

## German Reunification from the Perspective of Integration Theory: From Functionalism to Neofunctionalism

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Although there were active exchanges at various levels between West and East Germany during the Cold War, the signs of reunification of the two Germanys were not found before Mikhail Gorbachev took power in 1985. As the extent of exchanges between the two zones of Germany increased, East Germans were getting a more positive attitude towards West Germans so that, finally, East Germany was unified to West Germany without serious conflicts.

It is obvious that the direct cause of the reunification was the collapse of East German national system resulting from the escape of East Germans abroad. However, it would be almost impossible to explain German reunification without considering various exchanges between the two zones of Germany which continued for a long time including TV programs and distribution of West German newspapers in East Germany. Some parts of the services and the information from West Germany were provided without mutual agreements between the two divided countries, but they contributed considerably to the reunification. The roles of the services were instrumental for the reunification and could be explained by functionalism. The conditions of the reunification were ready when East Germany revealed structural problems in its political system and East Germans thought of the reunification in their mind. West Germany changed its attitudes toward the reunification from cooperating with East Germany without showing its intention of reunification to asking East Germany to make political

negotiations for the reunification open and active. The continuous political negotiations led to incremental decision making and brought about good relations between East and West Germany. As the result, the two Germanys could achieve the reunification without violent conflict. For the reunification, West German government did not stick to only reunification itself in the early stage because alleviation of tensions between East and West Germany was the first task. However, as the structural problems in East German political system began to emerge, West German government took the policies based on the neofunctionalism.

The core concept of neofunctionalism is that institutions should be crafted so that they lead to further integration through the process of the expansive logic of sector integration. Welfare and power cannot be separated, because the solution of economic and social problems cannot be divorced from political considerations. Therefore, it is necessary to focus on political negotiation and integration. Such a strategy pertained to the case of German reunification: functionalism generated a political dynamic that pushed integration further along. Closer economic ties required more political coordination in order to operate effectively and eventually led to political integration as well—a process called spillover.

Germany achieved its reunification on October 2, 1990. In reality, German reunification was a process in which West Germany integrated East Germany. The German and Vietnamese reunifications are similar in that one side unified the other, but the process of each reunification is quite different. The Communist Party of Vietnam led to the reunification based on its strategies including violence and revolutionary ways, regardless of what the Vietnamese people wanted. On the contrary, German reunification was achieved by the German people's wishes without control or manipulation by the German Communist Party or government. East Germans wanted their country to be integrated into West Germany and voted for the integration. Thus, German reunification was the East German voters' choice.<sup>1</sup>

Elections on March 18, 1990 were the first free elections in histo-

<sup>1</sup> Wolfgang Schauble(1991), *Der Vertrag: Wie ich über deutsche einheit verhandelte*. Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, p. 158.

ry of East Germany. In the elections, Alliance for Germany, which was a conservative coalition of the Christian Democratic Union, Democratic Awakening, and the German Social Union that supported early integration, gained 192 seats among 400 total seats. On the other hand, PDS (Party of Democratic Socialism) gained only 66 seats and SDP (Social Democratic Party), which had modest attitude toward reunification, obtained 88 seats. These electoral results indicated that East Germans supported integration into the West German political system. Furthermore, the Treaty on Monetary, Economic, and Social Union between the two German states implied the end of sovereignty of the GDR by handing over responsibility for financial policy to the Federal Republic. Volkskammer approved the Treaty with 294 in favor, 62 opposed, and 7 abstaining.

The East European and inter-German policy by Willy Brandt was one of the most important factors to realize German reunification. Brandt applied functionalism to the procedure of the reunification. In other words, while West Germany considered East Germany as a domestic but separate state, East German government wanted to be treated as a foreign state. For this reason, Brandt argued that as long as it seemed to be impossible to develop the negotiation for exchanges between the two Germanys, it was better to find the interests shared by the two Germanys beyond political issues like reunification.

