

# 2017 Survey of Inter-Korean Integration

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**Printed** August 2018  
**Published** August 2018

**Published by** Korea Institute for National Unification (KINU)  
**Publisher** Yeon Chul Kim, President  
**Editor** Yeowon Lim, External Affairs and Public Relations Team

**Registration number** No.2-2361 (April 23, 1997)  
**Address** 217 Banpo-daero(Banpo-dong), Seocho-gu, Seoul 06578, Korea  
**Telephone** (82-2) 2023-8208  
**Fax** (82-2) 2023-8298  
**Homepage** <http://www.kinu.or.kr>  
**Design** Designintro Co. Ltd (82-2) 2285-0789  
**Print** Handesigncorporation Co. Ltd (82-2) 2269-9917  
**ISBN** 978-89-8479-916-5 93340 : Not for sale

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All KINU publications are available for purchase at all major bookstores in Korea.  
Also available at the Government Printing Office Sales Center  
Store (82-2) 734-6818; Office (82-2) 394-0337

# **2017 Survey of Inter-Korean Integration**

This is a translated version of Korean report published in December 2017. The analyses, comments, and other opinions contained in this paper are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the views of the Korea Institute for National Unification.



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2017 Survey of Inter-Korean Integration

# 1. Introduction



The public will for inter-Korean integration has been on a constant decline. It does not simply indicate a decrease in the percentage of people who feel a sense of moral obligation or the need for unification. It rather illustrates that there has been a reduction in the meaning, value, and influence of unification on individual life. This research shows that the attitude on unification in view of ideal and normative value of our society differs depending on age. The percentage of people who believe that unification is necessary becomes higher with age. However, only a small number of people responded that unification is necessary when factoring in practical values. A majority of South Koreans do not have an expectation that unification will change the current situation. They refuse to make even a small sacrifice in return for unification and believe that unification will not benefit them. To sum up, the attitude on unification viewed from an idealistic perspective is in stark contrast to that of unification in a realistic sense.

An in-depth analysis on South-South conflict in this research suggests that the public in South Korean society largely perceives unification and North Korean policy in four categories: 1) pressure policy, 2) engagement policy, 3) humanitarian assistance, and 4) North Korea-related projects. A cluster analysis carried out on the basis of those four categories illustrates the following four groups: 1) 39.3% of people show a high level of support both for pressure policy and engagement policy—a group in support of synchronous implementation of pressure and engagement; 2) the second group of 17.8% (pressure-focused group) was positive toward pressure-oriented policy but negative toward the resumption of humanitarian assistance and other related projects on North Korea;

3) the third group of 11.7% (engagement-focused group) was positive toward engagement policy, humanitarian assistance, and the resumption of projects on North Korea but negative toward pressure-oriented policy; and 4) the fourth group of 31.2% (indifferent group) showed an average level of support for those four areas of unification and North Korean policy. The four clusters of unification and North Korean policy precisely match those of perception toward North Korea revealed in the first and second year research of *Inter-Korean Integration Survey: Perceptions and Attitudes*. Pragmatism that views North Korea both as a subject for cooperation and confrontation matches the first group in support of both pressure and engagement. Realism that holds a negative view on the possibility of cooperation with North Korea and regards it as a subject for confrontation corresponds to the second pressure-focused group. Liberalism that perceives North Korea as an object for cooperation and is negative toward confrontation matches the third engagement-focused group. Isolationism that views North Korea neither as an object for cooperation nor confrontation corresponds to the fourth indifferent group.

Policy implications of this research are as follows. First, a comprehensive and multi-dimensional survey is required on the public view of unification. If the perception on unification from the ideal perspective is different from that of realistic sense, which standard is required to assess the public perception toward unification? What does “unification is necessary in light of ethical aspects but not in a realistic sense” mean? How should people’s somewhat contradictory attitude toward unification be interpreted?

An accurate analysis on the public perception toward unification and inter-Korean integration is essential to unification and North Korean policy formulated on the basis of social consensus.

Second, there has been an expanded public spectrum of policy on unification and North Korea. In general, policy on unification and North Korea is understood within a frame of pressure policy and engagement policy. However, the result of this research suggests that South Koreans recognize humanitarian assistance and North Korea-related projects not as tools of pressure policy or engagement policy, but recognize them separately from those policies. Conflicting public views on unification and North Korean policy are likely to have a positive impact on the government's policy implementation because it could provide an expanded room in the implementation process.

Third, the highest percentage of people responded that the engagement and pressure policy should be simultaneously implemented. This is indicative of weakening confrontational and conflicting patterns rooted on dichotomous thinking of pressure or engagement policy. Such result is considered positive for the policy implementation of the ROK government because it proves that the public is on the same page with the government's direction for North Korean policy—dual track approach of engagement and pressure policy toward North Korea.

Fourth, a high percentage of respondents support the synchronous approach of engagement policy and pressure policy, which signals a warning that policy on unification and North Korea could easily be used for political purposes. Thus, the political circle should pay

a careful attention to this result. In other words, when external factors for supporting either the pressure or engagement policy are provided, the policy preference can easily be swayed depending on an individual. Above all, efforts are required for the political circle not to use unification and North Korean policy as tools for political strife.

Fifth, the government's efforts for broadening the consensus on unification or securing the public support for unification and North Korean policy can be materialized through a transition in perception toward North Korea, not through disseminating the necessity of unification or promoting related policy. Match of four clusters of unification and North Korean policy with another four clusters of perception on unification well demonstrates that the policy preference is rooted on perception toward North Korea.

The survey had been conducted from March 21 to April 14, 2017. The target population was men and women aged over 19 residing in 16 cities and provinces across the country. The number of samples allocated to Sejong Special Self-Governing City fell short of providing meaningful results so Sejong City was not classified into a separate administrative district but rather included in South Chungcheong Province. As of March 2017, 1,000 samples were collected on the basis of quota sampling extracted based on population per sex, age, and region according to resident registration statistics of the Ministry of Security and Public Administration.

2017 Survey of Inter-Korean Integration

## **2. Attitude toward Unification**

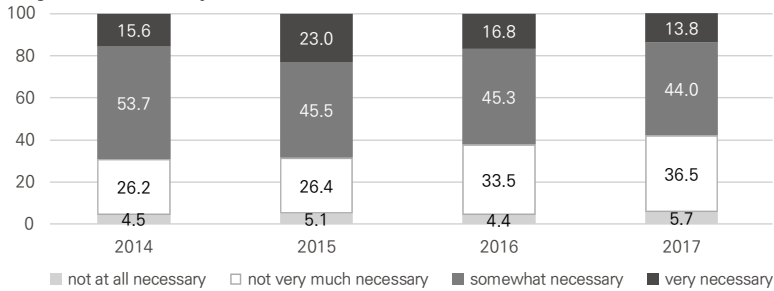




## A. A Sense of Moral Obligation for Unification

While 57.8% of those surveyed responded to a question of the necessity for unification that unification is necessary (very: 13.8% + somewhat: 44.0%), 42.2% responded that it is not necessary (not at all: 5.7% + not very much: 36.5%). The number of positive answer dropped by 4.3% from 2016 (62.1%) and by 11.5% from 2014 (69.3%), showing continuously declining patterns since the 2014 survey.

