of openness, diversity and liberalism — however, Belgium faces with a serious crisis from ethnic tension and potential separatism between the French-speaking and the Dutch-speaking people, aside from increasing proportion of foreign nationals,<sup>1</sup> and even more, its dissolution has very often been mentioned as a fact by international media as well as Belgian people.<sup>2</sup> In reality, Belgium held general elections in May 2014, for instance, but its coalition government was not established until October the same year because it has several controversial issues of economic and political autonomy between the ethnic communities. Although the cause of tension seems that the French-speaking community depends excessively on the Dutch-speaking community economically, but, in fact, more important reason lies in the fact that the Flemings want to preserve and maintain its own ethnic, cultural and historical independence instead of an artificial integration with the Walloons. Nevertheless, it is a clear lesson that the both communities neither resort to political violence nor lead to the collapse of state governance.

For any country, it is not easy to exactly define a national identity that may provide us with insights, in particular when we learn certain experiences after political mechanism of the ruling domestic structure is changed by revolution or reform. Political system is one

- 
1. On 1 January 2010, the population of Belgium was 10,839,905. 10% of total population (1,057,666) inhabitants are not Belgian. The largest group of foreign nationals is Italians (165,052), followed by French, Dutch, Moroccans and Poles respectively, [http://www.belgium.be/fr/la\\_belgique/connaitre\\_le\\_pays/Population/](http://www.belgium.be/fr/la_belgique/connaitre_le_pays/Population/) (Date accessed: February 10, 2015).
  2. "Bye Bye Belgium," Emission Special on RTBF, December 13, 2006; "Time to call it a day," *The Economist*, September 6, 2007; "Can divided Belgium hold together?" *BBC News*, October 20, 2008; "No Love Lost: Is Belgium About to Break in Two?" *Time*, June 30, 2010.

of main points to describe characteristics of a given state. So, a review would be useful to South Korea that pursues national unification if we can examine a country that experienced nation-building and ethnic integration through struggles in political mechanism and domestic structure. Even more so, if that country suffers a crisis of division ethnically after state-building and the national integration, it would be more significant to strictly explore the courses and the contents. Belgium may provide the unified Korean Peninsula with various implications through process and evolution of integration and division in the context nation-building, although its political situation, cultural amalgamation, ethnic composition and social integrity make different from those of the Korean Peninsula.

In this context, this essay firstly tries to overview Belgian history from the perspective of nation-building and changes of political system/mechanism that brought power differentiation to its political centralization. Sometimes, "nation-building" is exchanged or even confused with "state-building." The former refers to construction of identity and evolution of national mentality rather than physical infrastructure while the latter is related to a functional formation of establishing statehood of a certain country with consolidation of territory and permanent institutions.<sup>3</sup> Thus, nation-building is more significantly examined from the viewpoint of political legitimacy in domestic power distribution and people integration while the concept of state-building is widely considered in the context of international law, for instance, recognition of state establishment. This essay focuses primarily on domestic factors to ensure nation identity or bring conflicts between two ethnic groups in Belgium, but does not overlook institutional structures. It looks back that Belgium has undergone a constant crisis and reconciliation caused by the French-speaking and the Dutch-speaking, although German-speaking community also located in the Eastern province, but it is not seriously considered as

---

3. Harris Mylonas, *The Politics of Nation-Building: Making Co-Nationals, Refugees, and Minorities* (Cambridge & New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012); Charles Tilly, *The Formation of National States in Western Europe* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1975).

the black sheep of the communities because it is the smallest size of Belgian federal system, and that it has transformed its institutional mechanism with a series of state reforms to maintain unitary country since the revolution in 1830. Secondly, it focuses on the separatism and the split of national sentiment in Belgium that currently suffer from the Flemish Movement. Initially, the Movement was alienated from the extreme right, but it was deeply involved in the abolishment of discrimination conducted by the French-speaking and the ruling system in the law and the administrative process. Since the 20th century, the Flemings have produced chances to construct a Belgian Federalism which is composed of dual system — “Regions” and “Communities” — through State Reforms. Currently, the Flemish Movement has influence to “Separatism” that is primarily prevailing in Flanders. *Vlaams Belang*, a Flemish populism party, has claimed regional autonomy, but is going to pursue absolute national interests in the terms of only for Flemings, and moreover, tries to blend xenophobia and anti-Semitism in a slogan of family happiness. This trend, in a greater or less degree, is gradually widespread in the Flemish region. Finally, for the future of the unified Korean Peninsula, the essay discusses implications derived from Belgium’s integration or dissolution crisis.

## Political Structure and State Reform in Belgium

### *Historical Overview*

In Western Europe, Belgian governmental system has often been explained as a federal state, a con-federal entity or a dual political system.<sup>4</sup> In fact, the Constitution of Belgium officially identifies itself as a “federal state” composed of communities and regions.<sup>5</sup> Back to

---

4. Charles-Etienne Lagasse, *Nouvelles Institutions Politiques de la Belgique et de l'Europe* (Unknown: Artel, 1999); “Le confédéralisme n’est plus très loin,” *La Libre*, October 5, 2004.