At the end of 1966 a Grand Coalition headed by Kissinger and Brandt recognized East Germany as an equal partner in negotiations and declared the invalidity of the Munich agreement related with national borders. Brandt's foreign policy was based on functionalism and his policy had effects on subsequent negotiations with East Germany. Therefore, we may characterize this period as practicing functionalism.

### **The First Approach to German Reunification: Functionalistic Approach**

David Mitrany provided the basic idea and the paradigm of functionalism for scientific analyses. He regarded technical experts as the best agents for building collaborative ties bridging national

borders, because the states are overly protective of national interests at the expense of collective human interests. Rather than addressing the immediate sources of national insecurity, the functionalists' peaceful plan calls for transitional cooperation in technical areas as a first step.<sup>2</sup> The relationship between a community and members of the community is well described in the definition of a community, in which a community is the sum of the functions the members perform. Functions are the individual bricks to construct the community and indicators for individual members. Therefore, Mitrany proposed that political power and authority lacking active social functions are weak and futile. Governments and laws in functionalism are considered as the final stage coming out after completion of a community.<sup>3</sup>

Reconsidering his idea, Brandt's foreign policy did not have any illusion about German reunification. Rather, under the preposition that the goal was to contribute to relaxation of European relations and international security, he was involved actively in alleviation of international tension and began with the problems easily solvable. Thus Brandt, who had a secret idea that should maintain German national identification for the future reunification, could gain a good reputation and reduce opposition to German reunification from strong countries. His policy seemed to be an approach of functionalism because West Germany tried to increase the range of personal exchanges and economic trade with the principle of functionalism. Various exchanges helped people understand and believe each other. Brandt sought solutions of German problems not on the national level but the European political level. Thus, the solutions lay in an institutionalized and peaceful European order. West Germany had become a driving force in intra-German relations and relations with Eastern Europe in general.<sup>4</sup>

There are two important themes in integration theory on the basis of functionalism. First, when interdependency is built between societies maintaining interactions, they have common interests and then the societies realize that one is indispensable to the

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<sup>2</sup> Young-Rok Gu (1977), *Human and War*, Seoul: Bubmunsu.

<sup>3</sup> David Mitrany (1996), *A Working Peace System*, Chicago: Quadrangle Books.

<sup>4</sup> Yonhap News Agency (1990). "What do we learn from German reunification?" p.33

other. This indispensable relationship becomes the main factor to drive integration and cooperation in one area leads to cooperation in other areas, which is a part of dispersion theory. With these two preconditions, Brandt employed incrementalism as a realistic strategy for the reunification. Incrementalism proposed that cooperation at the nonpolitical and technical level leads to cooperative circumstances for political integration.<sup>5</sup> In this perspective, it was clear that economic trade between the two Germanys contributed to the success of German integration.

The Berlin Agreement of 1951 provided the base of trade and it was revised in August 1960. The total amount of the trade between East and West Germany in 1950 was 0.8 billion DM. After that time, the amount of the trade increased steadily and at last it increased dramatically in 1970 when the relationship between West and East Germany began to improve. The amount increased from 4.55 billion DM to 11.73 billion DM in 1980 and finally marked 16.74 billion DM in 1987. However, it reduced to 14.49 billion DM in 1987 because oil and raw material prices decreased and the quality of East German products lowered.

While West Germany took into account political interests through the trade, East Germany expected economic benefits. West German government anticipated the effect of economic trade to spill over to the political area, which was a functionalistic idea. In fact, ceaseless economic exchanges made political negotiations easier and contributed to the East German government, facing collapse, deciding not to use radical or violent ways and to accept integration into West Germany according to the electoral outcomes. For West Germany, the amount of trade with East Germany was less than 1.5% of West German total trade and East Germany ranked as the 15th biggest trading partner. For East Germany, however, the amount of trade with West Germany was 10% of its total trade and West Germany was the second most important trading country. Therefore, it was natural for East Germany to maintain a connection with West Germany even when their political relationship was not so good. It should be noted that West Germany considered exports as provision and import as purchases,

<sup>5</sup> Sang-Woo Rhee (1988), *Theory of International Relations*, Seoul: Pakyousa, pp.327-8.

which implied that West Germany would think trade with East Germany as a domestic exchange.<sup>6</sup> While East Germany, inferior to West Germany in terms of national strength, insisted on the two-state principle for its identification, West Germany, taking advantage of its power, considered trade with East Germany as domestic exchange to reduce hostility between them. Such a West German strategy was based on functionalism.