<Figure 2-1> Necessity for Unification



The number of respondents in support of the necessity for unification outnumbered those who thought the opposite across all generations except for those in their 20s. For the first time since the beginning of this research series in 2014, the number of respondents in their 20s who believed that unification is necessary was close to 30% at 28.8%. What is noticeable is that the number of positive answer for those in their 40s dropped by 6.3% from 2016, for those in their 50s, 6.9%, for 60s and over, 6.0% year-on-year.

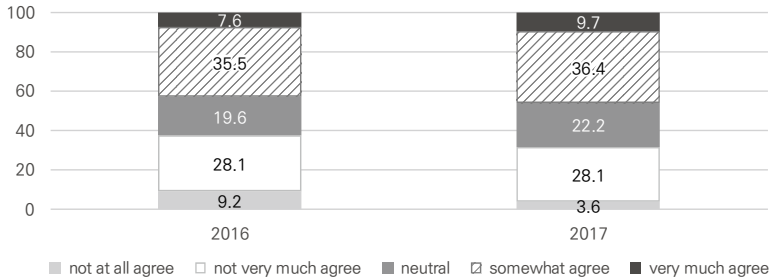
## **B. Detailed Attitude toward Unification**

A survey was conducted on the public attitude toward unification laying out 13 questions on a scale of 1 to 5 (1: do not agree at all, 5: very much agree). Among them, the results of nine questions are presented in this English version of the summary report.

### *1) Unification is not necessary if the two Koreas could peacefully coexist without a war*

The number of people in favor of peaceful coexistence—permanent and peaceful divided state—as opposed to unification, has increased by 2.9% to 46.0% from 2016 (very much: 9.7% + somewhat: 36.4%). The percentage of those in favor of peaceful and permanent state of the division was the highest at 59.4% among people in their 20s, similar to an answer to the question of moral obligation for unification. Those in opposition to peaceful and permanent division were the lowest at 44.6% among people in their 60s.

**<Figure 2-2> Necessity for Unification under Peaceful Coexistence between South Korea and North Korea**



Unification perception was categorized into four types based on the following survey questions and answers: 1) the necessity of unification—how much do you think unification is necessary? (On a scale of 1 to 4); and 2) the agreement for the permanent state of division—unification is not necessary if the two Koreas could peacefully coexist without a war (On a scale of 1 to 5).

**<Table 2-1> Four Types of Unification Perception**

Category		Necessity for Unification	
		Not necessary	Necessary
Permanent Division	Explicit Opposition	Group Indifferent to Unification 4.4%(2016) 2.4%(2017)	Group in Favor of Monolithic System 32.9%(2016) 29.3%(2017)
	Implied Agreement	Group in Favor of Divided State 33.5(2016) 39.8(2017)	Group in Favor of Possible Divided State 29.2%(2016) 28.5%(2017)

A cross-over analysis was conducted on those in agreement to the necessity for unification and the divided state. For the convenience of analysis, the question of necessity for unification was categorized

into two: 1) not necessary (not at all necessary + not that much necessary); and 2) necessary (somewhat necessary + very much necessary). The permanent divided state was classified into two: 1) explicit opposition (not at all agree + somewhat disagree); and 2) implicit agreement (neutral + somewhat agree + very agree).

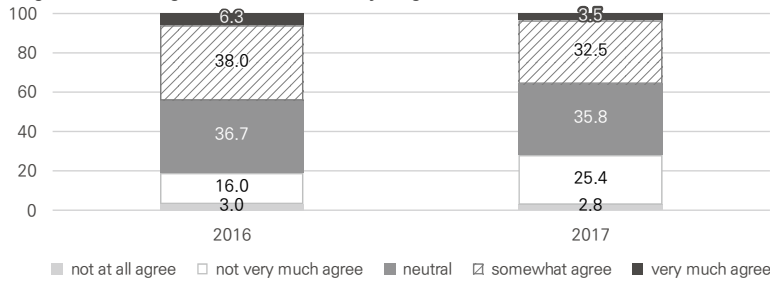
What should be notable from the result of cross-over analysis is that a group in favor of maintaining the status quo of the divided state had increased by 6.3% to 39.8% year-on-year—a group that responded that they implicitly agreed to the permanent divided state and that unification is not necessary. On the other hand, a group in favor of the monolithic system had decreased by 3.6% to 29.3% year-on-year—a group who explicitly agreed to the permanent divided state and believed that unification is necessary. A group indifferent to unification had reduced by 2% year-on-year to 2.4%—a group that explicitly disagreed to the permanent divided state and the necessity for unification. Meanwhile, a group in favor of possible divided state who believed that unification is necessary but also agreed to the permanent divided state was 28.5%, not that much different from the level of last year.

The continued crisis phase on the Korean Peninsula since North Korea's nuclear test in January 2016 seemed to have contributed to a significant increase of a group in favor of the divided state. First, one possibility is that people's aspiration to peacefully address the current crisis phase could have been reflected in that increase for the short-term. Second, another possibility is that people's inclination to resolve the current crisis through the permanent divided state rather than unification could have been reflected in such an

increase. However, the continuation of crisis mood on the Korean Peninsula could lead to the two worrying scenarios: 1) a short-term goal of peaceful management of inter-Korean relations could become fixated as a long-term solution; and 2) the perception that inter-Korean relations were set on the basis of permanent divided state could also be reinforced. Ultimately, it was confirmed that the crisis phase looming large on the Korean Peninsula triggered by North Korea's nuclear tests negatively affects the domestic environment conducive to unification.

**2) *Even if I may not witness unification in my lifetime, I have to sacrifice everything in exchange for achieving a grand goal of unification***

**<Figure 2-3> Willingness to Sacrifice Everything for Unification**



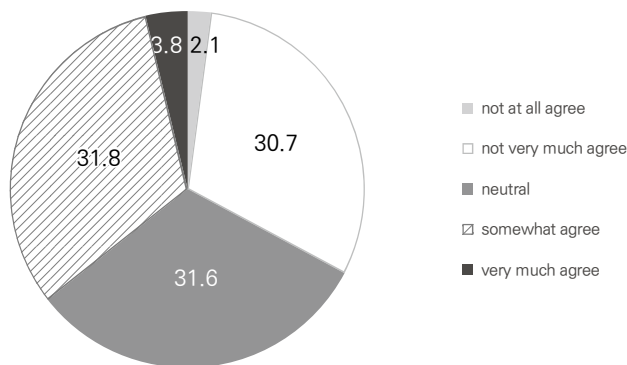
Only 36% of respondents agreed to a question of “we should sacrifice everything for unification.” To paraphrase the question, “our society should pursue unification at the sacrifice of many aspects of our lives.” That number decreased by 8.3% from 2016. Less than 50% of respondents in all regions except for Gwangju and Honam (52.9%), calculated within the range of demographic

variables, said that they are willing to sacrifice everything in exchange for unification. Less than 30% of young people in their 20s (24.4%) and 30s (28.5%) responded positively to that question.

### 3) *Sharing the same ethnicity does not necessarily mean that the South and the North should be unified as one country*

Preceding research has mostly used nominal scale when addressing a question of justification for unification. Such research presented various grounds for justification to respondents, such as “ethnic identity” and “elimination of war threat.” The biggest problem with those kinds of questions is that they force answers on respondents. They are forced to choose a legitimate reason for unification even when they do not believe that unification is necessary. In a bid to overcome the limitations of such advanced studies, this time a question was raised with the use of Likert scale—whether they agree to unification on the basis of ethnic identity.