the history of Europe, Belgium emerged in 1830 as a unit of sovereign state through so-called "Belgian revolution." Prior to that, it was a southern part of the Dutch system until the Dutch War of Independence 1568-1648, and then escaped from the Northern Dutch. The Dutch low-countries including Belgium shortly under the rule of Austria and France, and Belgium was integrated into the United Kingdom of the Netherlands in 1815 after Napoleon's defeat. The territory of Belgium was also internationally considered for the Netherlands to establish its defensive barrier against France. The French-speaking people, however, began to reject absolutism under the Dutch, Prince of Orange and the King William I of the Netherlands, and further to complain religious differences between Protestants in the Dutch region and Catholic churches in the French region. Such heterogeneous country could not exist as an integrated entity anymore. In August 1830, the French-speaking Catholic bourgeoisie and Liberals, influenced by the French July revolution, eventually resisted the ruling system centralized by the Netherlands authority. Furthermore, the Flemish bourgeoisie, with religious and mental aspects, supported the French-speaking bourgeoisie because they have more Catholic orientation than Protestant of the Netherlands. As a result, European neighboring countries, France, Prussia and England recognized Belgium as an independent sovereign state in London, 1831. The French-speaking revolutionaries installed a national congress and Leopold I was enthroned as the first King of Belgium.<sup>6</sup> Thus, Belgium's essential precondition was domestically to achieve national integration of the French-speaking and the Dutch-speaking to maintain political coalition while its neutrality and national independence were internationally secured by the European concert. Its monarchical regime constantly pursued centralized and unilingual structure in a unitary entity, more concretely Belgian social foundation and platform were

---

5. La Constitution Belgique, Art.1 er. "La Belgique est un État fédéral qui se compose des communautés et des régions."

6. About Belgium's international status in early 19th century, see, Paul Schroeder, "The 19th-Century International System: Changes in the Structure," *World Politics* 39, no. 1 (1986), pp. 1-26.

to “ensure and maintain the bourgeoisie’s preponderant power over new state.”<sup>7</sup> This solidarity based on the religious faith of Roman Catholic and the social structure formed by bourgeoisie mentality was a foundation to build a unitary Belgium, but faced still challenges of instability because it lacked consensus by all Belgian people. The national consolidation might suffer serious crisis of separatism if it is eroded or collapsed in either way, Catholicism or social structure led by bourgeoisie class.

Belgian elites took on board of ideas initially in nation building such as: firstly, the ruling class including the royal family who is part of the French-speaking, assumed that French language would be one of national unifying instruments.<sup>8</sup> The King Leopold I, the first monarchy of Belgium, was from the House of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha that ruled territories in parts of Bavaria and Thuringia and was the member of German confederation. As did most European royal family, he was speaking in French and succeeded much of the cultural heritage derived from France, and closer to the French bourgeoisie rather than the Dutch-speaking Flemings. Additionally, the French-speaking elites enforced all nations to speak in French as an extension of the French rule whereas the Dutch-speaking Belgian did not agree with the unilingual policy introduced by the French people; secondly, sharing the faith — Catholicism — in Belgium was another instrument to consolidate national identity. In Belgium, the Roman Catholic was a kind of mechanism that transcends ethnic differences and integrates the linguistic heterogeneity into one country. The Conservative Union (*L’Union Constitutionnelle et Conservatrice*), under the leadership of Charles Woeste, a lawyer and later to be minister of state, was created in major Dutch-speaking towns such as Ghent, Leuven, Antwerp, and Brussels during the mid-19th century. The Union was to be the Federation of Catholic and conservative circles Associations (*La Fédération des Cercles catholiques et des Associations conservatrices*) and then decided

---

7. Jean Beaufays, “Belgium: A Dualistic Political System?” *Publius* 18, no. 2 (1988), p. 64.

8. *Ibid.*

to establish the League of Catholic circles. The Flemish city Mechelen was a center of Belgian-Roman Catholic conference because Belgian the Dutch-speaking, upper-middle class, also has a deep Catholic tradition in the life. Furthermore, the Catholic Union participated in elections. In 1879, the King Leopold II, with the liberal government, proposed and conducted a secular law for creating free primary schools, but even failed by the resistance of Catholic powers in the parliament. In the field of industry, the Confederation of Christian Trade Unions as a leading trade union still influences all areas of Belgium since Belgium is currently a unionized country; thirdly, Belgium during the 18th century was the most dynamic European country with colonial exploitation. Although the colonial policy of Belgium was much covered by the personal ambitions of Leopold II who became the King in 1865, Belgian industry relied heavily on the products of colonized countries for instance, Congo Free State. Under the rule of Leopold II, Belgian government implemented a number of civil engineering projects and export-import business that were usually from exploitation of natural resources in colonies. Such exploitations, one hand, satisfied the greed of the King and royal family, on the other hand, improved of the living quality of bourgeoisie class regardless of the Dutch-the French.<sup>9</sup> In the early 1900s, Belgium's industry was characterized, "coalmining, blast-furnaces, metallurgy and textiles, but the production of artificial fibers and non-ferro industry were stimulated by the colonization of Belgian Congo."<sup>10</sup> At least, affluence in real life shielded its discrimination policy against political tension. Thus Belgium's unitary entity could be maintained under the faith of Roman Catholic and the social platform structured by the bourgeoisie provided that French-speaking dominates absolutely all political agenda.

---

9. Adam Hochschild, *King Leopold's Ghost: A Story of Greed, Terror, and Heroism in Colonial Africa* (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1999), pp. 61-74; Mark van den Wijngaert, Lieve Beullens and Dana Brants, *Pouvoir & monarchie: La Belgique et ses rois* (Bruxelles: Luc Pire, 2002), pp. 320-340.

10. Michelangelo van Meerten, *Capital Formation in Belgium, 1900-1995* (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2003), pp. 200-201.

