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SECURITY RELATIONS BETWEEN THE DPRK AND SOUTH KOREA AFTER THE END OF THE COLD WAR: RECIPROCITY OR BULLYING?

Jan Blinka – Zdeněk Kříž*

ABSTRACT

The aim of this paper is to ask the question whether the relations between North Korea and South Korea follow the premises of stimulus-response theory and thus are driven by reciprocity, or whether bullying strategy suits better to explain the relations between two Korean states. The presented data shows that reciprocating strategy was prevailing pattern of relations between Seoul and Pyongyang since the end of 1980s till 2013, thus supporting the empirical relevance of the stimulus-response theory. The existence of reciprocity-based strategies in inter-Korean relations has been revealed, both in their confrontational and cooperational formulation, whilst higher reciprocity was found in cooperative relations. Noteworthy, North Korean cooperative actions were of a milder character than South Korean ones, whilst South Korea did not respond by such strong confrontational actions, as were sent to it from the North. The results of the research are not significant only for theoretical level, but also for the policy-recommendation. The implication for practical politics is that states intending to increase the level of cooperation with North Korea should adopt the reciprocating strategy in its cooperative form. This approach must be adopted in the long-term perspective, as North Korea is sensitive to incoming impulses and is ready to switch from cooperation to confrontation right away.

Key words: North Korea, South Korea, reciprocity, bullying, stimulus-response theory, tit-for-tat, Korean peninsula

Introduction

Long-range ballistic missile testing, confrontational rhetoric; then an offer to negotiate, signing an agreement for cooperation, but immediately after that

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nuclear bomb testing, declaration of war; then again bilateral and multilateral negotiations, followed by putting an end to the nuclear program. Consequently, re-deteriorated mutual relations and breaking off diplomatic relations. That is how one could describe North Korean behaviour towards the Republic of Korea, the United States and the international community as a whole from the end of the Cold War up until now – unceasing alterations of cooperative and confrontational actions. How should other actors respond to that? How should they approach North Korea? Should they respond confrontationally or should they “turn to them also the other cheek” and respond cooperatively? Similar questions must be asked by the majority of politicians entering relations with Pyongyang. Americans, South Koreans, Russians, the Japanese and others surely ask themselves whether they should approach the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK) from the position of force or whether they should make positive offers to it. While the first can lead to increased tensions and a critical situation, the latter can be seen as a sign of weakness and hence it can be exploited.

The aim of this paper is to answer the research question whether the relations between North Korea and its southern neighbour, Republic of Korea, follow the premises of stimulus-response theory and thus are driven by action-reaction pattern. The stimulus-response theory on the basis of which the research questions will be formulated claims that actors behave according to the “how you treat me, I will treat you back” pattern or, in other words, confrontational behaviour is responded by confrontation and cooperative behaviour by cooperation. This reciprocity-based presumption is opposed by bullying, according to which actors tend to exploit positive behaviour and, on the contrary, respond cooperatively to harsh and resolute behaviour. Therefore, the aim of this text is to answer the seemingly trivial question which strategy these inter-Korean relations pursue – are they driven by reciprocity or by bullying? Since the first strategy supports stimulus-response theory, the second strategy opposes it.

The Inter-Korean relations are studied in the period since the end of the 1980s up until year 2013. The fact that this paper is restricted to the period after the end of the Cold War stems from the belief that the change in the distribution of power in the international system and changes of the security situation in the region made rather different conditions from those during the Cold War, which affected also relations between the DPRK and the Republic of Korea and thus there is a point in selecting this time period of the research.

Briefly, throughout the years 1987-92, a number of changes occurred in the world resulting in the collapse of the Cold-War system of two superpowers and clearly delineated alliances. This trend affected also the Korean Peninsula and changed the local relations so much that it had a great impact on the actors' behaviour towards each other. Hostility simmered down, new diplomatic contacts were established and long-term alliances were disrupted. The relations between all actors involved, North and South Korea, the United States, China, the Soviet Union/Russia as well as Japan, were re-defined. Due to the reform-oriented politicians in South Korea (President **Roh Tae-woo**), the Soviet Union (**Mikhail Gorbachev**) and in China (**Deng Xiaoping**), the cooperative relations between former belligerent actors were established (Seong-ji Woo, 2001, p. 107), resulting in the loss of one of North Korea's closest allies. As **Woo** pointed out (Seong-ji Woo, 2001, p. 107 and 130-137), the relations between the DPRK and the Soviet Union had rapidly worsened due to USSR-South Korea normalisation. However, there was no such development in the second case - the approach of Pyongyang towards Beijing remained more or less intact. The diversity of responses can be explained by the economic and political dependence of the DPRK on its Chinese neighbour, which further remained the North Korean supplier of oil, mineral resources and food. It can be claimed that after the loss of the Soviet Union, North Korea was forced to keep China as the only remaining ally and hence it was not as critical to China as to the USSR. Furthermore, North Korea could not afford to fall out of the favour of Beijing, which provided it with security guarantees and economic aid. Those changes, resulting in new geopolitical environment in which North Korea had to find its place, let the authors of this paper focus on the post-Cold War period.