<Figure 2-4> Support for Unification Discourse on the Basis of Ethnic Identity



The percentage of those in support of unification on the basis of ethnic identity (those not in agreement to a question) is similar to those who believed that the necessity for unification cannot be justified just because we are of the same ethnicity (those in agreement to a question). The number of respondents who believed that we should not be unified as one country just because we belong to the same ethnic group was 35.6%, slightly higher than 32.9% of those who believed that we should be unified because of our same ethnic root. However, those numbers were not statistically meaningful. The number of respondents who said “neutral” was 31.6%.

The difference identified per age group deserves attention. As for those in their 20s, 30s, and 40s, the number in agreement to the rationale of single ethnicity-single nation is less than half of those in disagreement to such rationale. As for those in their 30s and 40s, the number in disagreement to the rationale of single ethnicity-single nation is also higher than those who think the otherwise. Given that the highest number of respondents who chose the ethnic identity as a reason for unification in preceding studies, this research result that people in their 20s to 40s do not agree to the ethnic identity-based unification rationale is somewhat striking. In particular, people in their 20s to 40s expressed an explicitly negative opinion toward the unification rationale of single ethnicity-single nation—a result that requires an overall reevaluation on the justification for unification at the government and the academic level. Therefore, there needs to be a discussion on what kinds of methods and procedure are required to clearly identify the justification and reasons for unification perceived by the public.

**<Table 2-2> Attitude toward Unification on the Basis of Ethnic Identity per Age Group**

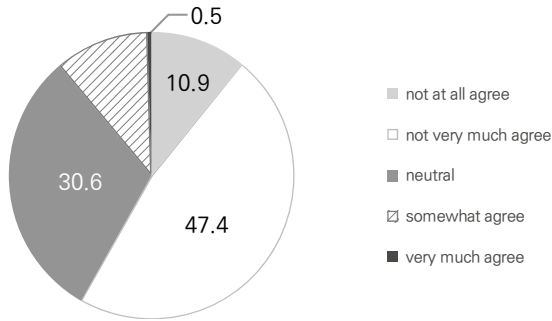
Age Group	Positive for Single Ethnic Nation	Neutral	Negative for Single Ethnic Nation
19-29	20.5	32.4	47.2
30-39	25.1	30.7	44.1
40-49	29.8	35.1	35.1
50-59	36.2	34.7	29.1
60 and over	47.3	26.1	26.6

*4) I am willing to sacrifice my life to some extent for unification*

A negative opinion prevailed on a question of “I am willing to sacrifice everything for unification.” Another question was raised “then, can you take up a little bit of burden for unification?” Respondents said that they see no need to achieve unification at the expense of their personal lives. Only 11.2% of respondents answered positively to this question. While 36% agreed to a societal and national burden associated with unification, only 11.2% agreed to an economic burden when the unification burden becomes tangible at an individual level. Given that there is less than 10% of agreement to this question among those in their 20s (9.0%), 30s (9.5%), and 40s (8.2%), resistance toward the future unification cost and the society’s sharing of burden in the process are expected.



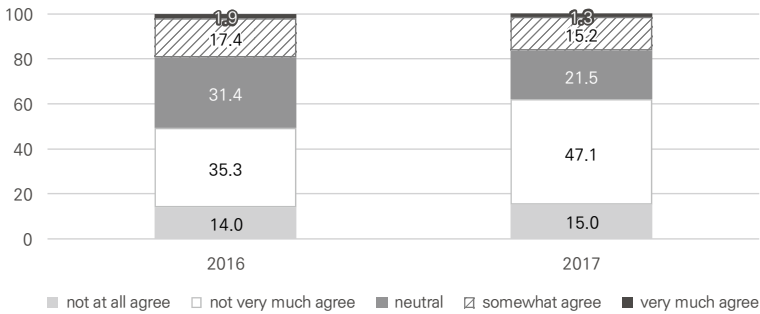
<Figure 2-5> Willingness to Take Up a Little Bit of Burden for Unification



5) *I support a tax increase required for unification cost*

A negative perception for societal and individual burden associated with unification was reflected in detailed behavior patterns. A negative opinion prevailed in terms of tax increases linked with unification cost. Only 16.5% of respondents agreed to this question—a number decreased by 2.8% compared to 2016. In addition, no difference per age group was observed.

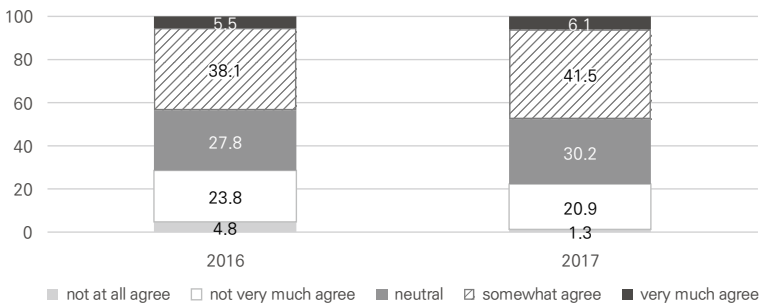
<Figure 2-6> Support for Tax Increase for Unification



### 6) *Unification is not our immediate goal at this moment*

47.6% (very: 6.1% + somewhat: 41.5%) responded that unification is not an immediate task of our society—a percentage decreased by 4% from last year. The highest number of agreement was shown among people in their 20s at 61.9% and the lowest percentage was recorded among people in their 60s and over at 36.9%.

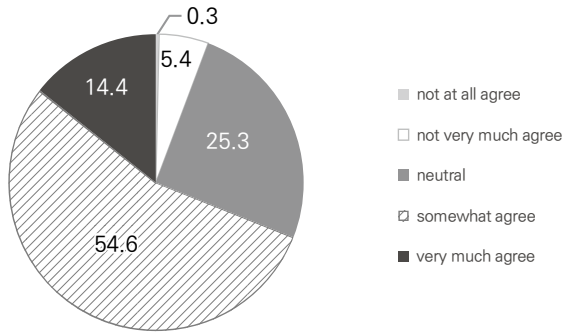
<Figure 2-7> Agreement for Unification as Immediate Goal of Korean Society



### 7) *I will choose the economy over unification when given a choice*

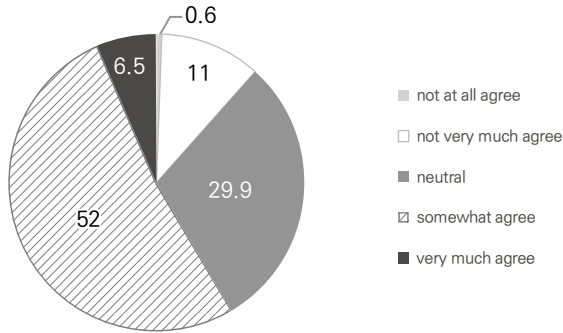
A social consensus was already built on that unification is not our immediate task to be addressed. Such consensus was also confirmed in answers to a question of “choose between unification and economy as an immediate task to be dealt with.” In fact, 69% respondents agreed to an answer “the economy is more of a pressing issue than unification”—2.9% increase from 2016. The perception that economy takes precedence over unification was confirmed within the range of all demographic variables.

<Figure 2-8> Agreement for Urgency of Unification in Relation to the Economy



8) *My life will not be significantly impacted regardless of unification*

<Figure 2-9> Evaluation of Impact of Unification on Life



To a question of what kind of impact unification will have on people’s life, 58.5% of respondents predicted that unification will not have a big impact on their life. Only 11.6% responded that unification will have an impact on their life.