### ***Unitary State Reserved by State Reform***

National consolidation and political centralization were possible in reserving fundamental desires of the Dutch-speaking people. Up until 1960s, although the Flemings achieved partial equality in the fields of laws, administration and communication, they did not fully participate in political decision process. They hope to set up their own independent institutions to balance out the much-maligned authorities of French-speaking prevailing over even the Flanders region. In order to maintain national integration while sustaining freedom, most of all, it was necessary for Belgian people to accept linguistic pluralism using French, Dutch, and German as official languages. And the first step was to allow them to recognize "linguistic territorialism" in administration, army, justice, and education to establish "inter-linguistic border" between the French, the Dutch and the German-speaking people.<sup>11</sup>

Since 1970s, therefore, along with the evolution of linguistic pluralism, Belgium's political system has been in controversy, called as Federalism or Dualism in the dimension of political reformation. Federalism usually represented as terms of "a political compact between groups which had come together in an association."<sup>12</sup> It is also described as "decentralized power fiscally and politically" under democracy principles.<sup>13</sup> In a federal structure, the idea of "power-sharing" is a main point for contender groups to preserve congruence of unitary entity. So, Belgium's ruling system is often referred to Consociationalism, which is a kind of federalism that is consociational approach to ethnic conflict, emphasizing distribution of political

---

11. Beaufays, "Belgium: A Dualistic Political System?" p. 65.

12. Jan Erk, *Explaining Federalism, Explaining Federalism State Society and Congruence in Austria, Belgium, Canada, Germany and Switzerland* (New York & Abingdon: Routledge, 2008), p. 2.

13. Joanne Bay Brzinski, Thomas D. Lancaster and Christian Tuschhoff, "Federalism and Compounded Representation: Key Concepts and Project Overview," *Publius* 29, no. 3 (1999), pp. 1-17; Jason Sorens, "The Institutions of Fiscal Federalism," *Publius* 41, no. 2 (2011), pp. 207-231.



power and stability of legal system to secure characteristics and autonomy of an individual group.<sup>14</sup> Furthermore, economic and social diversity are much considered to organize federal mechanism from the viewpoint of sociological federalism.<sup>15</sup> In particular, Belgium's federal structure seems to reflect socio-economic federalism between the communities and the regions which originated from economic gap and cultural differences. In other words, Belgium's federalization is considered by the ideas "Communization" since the role of federal mechanism plays in the political decentralization or even in the move for congruence between state and society.<sup>16</sup> Moreover, Belgium's regional/communal unbalance in socioeconomic aspect and formal-institutional differences as well as population size is also described as having properties of "asymmetric federalism." Belgium's three territorial Regions (the Flemish, the Walloon and the Brussels-Capital region) and three linguistic Communities (Dutch, French and German Community) are quite different in the aspects of physical size as well as cultural history. The Dutch-speaking Flanders, 60 percent of Belgians, lead the Cabinet of the central government at present, while the French-speaking — 30 percent of Belgians, usually lives in Wallonia, the southern region of Belgium — was a leading power in ruling Belgium as a whole by 1960s. Despite asymmetric federalism, Belgium does not have serious problems from population size. For instance, German community enjoys full competencies of legislative power in policy making as did the much larger French and Dutch-speaking communities. Brussels-Capital region is another independent region, alongside Wallonia and Flanders, using French and Dutch as a common language although the former is much more widespread than the latter in the city.

- 
14. Arend Lijphart, *Democracy in Plural Societies; A Comparative Exploration* (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 1977); Hong Ki-Joon, "Political Integration in Belgium: A Case Study on Consociational Federalism," *The Journal of Contemporary European Studies* 23 (2006), pp. 115-138.
  15. Pierre-Joseph Proudhon and Richard Vernon (Trans.), *The Principle of Federation* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1980).
  16. Jan Erk, *Explaining Federalism*, p. 31.

Such institutional differentiation shows a “Dualist Political System” through so-called “State Reform” by the request of the Flemings.<sup>17</sup> The first state reform in 1970 witnessed the setting-up of three Communities for cultural autonomy and three Regions for their own economic territory, resulted in the extension to individual and social services of competence of Communities. Then the fifth state reform eventually completed the full-fledged federal system under the Communities and the Regions. This dual-complex structure composed of Regions and Communities is a unique institutional mechanism to integrate linguistic groups into a unitary country and at the same time provide them with autonomous decision process and responsibility in policy. In doing so, the most important role of the federal government and the national parliament is to neutralize these asymmetric and complex features through political coalition.<sup>18</sup>

Table 1. State Reform of Belgium

No.	Year	Summary of Revision in the Constitution
1st	1970	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establishment of three cultural Communities to provide a cultural autonomy</li> <li>• Setting-up three Regions that have their own territory in economic field</li> </ul>
2nd	1980	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Extension to individual and social services of competence of communities (French, Dutch, and German)</li> <li>• Establishment of Council and Government in the Communities</li> </ul>
3rd	1988-1989	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shape Brussels-Capital Region</li> <li>• Communities’ competence covered up education, while the Regions did transport and public works</li> </ul>
4th	1993	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete fully-fledged federal under the Communities and the Regions (The following statement is inserted in the Constitution, “<i>La Belgique est un État fédéral qui se compose des communautés et des régions</i> [Belgium is a federal state composed of Communities and Regions]).”</li> </ul>

17. Beaufays, “Belgium: A Dualistic Political System?” pp. 63-73.

18. Wilfred Swenden, “Asymmetric Federalism and Coalition-Making in Belgium,” *Publius: The Journal of Federalism* 32, no. 3 (2002), pp. 67-87.