Functionalists suggested that political problems would be dissolved by the habits of cooperation learned by experts organized transnationally to cope with technical problems. Successful cooperation in nonpolitical areas would encourage attacking other problems collaboratively. If the process continues unabated, the bonds among nations will multiply, for no government would oppose the web of functional organizations that provide such clear-cut benefits to their citizens. Therefore, continuing cooperation in various areas makes nations interdependent on each other, and such a relationship is a starting point for political integration. Breaking down the artificialities of the zoning arrangements associated with the principle of sovereignty for more active functional cooperation creates new authority that is a primitive organization of integral political authority. The new authority requires social, economic, and technical cooperation among the nations for a long time. Professor Brierly explained such a process in terms of "attacking sovereignty by incremental permeation." Functionalists' argument can be displayed in Figure 1.<sup>7</sup> It shows structural relations between politics and the economy. The fact that ceaseless economic trade built trust between the two Germanys and then brought live political exchanges proves functionalism to be plausible.

For two years after November 17, 1970, East and West Germany had 272 meetings in total including two summit conferences, 70 cabinet meetings, and 200 director meetings. Finally on December 21, 1972, the two Germanys reached the basic agreement called the Treaty of Basic Relations, consisting of 10 articles.<sup>8</sup> The foregoing statement pointed out keeping peace, contribution of

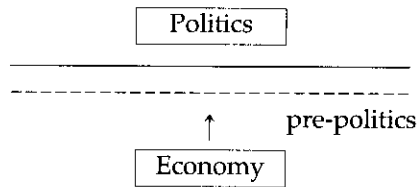
<sup>6</sup> Son-Sun Hong (1989, 12), "Resignation of Honecker and Open of Berlin Wall," *Diplomacy*, Vol 12.

<sup>7</sup> Yong-Rok Gu, *Ibid.* p. 329-30.

<sup>8</sup> Department of Unification (1990), *Reunification of Divided Nations*, p.23.

relaxation and security in Europe, recognition of current borders, and abstention from violence.

**<Figure 1> Relationship between Politics and Economy**



The Basic Treaty led to recognize East Germany as an equal partner in diplomatic negotiations and view it as a foreign state. Thus, the two Germanys succeeded in having institutional devices to discuss their future integration. The Basic Treaty got the two Germanys to reduce their mutual distrust resulting from disconnection and confrontation.

The Basic Treaty and subsequent mutual agreements improved the relationship between the two German states. As the result, they looked as if they had been an integrated country except in the political area. Diverse exchanges brought about an improved relationship, which proved the assumptions of functionalism valid. Functionalism is a part of social structural theory and focuses on integrational social theory. It is also a democratic theory in that policy integration results in organizational integration because the main goal of political organization is to provide its members with services. Functionalists also recognize incomparable power and desire of the self-existence of sovereignty system. Therefore, they restrain from attacking sovereignty in their practical strategies. The core concept of functional integration theory is to realize a regional community through nonpolitical integration and keep peace and total integration. Investigation of German reunification discloses the fact that German reunification resulted from revelation of the systemic problems in East Germany although the bloodless revolution by East German election and East Germans' escapes were the direct trigger. East Germans realized the problems of their political system through exchanges with West Germany and accepted the

destination of the reunification.

As shown above, West German government left political negotiations to the rear and devoted its efforts to develop relations in nonpolitical area related with reducing tension, improving international circumstances, and increasing economic trade. This West German strategy made East Germany dependent on West Germany in most areas. At last, dependence of one area spilled over other areas and resulted in changes in East Germany and unified the two Germanys. In conclusion, German reunification was made possible by the approach of functionalism. It should be noted that as the East German political system revealed systemic problems, early intra-German policy focusing on improving the relationship with East Germany beyond political area were changed to the policy obviously adopting neofunctionalism.