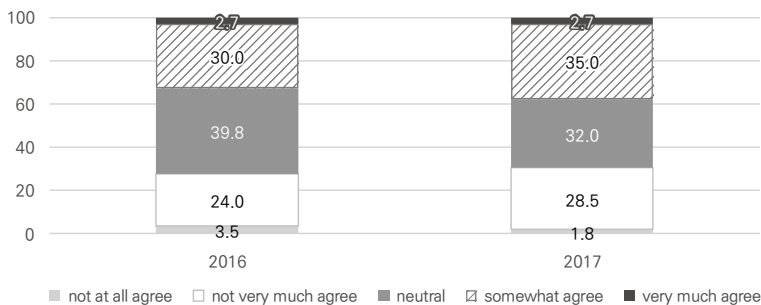
The general perception is that unification will create changes in

various aspects of society. The so-called “unification preparation” focuses on minimizing a chaos that can be triggered by unification. However, the public, main actor of unification, turns out to underestimate societal changes caused by unification. A slight difference depending on the level of major demographic variables indicates the general expectation of society that unification will not have much of an impact on their life.

**9) *Negative prospects come to my mind in general when thinking about post-unification situation in the future***

33.7% of people responded in preceding questions that they do not feel at ease when they think about unification. There has been a slight increase of people who viewed unification negatively at 37.7%—a 5% increase from 2016. It was reaffirmed in this research that the negative sentiment toward unification was stronger than positive one and that there has been an increasing number of respondents with the negative sentiment toward unification compared to 2016.

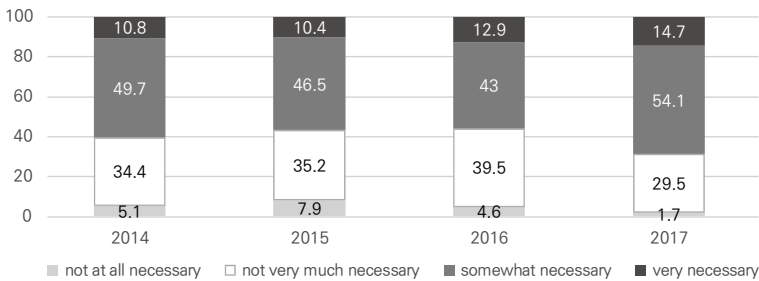
**<Figure 2-10> Negative Sentiment about Post-unification Situation**



### C. Thought on Unification Benefits

To a question of “how much benefits unification will bring to the nation?” 68.8% (very: 14.6% + somewhat: 54.2%) of people responded that “unification will be beneficial to the nation”—a 12.9% increase from 2016 (55.9%). Those who responded that unification will not be beneficial to the nation were 31.2% (not at all: 1.7% + not very much: 29.5%). It is contrary to roughly 70% of those aged over 30 and 61.9% of those in their 20s who believed that unification is beneficial to the nation. What is notable is that from 2014 up until 2016 there had been a continued decline of people who responded that unification will be beneficial at the national level (2014: 60.5%, 2015: 56.9%, and 2016: 55.9%) and that in 2017 the number had increased again to 68.8%.

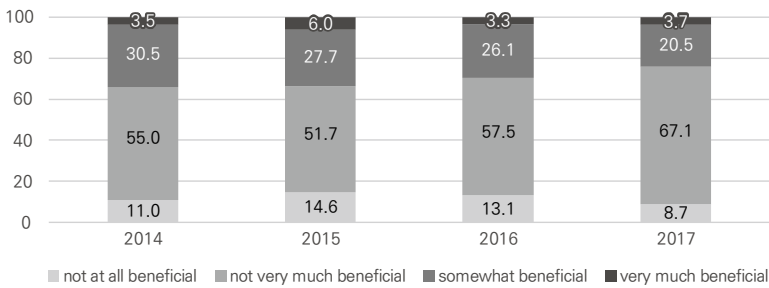
<Figure 2-11> National Benefits of Unification



To a question of “how much benefits unification will bring to their own life?” people who do not believe that unification will bring a direct benefit to their life outnumbered those who think the other way: 24.3% (very beneficial: 3.7% + somewhat beneficial: 20.6%) answered positively that it will be beneficial; and 75.7% (not at all beneficial: 8.6% + not very much beneficial: 67.1%) said negatively

that it will not be beneficial. In most cases, a high percentage of respondents reported that unification will not bring direct personal benefits to them. In particular, the younger the respondents are, the more likely they think that unification will not benefit them: only 17% of people in their 20s responded that unification will be beneficial to them.

**<Figure 2-12> Individual Benefits of Unification**



The number of those who answered that unification will be beneficial to them has been on the continuous decline since the beginning of this research in 2014. The percentage in support of “unification will bring personal benefits” was 34% in 2014 research, 33.7% in 2015, and 29.4% in 2016.

How should the public perception be interpreted that unification is beneficial for the nation, but not for the individuals? One of the causes is globalization of unification issue. So far, issues of the Korean Peninsula—unification issue as a representative case—have mostly been discussed from the perspective of international politics. In fact, very active discussions have been held on North Korea’s nuclear program and inter-Korean issues from the

perspective of surrounding countries' stance and policy. However, such discussions have been put forward only with a reflection of national interests and external policy of those concerned countries. Therefore, it appears legitimate for the public to put the unification issues into national perspective. So far unification issue has not been discussed at the individual level. The representative side effect of globalization of unification issue is the public perception that unification will not have an impact on their personal life. Thus, a transition of perception is required on the localization and individualization of unification issue.





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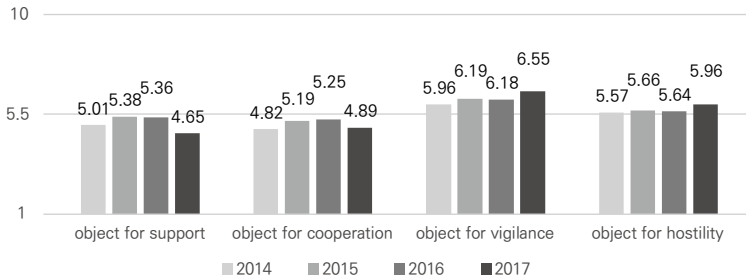
## **3. Attitude toward North Korea**



## A. Images about North Korea

In this research, perception on North Korea was measured with the use of Likert scale to allow respondents to explore images on the North at the multi-dimensional level, as opposed to the research design that makes the respondents decide on the first and second choices among projected images. A question of “what kind of objects do you associate with North Korea?” was asked to measure the public perception on North Korea. The answers were categorized into objects for 1) support, 2) cooperation, 3) vigilance, and 4) hostility. Respondents are led to choose each answer on a scale of 0 to 10 (0: not at all agree, 10: very agree).

<Figure 3-1> Perception on North Korea



On that question, an object for vigilance receives the highest mark at 6.55 point, followed by an object for hostility (5.96) and an object for cooperation (4.89). An object for vigilance has remained at the top since 2014. There have been markedly declining patterns of those who viewed North Korea as an object for support and cooperation when compared to 2016. The number of people who considered North Korea to be an object for support decreased by 0.71 point from 2016 and those who viewed the North to be an

object for cooperation reduced by 0.36 point.

What is interesting is the conservative perception on North Korea shown by those in their 20s and 30s. People in their 20s held the most negative view on North Korea in terms of an object for support and cooperation. The percentage of those who saw North Korea as an object for vigilance and hostility was the highest among people in their 20s and 30s. When looking at the ideological spectrum, liberals show strong tendency to choose cooperative factors toward North Korea (an object for support and cooperation) while conservatives have strong inclination for confrontational factors toward North Korea (an object for vigilance and hostility), as well as can be expected.