No.	Year	Summary of Revision in the Constitution
5th	2001	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Lambermont Accord amended: More competences were given to the Communities and the Regions in regard to agriculture, fisheries, foreign trade, development cooperation, auditing of electoral expenses and the supplementary financing of the political parties.<sup>19</sup></li> <li>• The Lombard Accord amended: Guarantee representation of the Flemings in Brussels in Parliament of the Brussels-Capital Region.</li> </ul>
6th	2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adjustment of electoral district and procedure under the title "A more efficient federal State and more autonomous entities"</li> <li>• Division of the Brussels-Halle-Vilvoorde (BHV) district (The split in electoral district of Flemings habitant in the French-region)</li> </ul>

Source: Belgium Portal ([http://www.belgium.be/en/about\\_belgium/country/history/belgium\\_from\\_1830/formation\\_federal\\_state/](http://www.belgium.be/en/about_belgium/country/history/belgium_from_1830/formation_federal_state/))

The Parliament members are dominated by the French-Dutch linguistic groups, and the Cabinet also is required to make a coalition government by them because any group cannot overwhelmingly account for the majority in federal government. The Chamber of Representatives (*La Chambre des Représentants*) now is made up of 150 parliamentarians that are directly elected by the constituency, while the Senators consist of the directly elected members and the appointed members from Community parliaments in accordance with population size. Prior to the revision of the Constitution in 1993, the Chamber of Representatives and the Senate (*Le Sénat*) shared the same powers and a law was to be voted on and passed in both chambers. Afterwards, the Chamber of Representatives in the federal system became the primary legislative institution while the Senate still has partial instruments on a way with the Chamber in four main areas: institutional aspect, international affairs, financial matters and judicial field.<sup>20</sup> On

19. IBP Inc., *Belgium Country Study Guide Volume 1 Strategic Information and Developments* (Washington D.C.: International Business Publications, 2012), p. 64.

20. "Sénat de Belgique." Prior to 1995, total number of senators was 184, and then was to be 71 for 1995-2014.

the other hand, the Cabinet's composition in the federal government also reflects power-sharing of linguistic communities and regions. The King officially but not seriously, appoints and dismisses ministers of the federal government. Before doing so, however, he must listen to consultations from the presidents of each party in the Chamber of Parliament, the Flemish and the French party presidents. Composing the federal Cabinet, the King nominates an *informateur* who is responsible for drafting a report on the basis of consultations, and then appoints a *formateur* who is in charge of developing the composition and the program of designated government. The Prime Minister is appointed after an agreement is reached by all participants in the process. Other ministers together form the Council of Ministers, the supreme executive institution, and State Secretaries are appointed by the *formateur's* proposal. The Chamber of Representatives concludes the final agreement/disagreement with a vote of confidence. Usually, however, the composition of coalition government, including appointing a *formateur* who usually become the Prime Minister, is not easy because the gap of ideas and programs between linguistic groups that designate the future of Belgium. Since the federal election on June 10, 2007, for instance, the Cabinet did not complete full coalition until that December since Yves Leterme who was appointed as the *formateur*, could not complete a coalition and resigned from the position. After the election in 2014, political coalition between the French and the Dutch speaking group moved similarly at a snail's pace.

### **Flemish Movement and Separatism**

The federal mechanism based on autonomous decision-making of the Communities and the Regions is to preserve national integration through power-decentralization or power-sharing. The state reforms temporally resulted in peaceful response of two language groups suffering from ethnic tension. Belgium moved to a dual system to form a unitary country of when the Francophone enjoyed its absolute privilege, but is still deeply divided by linguistic and socioeconomic

differences. This phenomenon actually brought about the “Flemish Movement.” The movement collectively called all social forces that focus on the emancipation of the Flemings in Belgium. Its aspiration has often produced a fight of Dutch-speaking associations and individuals against a centralized political structure. And, it began to demand more attention for the Flemish culture and the Dutch language against the French-speaking domination in all living areas. In the mid-19th century, a Flemish politician from Ghent, pointed out the discriminated Flemings from viewpoint of socioeconomic problems.

“The saddest phenomenon, however, is this: while it is clear that Flanders has the most serious lack of education, of good schools, of good school premises, it is also there that the least is being done to remedy this lack; and while in the Walloon area the municipalities, provinces and the State combined have spent 12 million francs in the last five years on extraordinary works for primary education, in the Flemish area, where the need is so much greater, only half that sum was spent...”<sup>21</sup>

Such Flemish claims, however, was not accepted in the Belgian society led by the Francophone, which consequently had alienated the Flemish Belgian’s loyalty from Belgian patriotism during the Great War. Flemish soldiers even wrote a letter to King Albert I in 1917, asking his majesty’s intervention on the discrimination spreading in Belgium military culture.<sup>22</sup> Therefore, the war story is differently remembered between the Flemings and the Walloons.<sup>23</sup> Shared mentality based on Catholicism and bourgeoisie began to erode in confrontation to the death in the Total War.

Since 1970s, such demands of the Flemings have created the opportunity to conceive a Federal structure in Belgian context, based

---

21. Julius Vuylsteke, *Brief Statistical Description of Belgium*, recited from “History of Flemish movement up to 1914.”

22. André De Vries, *Flanders: A Cultural History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), p. 19.

23. Karen D. Shelby, *Flemish Nationalism and the Great War: The Politics of Memory, Visual Culture and Commemoration* (New York: Palgrave, 2014).

on ideas of Regions and Communities through state reforms. Those Regions and Communities enjoyed exclusively their own autonomous decision-rights in cultural, educational, health and hygiene policy. More important thing is that the Flemish Movement still reveals itself in political party, social aspiration and cultural protectionism. In particular, Flemish nationalists *Vlaams Belang* (Flemish Interest), the renamed group of *Vlaams Block* that was an extreme political party that was dissolved after the violation of the Constitution in November 2004, has continually called for withdrawal from the federal system as well as proposed anti-multicultural policy. Furthermore, a series of results of the Chamber of Representative elections has demonstrated the rise of the Flemish separatist parties claiming full independence of the Dutch-speaking territory.