### **The Second Approach to German Reunification: Neofunctionalistic Approach**

Neofunctionalism is different from functionalism in two points. First, while functionalists try to avoid dealing with political intervention, neofunctionalists directly address the political factors. Second, neofunctionalism holds that political institutions and policies should be crafted so that they lead to further integration through the process of "the expansive logic of sector integration." It proposes that welfare and power cannot be separated, because the solution of economic and social problems cannot be divorced from political considerations.<sup>9</sup> Such an argument was applied to the case of German reunification.

As economic exchanges between East and West Germanys increased, their political meetings were held more frequently and more active. Especially, General Secretary Eric Honecker's West Germany visit on October 7, 1987 was the first visit of a East German General Secretary after 1949, so it was very meaningful in a historical perspective. His visiting contributed to the peaceful relationship between the two Germanys and increased various exchanges between them.

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<sup>9</sup> Sang-Woo Rhee, *Ibid.* p.331-2.



With the great escape and peaceful revolution on October 18, 1989 Honecker was ousted and replaced by Krenz. He promised to revamp the Politburo and announced an action program—all to no avail. It was clear that he could not jump over his own shadow. East Germans knew the limit of the reforms conducted by Social Unity Party (SED), so they demanded a grass-roots democratic revolution and more radical reforms. More than one million people participated in the demonstration in East Berlin on November 4, and East German government resigned on December 7, 21 days after Krenz took the office of General Secretary. Hans Modrow was elected the new president of the GDR Council of Ministers on 8 November. Finally on November 9, 1989, the new Communist leadership opened the country's borders to West Germany including the Berlin Wall. The next day the Communist Party announced new laws including a free election, freedom of movement, transition of economic policy, freedom of speech and the right of the people to assemble peacefully. Chancellor Helmut Kohl, on November 28, proposed a "Ten-Point Program" for German reunification, in which three steps for the reunification were composed of a treaty community, a national coalition, and reunification.<sup>10</sup> As political negotiations were held with continuity, the previous West German policy toward East Germany based on functionalism was changed to the policy to prepare national integration based on neo-functionalism.

The Communist Party of East Germany and opposition parties did not support Kohl's proposal in that reunification might revoke

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- <sup>10</sup> 1) The federal government will provide immediate aid where it is needed.  
 2) The federal government will continue its cooperation with the GDR in all areas  
 3) I have offered comprehensive aid and cooperation, should the GDR bindingly undertake to carry out a fundamental changes in the political and economic system.  
 4) We are prepared to adopt the idea of contractual community.  
 5) We are also prepared to develop confederative structures between the two states in Germany with a view to creating a federation.  
 6) The development of intra-German relations remains embedded in the pan-European process.  
 7) The attraction and aura of the European Community are and remain a constant feature of pan-European development.  
 8) The CSCE process is a central element of the pan-European architecture.  
 9) Overcoming the division of Europe and Germany presupposes far-reaching and rapid steps in the field of disarmament and arms control.  
 10) The German nation can recover its utility in free self-determination.

chauvinism as Hitler governed and that East Germany were likely to be integrated into West Germany. Furthermore they insisted that the Soviet role should have been considered. The demonstrations continued as hundreds of thousands took to the streets in Leipzig and other cities demanding German unification.

Responding to demands for revolution from grass-roots, the prime ministers of the two Germanys met on December 19, and reached the agreement of making a treaty community. On December 22, finally, the door to reunification was opened with the masses that streamed through the Brandenburg Gate after 28 years of being closed. Once the Berlin Wall had opened, there was a manifest mood-swing: it became unnecessary to use East German DM obligatorily and to apply for a visa when West Germans visited East Germany. Such abolition of the regulations contributed to accelerate the unification of the two parts of Germany.