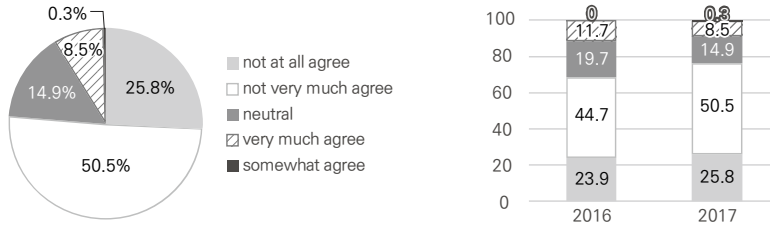
**<Table 3-1> Perception on North Korea per Age Group**

Age	Support	Cooperation	Vigilance	Hostility
20s	4.35	4.64	6.78	6.03
30s	4.79	4.82	6.78	6.06
40s	4.72	4.87	6.44	5.96
50s	4.51	4.92	6.46	6.01
60s and older	4.82	5.10	6.37	5.82

## **B. North Korea as Object for Dialogue and Compromise**

A question of “do you think that the current Kim Jong-un regime is a counterpart capable of engaging in dialogue and reaching a compromise?” was asked in order to research into the perception on the possibility and necessity of dialogue and compromise with the Kim regime.

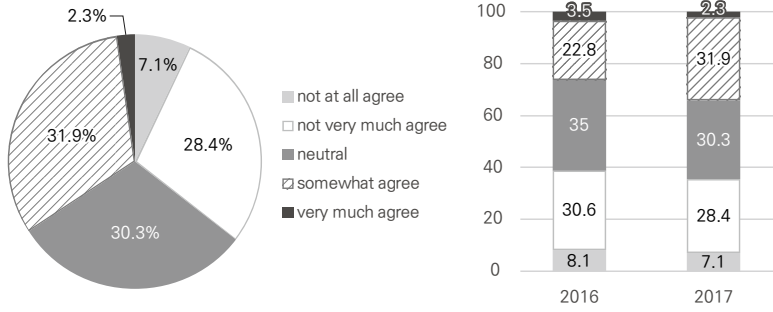
**<Figure 3-2> Possibility of Dialogue and Compromise with the Kim Jong-un Regime**



While the positive answer to the possibility of dialogue and compromise with the Kim regime was 8.8% (very: 0.3% + somewhat: 8.5%), the negative answer was higher than the positive one at 76.3% (not at all: 25.8% + not very much: 50.5%). The positive response to the possible dialogue and compromise decreased by 2.9% from 2016 (11.7%). In all age groups, a negative response to the possible compromise was shown high at over 65%.

Aside from the question above, another question was asked “do you believe that we should seek dialogue and compromise with the North Korean regime?” The positive answer to that question was slightly lower at 34.2% (very: 2.3% + somewhat: 31.9%) than the negative one at 35.5% (not at all: 7.1% + not very much: 28.4%). What is interesting though is that when compared to 2016 (26.3%), there has been a 7.9% increase of people who responded that dialogue and compromise with the Kim regime should be pursued even though they consider it a low possibility.

**<Figure 3-3> Recognition of the Need to Pursue Dialogue and Compromise with the Kim Jong-un Regime**



## **4. In-depth Analysis: Images of North Korea and Policy on Unification and North Korea**





## **A. Result of Analysis on Factors about Policy on Unification and North Korea**

Answers to 16 questions in the category of policy on unification and North Korea of *2017 Survey of Inter-Korean Integration* were analyzed to discover the public preference for such policy. The survey participants answered each question on a scale of 0 to 10 (0: not at all agree, 5: neutral, 10: very agree). A factor analysis on each question was carried out first and then a cluster analysis was conducted based on the factor analysis. The contents of 16 questions and results of factor analysis are presented in Table 4-2.

The factor analysis indicates that people's preference for policy on unification and North Korea is classified into four factors: 1) pressure policy, 2) engagement policy, 3) humanitarian assistance, and 4) resumption of projects for North Korea. The result affirms that people do not recognize the humanitarian assistance and resumption of projects for North Korea as tools of engagement or pressure policy but separately distinct from such policies. This result can be interpreted as being deviated from the dichotomous approach of traditional pressure policy vs. engagement policy. However, the dichotomy between pressure and engagement policy is still valid given the inclination shown in Table 4-1: the more a person supports the humanitarian assistance and resumption of projects for North Korea, the more they are likely to support engagement policy and less likely to support pressure policy. Finally, Terminal High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) was classified as a separate factor. This result is in contrast to a generally-held view that the THAAD deployment is a sub-factor of pressure or

engagement policy.

**<Table 4-1> Result of Correlation Analysis among Four Factors of Policy on North Korea and Unification**

	Pressure Policy	Engagement Policy	Humanitarian Assistance
Engagement Policy	.19***		
Humanitarian Assistance	-.21***	.46***	
Resumption of Projects	-.18***	.37***	.48***

\*\*\*  $p < .001$ .

**<Table 4-2> 16 Questions and Result of Factor Analysis Measuring the Direction of Policy on North Korea and Unification**

	No.	Question	Average (Standard Error: SE)
Pressure Policy	2.	Sanctions on North Korea should be stringently implemented through international coordination	6.33(.04)
	4.	Distributing propaganda leaflets, sending balloons, broadcasting propaganda, and using loudspeakers should be actively mobilized	
	5.	Security against North Korea's military threats should be obtained	
Engagement Policy	1.	Economic exchange and cooperation should be continued even in the political and military confrontational phase	5.82(.04)
	3.	Exchange of sports, culture, and human resources should be expanded	
	6.	Policy on North Korea should aim for a peaceful coexistence between the two Koreas rather than seeking unification	
	8.	Policy on North Korea should include the promotion of inter-Korean economic cooperation based on the principal of separation between politics and economy	

	No.	Question	Average (Standard Error: SE)
	11.	Humanitarian assistance and social-cultural-economic exchanges should be resumed if North Korea stops (freezes) developing nuclear weapons	
	12.	Support for North Korean defectors should be strengthened	
Humanitarian Assistance	7.	Unconditional food aid should be provided to North Korea	4.28(.05)
	9.	Humanitarian assistance to North Korea should be continued	
	10	Humanitarian assistance to and social-cultural-economic exchanges with North Korea should be stopped if North Korea keeps refusing to abandon its nuclear weapons*	
Resumption of Projects	13	The shutdown of the Kaesong Industrial Complex (KIC) is the right decision*	4.71(.06)
	15.	The Mount Kumgang tour program should be resumed	
	16	The KIC should be resumed	
THAAD	14.	The THAAD should be deployed	6.12(.06)

\* reversed coding

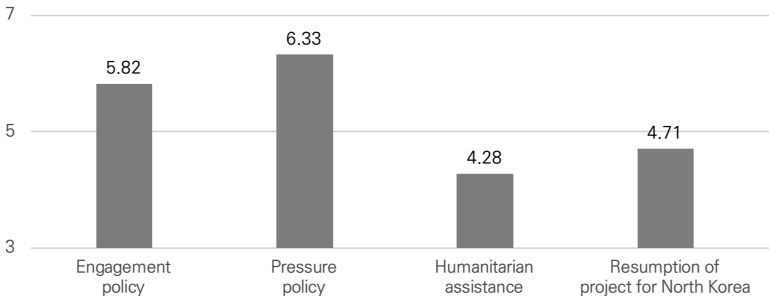
## B. Analysis of Support in Each Area of Policy

The number of support for pressure policy was the highest at 6.33 point and the support for engagement policy is also high at 5.82. The support for the resumption of projects for North Korea was 4.71 and for humanitarian aid to North Korea, 4.28—both lower than the average 5 point. Regardless of sex, age group, educational background, economic status, and whether respondents have met North Korean defectors before, respondents prefer policy in the order of pressure policy, engagement policy, resumption of North Korean projects, and humanitarian assistance. A difference per

region, however, was shown: Gwangju and Honam regions had a higher number of support for humanitarian assistance than the resumption of North Korean projects; and the support for engagement policy in the Gangwon Province was higher than pressure policy.