Table 2. *Chambre des Représentants* Elections in 2007

Political Group	%	Seats
<b>Christian Democratic and Flemish (CD&amp;V)-New Flemish Alliance (N-VA)</b>	18.51	30
Movement for Reform (MR)	12.52	23
Socialist Party (PS)	10.86	20
Open VLD	11.83	18
<b>Vlaams Belang (Flemish Interest)</b>	11.99	17
Flemish Socialist Party - Spirit (SPA-Spirit)	10.26	14
Humanist Democratic Centre (CDH)	6.06	10
Greens - Walloon (Ecolo)	5.10	8
Dedecker List	4.03	5
Greens - Flamands (GROEN!)	3.98	4
National Front (FN)	1.97	1

Table 3. *Chambre des Représentants* Elections in 2010

Political Group	%	Seats
<b>New Flemish Alliance (N-VA)</b>	17.4	27
Socialist Party (PS)	13.7	26
Movement for Reform (MR)	8.4	18
<b>Christian Democratic and Flemish (CD&amp;V)</b>	10.9	17
Open VLD	8.6	13
Flemish Socialist Party - Spirit (SPA-Spirit)	9.2	13
<b>Vlaams Belang (Flemish Interest)</b>	7.8	12
Humanist Democratic Centre (CDH)	5.5	9
Greens - Walloon (Ecolo)	4.8	8
GROEN!(Greens - Flamands)	4.4	5
Dedecker List	–	1
People's Party	–	1

Table 4. *Chambre des Représentants* Elections in 2014

Political Group	%	Seats
<b>New Flemish Alliance (N-VA)</b>	20.3	33
Socialist Party (PS)	11.7	23
<b>Christian Democratic and Flemish (CD&amp;V)</b>	11.6	18
Open VLD	9.8	14
Movement for Reform (MR)	9.6	20
Flemish Socialist Party - Spirit (SPA-Spirit)	8.8	13
Greens - Flamands (GROEN!)	5.3	6
Humanist Democratic Centre (CDH)	5.0	9
<b>Vlaams Belang (Flemish Interest)</b>	3.7	3
Greens - Walloon (Ecolo)	3.3	6
Others	–	5

Source: Inter-Parliament Union; "Elections 2014" *Le Soir*.

\* Bold type refers to the parties calling for Flemish independence.

In the tables, the Dutch parties include Open VLD, Flemish Socialist Party-Spirit (SPA-Spirit), GROEN!, *Vlaams Belang* (VB), Christian Democratic and Flemish (CD&V) and New Flemish Alliance (N-VA) whereas the French parties cover Socialist Party (PS), Movement for Reform (MR), Humanist Democratic Centre (CDH) and the Ecolo. The seats are 87 for the Dutch communal representatives and 62 for the French including the German-speaking area.

One special feature in Belgian party system is that the ownership is divided in accordance with both the language-ethnic groups. For instance, Flemish Socialist Party and French Socialist Party are completely different in organization, budget and constituency, and nominate potential candidates respectively in elections, although they share a common political tendency in same ideologies. Flemish parties are usually in favor of the Flemish movement, although there are varying degrees. Among them, *Vlaams Belang*, Christian Democratic Flemish, and New Flemish Alliance together are dominant political parties in Flanders to support the Flemish movement, whereas the French-speaking people did not share to complain the political system under the ruling of the Francophone. In fact, "Belgian nationalism was a much stronger force in the region than Walloon nationalism ever was."<sup>24</sup> As seen from the tables, the Parliament seat-share of three Flemish groups has been much higher than other groups, and thus this trend is bringing into the concern of nation-spilt.

*Vlaams Belang* (VB) possesses many resources that the Flemish movement provided. It calls for separatism from Federal system, and further, degraded Belgium as an "artificial state" while Christian Democratic and Flemish and New Flemish Alliance propose moderately the way of the con-federal state rather than separatism. Such extreme right-wing ideas had not much influence in the Flemish Movement until German totalitarian regime financially supported to *Vlaams Nationaal Verbond* (Flemish National Union) in the early 1930s, and subsequently it made eventually the way to the radical direction.<sup>25</sup> In

---

24. David Art, "The Organizational Origins of the Contemporary Radical Right: The Case of Belgium," *Comparative Politics* 40, no. 4 (2008), p. 429.

25. *Ibid.*, pp. 426-427.



other words, Flemish Movement has redirected to ensure the Fleming's socioeconomic rights and proposed the anti-migration policy in the slogan of family happiness on the basis of the Dutch solidarity against social discrimination. Political ideology in extreme right-wing parties has been surely determined by "the shape of the far right landscape."<sup>26</sup> *Vlaams Belang* reveals its political principles following,

... It is an instrument for the advancement of the national and cultural identity of Flanders. Through its political initiatives the *Vlaams Belang* aims to ensure that the organisation and government of the state are (co-)determined by the need to preserve the cultural identity and the national interests of the Flemish people....<sup>27</sup>

The Flemish extremists also hide its identity in building Flemish independence, defending the Dutch language, and encouraging cooperation between the Flemish region and the Netherlands. Moreover, it reveals that its activities aim "to dissolve Belgium and establish an independent Flemish state"<sup>28</sup> Of course, *Vlaams Belang* is largely criticized from European and international communities as well as Belgian people because it rejects universal values such as multiculturalism that reflects cultural diversity and relativism, while it only cherishes the Flemish cultural identity. Thus although the separatist emphasizes the democracy and the rule of law are the best priorities for individual freedom in its "Mission Statement,"<sup>29</sup> its declaration could still not be accepted to European support.