On February 1, 1990, two days after Modrow visited the Soviet Union, he declared 4 stages for the reunification in which united Germany should have the international position of a neutral federal republic with Berlin as the new capital city. It was not different from Kohl's reunification plan except military problems. This neutralization plan was rejected by West Germany because it would make West Germany secede from NATO and be isolated from Europe. Then it was possible that West Germany's position would be declined. However, Chancellor Kohl visited Moscow and met General Secretary Gorbachev, who opposed German reunification. They agreed that it was the right of the German people to determine the future of their countries. For this agreement, Kohl offered 220 million DM to Gorbachev for importing food and grains. In addition, on February 13, the four wartime Allies and the two German states came to an agreement at a conference in Ottawa to proceed with negotiations on German reunification. This agreement was exceptional because unlike other agreements made by the Four Powers, East and West Germany were involved in the agreement and they could make international circumstances favorable to them. Thus, West Germany's foreign policy toward East Germany, which always considered the political intention of German reunification, led the two Germanys to establish an organi-

zation to discuss the reunification. This achievement was a good example of neofunctionalism.

East Germany proposed a money exchange rate 1 to 1 and West Germany accepted the proposal in spite of objections by some people. On May 2, West Germany decided to exchange East and West marks at a rate of 1: 1 for wage, salary, subsidies, rents, and pensions. For personal saving, it was supposed to exchange at a rate 1 to 1 up to 4,000 marks, but the total amount of money one could change was different according to ages; up to 2,000 marks under 14 years old; up to 4,000 marks between 15 and 59 years old; 6,000 marks over 60. It was viewed as a kind of ceremony for the reunification. At last, East and West Germany signed a Treaty on Monetary, Economic, and Social Union between the two German states on May 18, 1990, which implied East Germany was integrated into West Germany. The West German Parliament and the Bundesrat approved it on 21 June. The treaty was effective from July 1, 1990 and East mark disappeared on the earth. It was the first time to make a currency union between two countries without a war.

Political conferences were continued. A conference at Ottawa decided on Two-Plus-Four talks to deal with German position and international relations, in which agreement between East and West Germany was the most important objective and approval by four World War II powers was of the second importance. More detail contents of the political talks are as follows:

- 1) The 1st 2+4 talks was held in Bonn on 5 May 1990. Eduard Schevardnade, the foreign minister of the Soviet Union, suggested that the military problems after unified Germany could be discussed after solving the reunification itself. But Kohl argued that military issues should be discussed before the reunification and that the reunification should be achieved immediately. Although there was no agreement in the first talk, German reunification was an established fact.
- 2) The 2nd 2+4 was held in Paris on July 17, 1990. It dealt with Germany's membership in NATO.
- 3) The 3rd 2+4 was held in East Berlin on September 7, 1990. They dealt with the cost of withdrawing Soviet troops from

East Germany, but did not come to an agreement.

- 4) The 4th 2+4 was held in Moscow on September 12, 1990. Discussions between Kohl and Gorbachev by phone solved the problems concerning the cost of withdrawal when Kohl promised to give 12 billion marks. The Western Powers accepted the required prohibition of arrangement of nuclear weapons in East German territory and of NATO military drills. Finally, the two Germanys and Four Powers made a conclusion of the Two-Plus-Four talks in Moscow called the Treaty of Final Resolution of German Problems, which consisted of a preamble, German territory, military power, withdrawal of Soviet troop, the right of Allies.

## Conclusion

As shown above, the two Germanys functionally connected which reduced mutual hostility. Brandt's policy toward East Europe helped to relax tension and to foster cooperation between East and West Germany. Even though East Germany had a passive attitude toward unification policy and was more interested in systemic development and maintenance, it could not help responding to the continuous and hospitable West German policy. Exchanges between them were beneficial especially to East Germany. Under these conditions, the instability of East German political system due to ineffectiveness of reforms accelerated the reunification speed and West Germany fully utilized the conditions to create the mood for the reunification. When this process is reviewed, it is possible to state that the early policy of West Germany toward East German was based on functionalism and it moved to the direction of neofunctionalism. ■■■