The preference for four policy areas classified by age group illustrates that the support of those in their 20s for pressure policy, engagement policy, and humanitarian assistance is lower compared to other age groups. This can be interpreted that those in their 20s are in general indifferent to unification policy. People in their 50s (6.40) and 60s (6.37) showed the highest support for pressure policy while those in their 20s had the lowest support for pressure policy at 6.25. The highest percentage of support for engagement policy was found among respondents in their 30s at 5.90 and for those in their 50s at 5.88. The lowest number of support for engagement policy was recorded among people in their 20s at 5.75. While people in their 40s showed the highest support for the resumption of North Korean projects at 4.84, those in their 50s demonstrated the lowest support at 4.58. While the lowest support for humanitarian assistance was shown among those in their 20s at 4.09, the highest support was found among those in their 60s and older at 4.40.

<Figure 4-1> Average of Support in Four Areas of Policy on North Korea and Unification



The result is indicative of tendency that the higher the income, the higher the support for engagement policy, the resumption of projects for North Korea, and the humanitarian assistance. The support for pressure policy was recorded at the similar level between a group with an income of 2 to 4 million won (6.36 point) and the one over 4 million won (6.34). The support for engagement policy was higher in a group with an income over 4 million won (5.89) than the one with less than 2 million won (5.78) as well as a group with an income of 2 to 4 million won (5.74). The group of over 4 million won in income showed the highest support for the resumption of projects on North Korea (less than 2 million won: 4.36; 2 to 4 million won: 4.64; over 4 million won: 4.85) and the humanitarian assistance (less than 2 million won: 4.27; 2 to 4 million won: 4.23; over 4 million won: 4.32).

Respondents who came in contact with North Korean defectors showed a higher support for pressure policy than those who did not (the former: 6.50 vs. the latter: 6.30), for engagement policy (the former: 6.01 vs. the latter: 5.70), and for the humanitarian assistance (the former: 4.50 vs. the latter: 4.23).

The difference of policy preference based on ideological inclination was shown most prominently in the resumption of projects on North Korea and the humanitarian assistance. Respondents who consider themselves conservatives are more negative toward the resumption of North Korean projects (4.15) and the humanitarian assistance (3.97) than those who viewed themselves progressives (the resumption of projects on North Korea: 5.12, the humanitarian assistance: 4.63). Respondents who identified themselves with conservatives clearly prefer the pressure policy (pressure policy: 6.56 vs. engagement policy: 5.65) while those who considered themselves progressives showed the similar preference both for pressure policy and engagement policy (pressure policy: 6.21 vs. engagement policy: 6.05).

How the high support both for the pressure and engagement policy should be interpreted? First, such result can be attributed to a high percentage of people who believed that the pressure and engagement should go hand-in-hand when it comes to North Korea. Second, it can be interpreted as a result of selective support stemming from the pervasive division between a group solely in support of pressure policy and that of engagement policy caused by deepening South-South conflict. A cluster analysis was utilized to examine those two possibilities.

### **C. Result of Cluster Analysis on Unification and North Korean Policy**

If the first possibility is proven to be true, in other words, if many

people believed that the pressure and engagement policy should be simultaneously enforced on North Korea, one can predict the result of cluster analysis that a group in support of synchronous policy implementation is expected to emerge. On the other hand, if the second possibility is proven to be true, in other words, if this is a result of selective support coming from the division between a group solely in support of pressure policy and that of engagement policy, the result of cluster analysis is likely to be as follows: a group in support of synchronous policy implementation will not likely to emerge; and a group only in support of pressure policy and the one solely in support of engagement policy are expected to appear.

A cluster analysis<sup>1)</sup> identifies the four clusters regarding unification and North Korean policy: 1) a group in support of synchronous implementation of pressure and engagement policy (a group in support of two-track approach), 2) a group in support of engagement policy, 3) a group in support of pressure policy, and 4) indifferent group (Figure 4-2, Table 4-3). The percentage of first group was 39.3% showing a higher support both for pressure policy (6.69 point) and engagement policy (7.09 point). The first group relatively preferred the resumption of projects for North Korea (5.12) over humanitarian assistance (4.57). The third group was 17.8%—a group in support of pressure policy (7.50), but in opposition to humanitarian assistance (3.08) and the resumption of projects for North Korea (3.45). This group's preference for engagement policy also exceeds the average (5.71). The second group was confirmed

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1) K-average cluster analysis was performed based on four areas of unification and North Korean policy identified as a result of factor analysis.

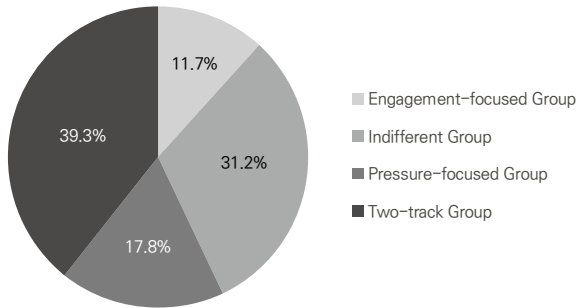
at 11.7%, which is positive toward engagement policy (6.62), humanitarian assistance (5.53), and resumption of projects for North Korea (5.12), but negative toward pressure policy. Lastly, the indifferent group was 31.2%, which showed around the average preference for all four clusters of unification and North Korean policy. This result illustrates that the higher support both for the pressure and engagement policy is not a result of selective support caused by South-South conflict. In other words, it is not because the South Korean society is divided along the two spectrum—a group in support of pressure policy and that of engagement policy. Rather, it is a result of the highest percentage of the public who argues for synchronous policy implementation.