Surly, New Flemish Alliance (N-VA) and Christian Democratic and Flemish (CD&V) are more modest groups compared to *Vlaams Belang* in terms of absolute regional autonomy, country dissolution and even xenophobia. Nevertheless, two Flemish parties are still negative to Belgian integration without common aspirations and interests.

---

26. Ibid., p. 436.

27. The Flemish Republic, <http://www.flemishrepublic.org/4/> (Date Accessed: February 14, 2015).

28. Ibid.

29. Ibid.

*Vlaams Belang* thinks the subsidiary for other communities as “the dissipation of public money.”<sup>30</sup> To some extent, this idea is shared with all other Flemish parties. New Flemish Alliance, the biggest party in Belgium, declared that it would see Belgium evolving from a federal state into a confederation.<sup>31</sup>

### Concluding Remarks: Implication for Unified Korea

To what extent does this Belgian experiences provide lesson to the Korean Peninsula? Most of all, there are many discourses with negative responses to the unification of the Korean Peninsula, stressing the generation gap. According to recent survey, 50-60 percent respondents feel that unification of the Korean Peninsula is unnecessary while the poll in 1990s, 90 percent gave a positive response.<sup>32</sup> The most persuasive reason of the poll-result shift is largely understood that the South Korean people heavily feel governmental spending, increase in taxation and administrative redundancy through the calculation of cost-benefit, of course although there are a few arguments that emphasize a market expansion in unified South-North Korea and an invisible asset calling “completed peace and stability” may neutralizes a fiscal burden and a sharing responsibility in the condition that a reasonable time schedule is needed.<sup>33</sup> It seems that personal impression based on the calculation of cost-benefit replaces a discourse of sensible unification.

---

30. Ibid.

31. “The meaning of a confederation. What are the implications for Belgium?” *News Juice*, October 12, 2012.

32. “The Generation Gap on Korean Unification,” *The Diplomat*, January 29, 2015; “Survey shows a third of young S. Koreans negative on unification.” *Yonhap News*, November 19, 2013; “South Korean youth grow wary of unification,” *The Washington Post*, October 17, 2011; “Korean unification: dreams of unity fade into past for young South Koreans,” *The Guardian*, May 27, 2013.

33. Kim Kyuryoon, Hwang Byung-Duck et al., *New Approach to the Costs/Benefits of Korean Unification: Adopting Comprehensive Research Factors and Seeking Alternatives* (Seoul: KINU, 2012)

To be sure, Belgium's nation-building supported by heterogeneous ethnic bourgeoisies and Catholicism holding decisive motivations to launch a new country is a unique case in European history. More significant implication, however, is to observe the cases that covers State Reform, social movement (i.e. Flemish Movement) and rising of separatism after integration. When Belgium initially appeared, its priority was "nation-state building" led by Catholicism and bourgeoisie class, even though they were combined by different groups ethnically. Over the years, it was not easy to integrate both French-speaking and Dutch-speaking into a unitary country. Belgium has a special experience that the aspiration of national integration or ethnic followed the establishment of nation state. Belgium's nation state meant eventually post-modern state beyond ideologically ethnic heterogeneity, or modern-state without ethnic heterogeneity. If it is for the latter, that is, say, "an artificial state," as *Vlaams Belang* alleged. Post-integration of Belgian nation state conceived the ideas of Communities and Regions in the political structure of dualistic federalism. In this point, we have to retrospect again on why the nationalism or the ethnic integration appears in Belgium.

On entering the 20th century, the Dutch-speaking people under the ruling of the minority authorities desired a more matured culture and a kind of consciousness to maintain its own history rooted in national aspiration. As above, Belgian politician Julius Vuylsteke pointed out that the education matter is a crucial area to defend its culture and history for the Fleming's autonomy. This stress means that one of basic rights of persons is to be respect for their culture and education, rather than construct formal nation state. Moreover, the experience of the War strengthened those confidences to the Flemings.

At least, in Belgium, the religious faith and the class-solidarity became to be the less discipline under democratic principles. Federalism, which could secure autonomy and independence of ethnic groups, replaced the obsolete ideology. "The Flemish Movement" was a kind of political demonstration calling for the protection of the Flemish-speaking people's fundamental rights. Furthermore, the Movement reflected aspiration of "*raison d'être* of Flemish people,"

although it was partly transformed to the political extremism. In Post-industrial society, Socio-economic issues came to underplay religious faith and class solidarity.

In the 21st century, Belgium again encounters a controversial issue, in other words, "separatism" led by the Flemings. Ostensibly, the reason why is that asymmetric distribution of economic resources between the Walloon and the Flanders results in the former's excessive dependence on the latter. Yves Leterme, the former Prime Minister, said,

"... The federal government has a future if given the space to the federated entities to support their funding, to solve their social and economic differentials. If we can do that at the institutional level, the Belgian state has a future...."<sup>34</sup>

Currently, however, Flemish movement reveals partly positive effects on ethnic solidarity in the context of socio-economic matters, but there is no influence of for instance employment in the primary sector, and also shows a negative effect of industrial combination mutually in both the Communities.<sup>35</sup> Rather than, more crucial thing is the willingness for integration or to be represented by other alternative words. Conceivable ideas for ensuring independence and autonomy of the Communities and the Regions, ironically, introduced the split between Dutch-French culture and history. The Walloons as well as the Flemings do not step by step convince of the "raison d'être of Belgium." A French media reported for instance the French-speaking at Wallonia are 23 percent believe the disappearance of Belgium, and 59 percent still do not feel that, and 18 percent do not know anything. That is to say, 41 percent of the Francophone in the southern region is indifferent or negative to Belgium as a unitary entity.<sup>36</sup>

34. "Je veux aider la Wallonie à s'en sortir," *La Libre*, May 21, 2007. Translation by the author.