**<Table 4-3> Four Clusters of North Korean and Unification Policy and the Average of Four Areas per Cluster (Standard Error)**

Cluster	Two-track Group	Engagement-focused Group	Pressure-focused Group	Indifferent Group
North Korean Policy				
Engagement Policy	6.69(.03)	6.62(.07)	4.71(.05)	5.04(.04)
Pressure Policy	7.09(.04)	4.81(.08)	7.50(.06)	5.29(.05)
Resumption of Projects for North Korea	5.12(.08)	5.43(.18)	3.45(.12)	4.65(.09)
Humanitarian Assistance	4.57(.07)	5.53(.14)	3.08(.08)	4.14(.07)



<Figure 4-2> Four Clusters of North Korean and Unification Policy and Its Percentage



Analysis of demographic variables indicates that a group in support of the two-track approach (synchronous implementation of pressure and engagement policy) is the highest in numbers, followed by pressure-focused group, engagement-focused group, and indifferent group in general. Sex, education, and income level had no significant impact on the overall results across all groups. The number of indifferent group (36.6%) was similar to that of the two-track group (36.0%) among those in their 20s. On the other hand, a common trait found among those in their 30s and older was the highest percentage of the two-track group (30s: 38.8%, 40s: 37.7%, 50s: 43.2%, and 60s and over: 40.25%). North Gyeongsang Province (65.4%) and Seoul (51.8%) had the highest number of people who preferred the synchronous policy implementation. The pressure-focused group was the highest in Seoul at 28.4% and the engagement-focused group was the highest in Gyeonggi Province at 22.2%. While 43.2% of a group who met North Koreans defectors preferred a two-track approach, 16.6% of them preferred an engagement-focused policy. In addition, 38.4% of a group who has not come into contact with North Korean defectors preferred a two-track approach and 10.6% of them preferred the

engagement-focused policy. What is commonly found across the ideological spectrum is that a group in support of the synchronous policy implementation makes up the highest regardless of ideology (conservatives: 37.3%, centralists: 35.3%, progressives: 44.2%). However, what is differentiated is that the percentage in favor of the two-track approach among progressives outnumbered that of centralists and conservatives. While progressives favored engagement policy (14.9%) over pressure policy (11.9%), conservatives and centralists preferred pressure policy (conservatives: 22.8%, centralists: 20.9%) over engagement policy (conservatives: 12.9%, centralists: 7.4%).

#### **D. Result of Correspondence Analysis: Two-track Approach of Pressure and Engagement Policy vs. Perception on North Korea**

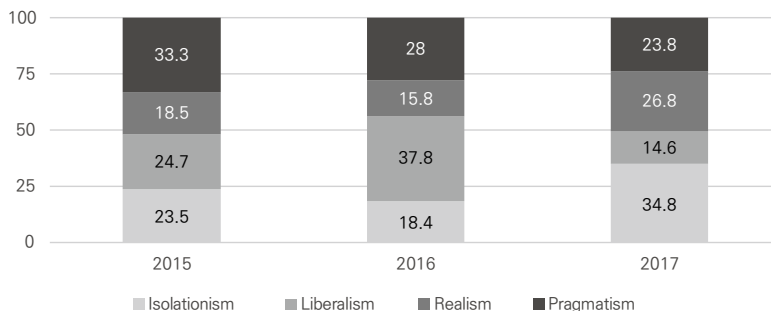
The synchronous support for pressure and engagement policy might seem contradictory. But this phenomenon can be viewed as natural given that the inter-Korean relations are fundamentally contradictory and ambivalent in nature, long been marred by confrontations and cooperation. The group in support of the synchronous implementation of pressure and engagement policy was born not as a result of the new attitude developed from the continued crisis on the Korean Peninsula triggered by North Korea's nuclear advancement or the introspection of the so-called "10 years of progressive era and 9 years of conservative era." Rather, it can be best understood as the limitations of precedent studies that failed to reflect the contradictory and ambivalent perception of individuals.

As specified above, precedent studies usually deployed a dichotomous approach—positive vs. negative—on the perception of North Korea and policy on unification and North Korea, rather than an ambivalent approach. Therefore, there exists a structure limitation of not being able to observe the two-track group. “Cooperation based on strong security” has been the direction of North Korean policy of all past governments of South Korea, which reflects conflicting attitude toward North Korea.

If preference for policy on unification and North Korea is influenced by the public perception on North Korea as argued by precedent research, all those four groups will have different perception on North Korea regarding such policy. Findings of the first and second year research suggest that the perception on North Korea is also classified into four clusters. Then the four clusters of policy on unification and North Korea should be matched with four clusters of perception on North Korea: 1) pragmatism that views North Korea as an object both for cooperation and confrontation should be matched with a group in support of the two-track approach of pressure and engagement policy, 2) realism that regards North Korea as an object for confrontation and views the possible cooperation with the North negatively should be matched with a group in support of pressure-focused policy, 3) liberalism should correspond to a group in favor of engagement-focused policy given that it considers North Korea to be an object for cooperation and regards confrontation negatively, and 4) isolationism should correspond to an indifferent group among four clusters of policy on North Korea and unification given that it views North Korea neither as an object for cooperation nor confrontation.

The public perception on North Korea was primarily analyzed building on the findings of the 2017 research. The results confirm the four clusters regarding the public perception on North Korea: pragmatism, realism, liberalism, and isolationism. The percentage of pragmatism was 23.8% (positive toward both cooperation and confrontation with North Korea), for realism 26.8% (negative toward the possible cooperation with North Korea and positive toward confrontational policy), for liberalism 14.6% (positive toward the possible cooperation and improved relations with North Korea and negative toward confrontational policy), and for isolationism 34.8% (negative toward both cooperation and confrontation with North Korea). A detailed analysis on the perception of North Korea was not conducted since the goal of this research lies in whether the public perception on North Korea can be matched with the preference of policy on unification and North Korea.

**<Figure 4-3> Four Clusters of Perception on North Korea and Its Percentage**

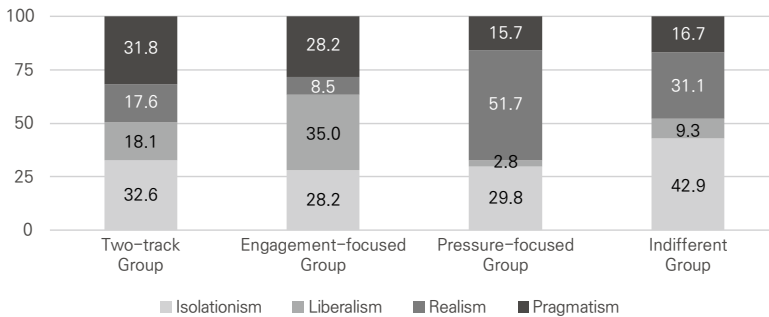


A model of four clusters of unification and North Korean policy per four clusters of the public perception on North Korea was analyzed and displayed by percentage. Such analysis identifies the

matching of four clusters of public perception on North Korea with those of policy on North Korea and unification.

Pragmatism (31.8%) and isolationism (32.6%) make up a high percentage among a group in support of the synchronous implementation of two sets of policy given that those two areas hold the similar proportion of the perception for cooperation and confrontation. Liberalism was the highest among a group in support of engagement policy (35.0%). Realism was the highest among a group in support of pressure policy (51.7%). Isolationism represents the highest percentage among an indifferent group (42.9%). Such result confirms the essential hypothesis of this research—the matching of preference of unification and North Korean policy with the public perception on North Korea.

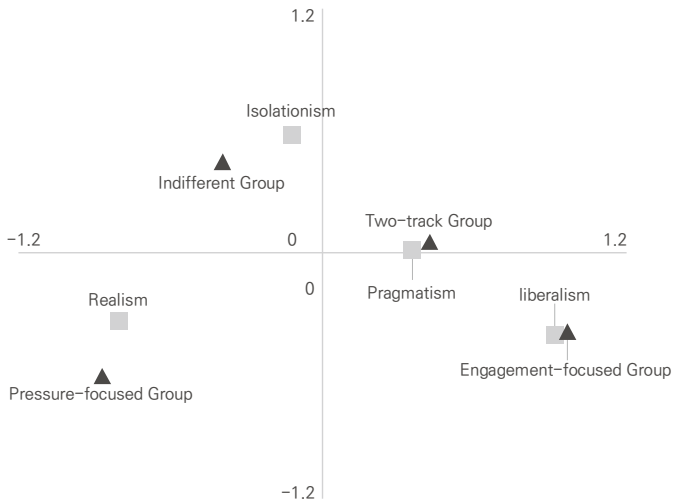
**<Figure 4-4> Percentage of Four Clusters of the Public Perception on North Korea per Four Clusters of Policy on North Korea and Unification**



A correspondence analysis was performed to statistically verify the matching of four clusters of unification and North Korean policy with four clusters of perception on North Korea. The result of such analysis found the matching of four clusters of unification and

North Korean policy with those of perception on North Korea statistically meaningful. As shown in Figure 4-5, the following matching was statistically meaningful: ① a two-track group–perception of pragmatism, ② a group of engagement policy–liberalism, ③ a group of pressure policy–realism, and ④ an indifferent group–isolationism. However, the intensity of correspondence somewhat varies, which indicates the distance between the perception on North Korea and the preference for policy on unification and North Korea as illustrated in Figure 4-5. The intensity of correspondence of two-track group–pragmatism and engagement group–liberalism was stronger than that of pressure group–realism and indifferent group–isolationism.

**<Figure 4-5> Matching of Four Clusters of Policy on North Korea and Unification with Four Clusters of the Public Perception on North Korea**



Although the matching of four clusters of unification and North Korean policy with four clusters of perception on North Korea varies

in intensity among people over 30s, such pattern is shown in a coherent manner. Among those in their 20s, the level of matching of engagement group–liberalism was low but that of two-track group–pragmatism was high. The level of matching of engagement group–liberalism and that of two-track group–pragmatism was high among those in their 30s. Four clusters of policy on unification and North Korea correspond to four clusters of perception on North Korea in a proportional manner among those in their 40s and 50s. The level of matching of pressure group with realism was high among those in their 60s. While the level of matching of pressure group with realism was high among conservative groups, centralist and conservative groups showed the proportional matching of clusters of unification and North Korean policy with four clusters of the perception on North Korea.

## **E. Policy Implications**

Implications of the overall findings of analysis on four areas of unification and North Korean policy are as follows. First, the public perception on unification and North Korean policy was largely classified into four areas—pressure policy, engagement policy, humanitarian assistance, and the resumption of projects for North Korea. Such classification is evaluated as positive given that the room for crafting policy on unification and North Korea has expanded. It can be interpreted as tendency of viewing projects on North Korea separately from the situation on the Korean Peninsula—a determinant of either pressure or engagement policy. It indicates that the autonomy for humanitarian assistance and projects on North Korea

can be secured as a result of weakening trends of recognizing humanitarian assistance and projects on North Korea as a tool for pressure or engagement policy. Second, a careful approach of the ROK government is required in terms of the resumption of humanitarian assistance and projects on North Korea when factoring in the relatively low support for those two areas. Third, the experience of meeting North Korean defectors led to an increased support both for cooperative policy (engagement policy) and confrontational policy (pressure policy)—a result in conflict with the generally-held view that a contact with North Korean defectors would form a friendly attitude toward North Korea. More in-depth follow-up research is required in that respect. Fourth, a group in support of pressure policy is negative toward the resumption of humanitarian assistance and projects on North Korea—a result that conforms to the general perception. However, it is a result contrary to the general belief since the same group was also positive toward engagement policy based on exchange and cooperation. It is because such result is in conflict with the general expectation that the more the support for pressure policy, the higher the opposition for engagement policy. Another possibility is that the positive attitude toward exchange and cooperation with North Korea and the negative attitude toward humanitarian assistance and projects on North Korea could stem from the perception that the humanitarian assistance and projects on North Korea are just give-away projects with nothing in return.

What are the implications of findings of cluster analysis and demographic analysis—classification of the public perception on unification and North Korean policy into four different groups?



First, those who demand the two-track approach of engagement and pressure policy make up the highest percentage. And such result indicates that the confrontational and conflicting patterns based on dichotomous thinking—only for pressure or only for engagement—are being weakened. Second, the government’s policy basis—two-track approach of pressure and engagement toward North Korea—turns out to be in conformity with the view of the public. This can serve as a positive factor for the policy implementation of the government. However, the followings should be considered that the intensity of a group in support of pressure policy is somewhat stronger than that in favor of engagement policy. Third, the synchronous preference for two sets of policy could act as a burden to the government’s policy implementation process given the two following reasons: the reasons for pressure and engagement in contradictory nature should be simultaneously presented; and the pressure and engagement policy cannot be pursued exactly at 50 to 50 proportion.<sup>2)</sup> In other words, if the engagement policy is relatively emphasized, a sense of anxiety could arise given that the pressure policy has been put on the back burner. On the other hand, if the pressure policy is comparatively stressed, a sense of anxiety could also come to the surface given that the engagement policy has been put on the back burner. Fourth, if a reason for the support of pressure or engagement policy is externally provided, the policy preference could be changed depending on individuals. For instance, if North Korea’s nuclear and missile provocations are to be focused, the pressure policy is more likely to be favored. If North Koreans’ dismal living conditions are to be highlighted, the

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2) Eldar Shafir, Itamar Simonson, and Amos Tversky. “Reason-based Choice,” *Cognition* vol. 49 no. 1 (1993), pp. 11-36.

engagement policy is likely to be preferred.

However, changes in policy preference do not stem from ignorance or misunderstanding of the public. Rather, changes occur because there are legitimate reasons both for the support of pressure and engagement. In that sense, policy efforts are required that satisfy both reasons. In particular, efforts are needed to simultaneously articulate the effects of engagement and pressure in regard to unification and North Korean policy. For example, there needs to be an explanation for the limitations of pressure policy without engagement, and those of engagement policy without pressure.

Fundamentally, the social consensus should be built with a consideration for ambivalent characteristics of unification and North Korean policy. The conflicts over existing unification and North Korean policy have long been considered as conflicts of progressive individual/group vs. conservative individual/group. Measures for managing the conflicts have also focused on finding a middle ground between groups. However, new challenging factors on unification and North Korean policy have started to emerge, which are derived from the findings of this research: both conservative and progressive characteristics—pressure and engagement—simultaneously exist within individuals. Therefore, there need to be measures for resolving the conflicts, not between individuals, but within individual, regarding unification and North Korean policy.

The government's efforts to expand the social consensus on unification or to secure the support for unification and North Korean policy can be materialized not by promoting the policy or persuading the public of the necessity for unification, but through

the transition of perception on North Korea. The matching of four clusters of unification and North Korean policy with those of perception on North Korea indicates that the preference for such policy is shaped by the perception on North Korea. The perception of the majority of the public that supports the synchronous pursuit of engagement and pressure policy comes from their perception on North Korea: North Korea is an object both for confrontation as well as cooperation and support. At the end of the day, efforts are required to make a social consensus on what kinds of perception on North Korea are needed. So far, North Korea has been an object for conquer, competition, and absorption. As North Korea's nuclear and missile capabilities have advanced, changes in the perception on North Korea have occurred along with such advancement. Especially, following changes were discovered in this research: a feeling of disgust against North Korea has been on the rise among those in their 20s and 30s; and voices calling for the complete division from North Korea are also being raised. All of those signs indicate that the public views North Korea not as an object for unification, but as an object for co-existence. To that end, now is the time to contemplate whether there is a proper view on North Korea, and if not, in which direction the social consensus on the perception toward North Korea should go forward.