35. François Nielsen, "The Flemish Movement in Belgium After World War II: A Dynamic Analysis," *American Sociological Review* 45, no. 1 (1980), pp. 76-94.

36. "Un Wallon sur deux prêt à devenir français!" *La Voix Nord*, July 29, 2008, Furthermore, in the report, almost half of the Walloons – 49% – make a favorable impression of France. Even more, 60% Nord-Pas-de-Calais peoples are in favor of the annexation of Wallonia.

On rising of a grand community, the European Union, on the one hand, the nation state relies on absolute sovereignty and independence is to be more ambiguous entity. On the other hand, the project of multiculturalism failed. Belgium in the 21st century might be highly back to the early 19th century, if they do not conceive a new mechanism or aspiration for consolidation of both the Communities. A majority of the Walloons (66%) wants to preserve the king's powers while only a third of the Flemings (31%) would like to keep in the state,<sup>37</sup> although Philippe I, the new king of the Belgians, says that he would strongly unite a divided nation.<sup>38</sup>

In this context, Belgium case provides the following inputs for the unified Korean Peninsula. Firstly, the Korean Peninsula should reflect the reason of the division. Ethnic conflict is not the case for the South and North Korea. The task for integration lies in "the Korean people," but not in a class or a group that would design to be a dominant force. Secondly, comparing with Belgian experience, federalism is not a panacea for satisfying everything in political life. Over the times, it might come to the conflicts of the Communities and the Regions each other, if the federalism is not a just suitable hat to both Koreans. Institutional distribution of capability and competence between the local provinces and the central government has to be thoughtfully considered. Such a matter of social security is a crucial point as instrument to allocate power in the multi-federalism.<sup>39</sup> Thirdly, it is necessary to prepare for occurrence of the extreme/popular movement. As long as the Korean peninsula is divided, it is certain to leave a great gap of value, perception and cognition in philosophical and cultural way in both sides. Political implementations have to be determined in considering the necessity of non-material factors as well as physical resources. Lastly, it should be considered to the rela-

---

37. "Flamands et francophones divisés sur le futur rôle du roi," *Le Soir*, July 15, 2013.

38. "Le nouveau roi des Belges devra unir une nation divisée," *Capital*, July 21, 2013.

39. Patricia Popelier and Bea Cantillon, "Bipolar Federalism and the Social Welfare State: A Case for Shared Competences," *Publius* 43, no. 4 (2013), pp. 626-647.

tion with neighboring countries. Belgium was constructed through the conclusion agreed by the great neighbors such as UK, France, Germany and the Netherlands. In particular, France and the Netherlands were the main stakeholders to defend its border interests. If Belgium is to be disintegrated in future, France and the Netherlands have to think many things again in the structure of European post-modern state. Similarly, whether the future of South-North Korea designates unification, integration or serious conflicts of the Peninsula, neighbor stakeholders will keep close eye on the entity in the context of systemic stability and regional order. Thus, the Korean peninsula reflects again its future vision to contribute to the world.

Belgium's experiences are much different from the Korean unification project. However, Belgium comes to be the reflection for both Koreans provided that the South-North Koreans together discover the way for creative evolution in national integration or in crisis of the split.

■ Article Received: 2/28 ■ Reviewed: 3/23 ■ Revised: 4/14 ■ Accepted: 4/16

## References

- Art, David. "The Organizational Origins of the Contemporary Radical Right: The Case of Belgium," *Comparative Politics* 40, no. 4 (2008): 421-440.
- Beaufays, Jean. "Belgium: A Dualistic Political System?," *Publius* 18, no. 2 (1988) (Bicommunal Societies and Politics): 63-73.
- Belgium. *La Constitution Belgique*.
- Belgium Portal. [http://www.belgium.be/en/about\\_belgium/country/history/belgium\\_from\\_1830/formation\\_federal\\_state/first\\_and\\_second\\_reform\\_of\\_state/](http://www.belgium.be/en/about_belgium/country/history/belgium_from_1830/formation_federal_state/first_and_second_reform_of_state/) (Date Accessed: February 15, 2015)
- Brzinski, Joanne Bay, Thomas D. Lancaster and Christian Tuschhoff. "Federalism and Compounded Representation: Key Concepts and Project Overview," *Publius* 29, no. 3 (1999): 1-18.
- "Bye Bye Belgium," *Emission Special on RTBF*, December 13, 2006, <https://vimeo.com/34569939> (Date Accessed: February 14, 2015)

- "Can divided Belgium hold together?" *BBC News*, October 20, 2008, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/7678777.stm> (Date Accessed: February 10, 2015).
- De Vries, André. *Flanders: A Cultural History*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007.
- "Elections 2014," *Le Soir*, <http://elections2014.lesoir.be/result/federal> (Date Accessed: February 18, 2015).
- Erk, Jan. *Explaining Federalism, Explaining Federalism, State Society, and Congruence in Austria, Belgium, Canada, Germany, and Switzerland*. New York & Abingdon: Routledge, 2008.
- "Flamands et francophones divisés sur le futur rôle du roi," *Le Soir*, July 15, 2013. <http://www.lesoir.be/262874/article/actualite/fil-info/fil-info-belgique/2013-06-15/flamands-et-francophones-divises-sur-futur-role-du-roi> (Date Accessed: February 14, 2015).
- The Flemish Republic. <http://www.flemishrepublic.org/4/> (Date Accessed: February 14, 2015)
- Hochschild, Adam. *King Leopold's Ghost: A Story of Greed, Terror, and Heroism in Colonial Africa*. New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1999.
- Hong, Ki-Joon. "Political Integration in Belgium: A Case Study on Consociational Federalism," *The Journal of Contemporary European Studies* 23 (2006): 115-138.
- IBP Inc. *Belgium Country Study Guide vol. 1, Strategic Information and Developments*. Washington D.C.: International Business Publications, 2012.
- Inter-Parliament Union. [http://www.ipu.org/parline-e/reports/arc/2029\\_07.htm](http://www.ipu.org/parline-e/reports/arc/2029_07.htm) (Date Accessed: February 14, 2015).
- "Je veux aider la Wallonie à s'en sortir," *La Libre*, May 21, 2007. <http://www.lalibre.be/actu/belgique/je-veux-aider-la-wallonie-a-s-en-sortir-51b8925de4b0de6db9af6848> (Date Accessed: February 14, 2015).
- Kim Kyuryoon, and Hwang Byung-Duck et al. *New Approach to the Costs/Benefits of Korean Unification: Adopting Comprehensive Research Factors and Seeking Alternatives*. Seoul: KINU, 2012.
- "Korean unification: dreams of unity fade into past for young South Koreans," *The Guardian*, May 27, 2013, <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/may/27/south-north-korea-unification> (Date Accessed: February 11, 2015).
- Lagasse, Charles-Etienne. *Nouvelles Institutions Politiques de la Belgique et de l'Europe*. Unknown: Artel, 1999.

- "Le confédéralisme n'est plus très loin," *La Libre*, October 5, 2004, <http://www.lalibre.be/actu/belgique/le-confederalisme-n-est-plus-tres-loin-51b88612e4b0de6db9aaf0cd> (Date Accessed: February 10, 2015).
- "Le nouveau roi des Belges devra unir une nation divisée," *Capital*, July 21, 2013, <http://www.capital.fr/a-la-une/actualites/le-nouveau-roi-des-belges-devra-unir-une-nation-divisee-860206> (Date Accessed: February 17, 2015).
- Lijphart, Arend. *Democracy in Plural Societies: A Comparative Exploration*. New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 1977.
- Mylonas, Harris. *The Politics of Nation-Building: Making Co-Nationals, Refugees, and Minorities*. Cambridge & New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012.
- Nielsen, François. "The Flemish Movement in Belgium After World War II: A Dynamic Analysis," *American Sociological Review* 45, no. 1 (1980): 76-94.
- "No Love Lost: Is Belgium About to Break in Two?" *Time*, June 30, 2010.
- Popelier, Patricia and Bea Cantillon. "Bipolar Federalism and the Social Welfare State: A Case for Shared Competences," *Publius* 43, no. 4 (2013): 626-647.
- Proudhon, Pierre-Joseph. *The Principle of Federation*, translated by Richard Vernon Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1980.
- Shelby, Karen D. *Flemish Nationalism and the Great War: The Politics of Memory, Visual Culture and Commemoration*. New York: Palgrave, 2014.
- Schroeder, Paul. "The 19th-Century International System: Changes in the Structure." *World Politics* 39, no. 1 (1986): 1-26.
- Sénat de Belgique. [http://www.senat.be/www/?MIval=/index\\_senate&LANG=fr](http://www.senat.be/www/?MIval=/index_senate&LANG=fr) (Date Accessed: February 15, 2015).
- Sorens, Jason. "The Institutions of Fiscal Federalism," *Publius* 41, no. 2 (2011): 207-231.
- "South Korean youth grow wary of unification." *The Washinton Post*, October 17, 2011, [http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/south-korean-youth-grow-wary-of-unification/2011/10/14/gIQA3ujmqL\\_story.html](http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/south-korean-youth-grow-wary-of-unification/2011/10/14/gIQA3ujmqL_story.html) (Date Accessed: February 15, 2015).
- Swenden, Wilfred. "Asymmetric Federalism and Coalition-Making in Belgium." *Publius: The Journal of Federalism* 32, no.3 (2002): 67-88.
- "The Generation Gap on Korean Unification." *The Diplomat*, January 29, 2015, <http://thediplomat.com/2015/01/the-generation-gap-on-korean-unification/> (Date Accessed: February 15, 2015).



- "The meaning of a confederation. What are the implications for Belgium?" *News Juice*, October 12, 2012, <http://newsjuice.eu/2012/10/28/the-meaning-of-a-confederation-what-are-the-implications-for-belgium/> (Date Accessed: February 10, 2015).
- Tilly, Charles. *The Formation of National States in Western Europe*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1975.
- "Time to call it a day," *The Economist*, September 6, 2007, <http://www.economist.com/node/9767681> (Date Accessed: February 14, 2015).
- Van den Wijngaert, Mark, Lieve Beullens and Dana Brants. *Pouvoir & monarchie: La Belgique et ses rois*. Bruxelles: Luc Pire, 2002.
- Van Meerten, Michelangelo. *Capital Formation in Belgium, 1900-1995*. Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2003.
- Vuylsteke, Julius. *Brief Statistical Description of Belgium*, reproduced from "History of Flemish movement up to 1914," [http://www.ucl.ac.uk/dutchstudies/an/SP\\_LINKS\\_UCL\\_POPUP/SPs\\_english/flemish\\_movement/political.html](http://www.ucl.ac.uk/dutchstudies/an/SP_LINKS_UCL_POPUP/SPs_english/flemish_movement/political.html) (Date Accessed: February 10, 2015).