1 Stimulus-response theory and its application on the relations of North and South Korea

The stimulus-response theory from its nature focuses on empirical and observable relations between the actors. In international relations it means to examine declarations, policies and behaviour sent by one actor towards another without paying attention to anything which cannot be observed. This theory sees actors, or states in the case of international relations, as black boxes. We, as observers of their international behaviour, cannot see what happens inside of them, so there is no point in trying to distinguish any internal processes or other sources of particular behaviour. The only behaviour's

source, which is relevant to stimulus-response theory, is the impulse sent by another state. This way of thinking is completely in line with behaviourism, which also focuses only on observable processes. One may find it as causal simplification, however, if we, authors and thinkers about international relations, want to study the application of stimulus-response theory, we have to adopt this way of thinking.

The core of the theory in question lies in reciprocal behaviour of individual actors. Actors, or states in international relations, behave with regard to stimuli coming to them from the outside according to the tit-for-tat premise. Thus they respond cooperatively to cooperative behaviour and vice versa, confrontationally to confrontation. The stimulus-response theory examines actions between states in dyadic, i.e. bilateral relations, when one actor responds to the stimuli sent by another actor. So, one action is not only the reaction to previous stimuli, but is also stimuli for next opponent's reaction.

Robert O. Keohane defines reciprocity as “exchanges of roughly equivalent values in which the actions of each party are contingent on the prior actions of the others in such a way that good is returned for good, and bad for bad” (Keohane, 1986, p. 6-8). The reciprocating strategy offers a partial solution how to avoid being involved in an escalatory spiral, since it enables opponents to proceed into the cooperation phase without losing face.¹ Nevertheless, it does not mean that there is no danger of conflict escalation in this case – as was implied above, actors respond reciprocally both to cooperative and confrontational stimuli coming to them from the outside. Therefore, it is up to their opponent whether it will escalate or deescalate tension in mutual relations. The actor following reciprocating logic should start the “game” by a positive offer for cooperation and consequently adopting its behaviour to opponent's stimuli. This type of game is referred to by Axelrod the *tit-for-tat-strategy*. However, according to **Leng**, as a matter of fact, interstate cooperation does not start with a cooperative offer, but, on the contrary, by demonstrating determination and a firm attitude combined with an offer for appeasement. This procedure is called the *carrot-and stick method* and as opposed to pure reciprocity, it sees a certain degree of a tough attitude as a necessity. The state must prove that it is

¹ The reciprocating strategy serves as a basis for the GRIT concept (*Graduated Reciprocation in Tension-reduction*) by Charles E. Osgood, who aimed to decrease the Cold War tension between superpowers by steps for building trust and reducing arms race (Leng, Wheeler, 1979, pp. 660-661).

determined to defend its vital interests if necessary by force, yet that it is ready to negotiate with its opponent and increase the degree of cooperation (Leng, 2004, p. 59).

The bullying strategy is based on the neorealist view describing the international system as an anarchic environment where one plays a zero-sum game and states must always expect a possibility of war as **Aron** states (Aron, 1968, p. 658). Positive offers for cooperation and concessions are understood in this logic as a sign of weakness and punished by their exploitation and tougher actions on the part of the opponent. The best way how to make them cooperate is by force, decisiveness and harshness. Hence states acting according to the bullying strategy will respond to all the opponent's actions that do not reach the anticipated level of cooperation or meet all requirements by hardening actions and threats or punishments (Leng, Wheeler, 1979, p. 658). A problem will occur in case they are implemented against each other by bullied actors having the same level of determination to fulfil their threats. Both will assume an uncompromising negotiating attitude, which will get tougher and tougher in response to the opponent's lack of cooperation. Neither of the parties will be willing to make concessions, as it would lose face and appear to be weaker. However, that will lead to the escalation of tensions that will tend to escalate into an open military conflict, if either party does not change its strategy (Leng, 1984). By behaving in this way, states will proceed from bullying to reciprocating escalation, as both respond to opponent's non-cooperation by increasing the tension.

Those two strategies, bullying and reciprocity, will be examined upon the empirical data, e.g. mutual exchanges of behaviour between North and South Korea in given period. Since the authors of this text accept the neorealist presumption about the hierarchy of dimensions in international politics and the superiority of the security dimension over others, it is mainly security, diplomatic-political and economic relations that will be examined. Even if this presumption about the hierarchy of the agenda in international relations was not right in general, it is definitely valid for the relations between North and South Korea – those states are still technically in the state of war, so any kind of economic and/or social cooperation are predominantly shaped by developments in the security area.

2 Methods of data collection and evaluation

As the aim of this paper is to analyse whether the dyadic relations between the DPRK and South Korea are led by reciprocity or bullying, it is apt to outline the procedure. **Goldstein** and **Freeman** argue that reciprocity can be observed in military expenses or events. In the first case scholars examine whether the military costs of a particular country drop or rise depending on the growth or decline of its opponent's expenses. Hence they concentrate on the changes of budgets and purchases of individual army branches and observe their development over time. This way of studying reciprocity cannot be applied in stimulus-response theory analysis, because it opposes the presumption of the actors as "black boxes". The latter option, which is more widespread among researchers, is to examine reciprocity on a series of events. The scientist chooses a particular period in which he or she studies individual actions of a dyad of states towards each other and tries to find there reciprocating or bullying (Goldstein, Freeman, 1991, p. 18-19). This is also the approach adopted by the authors of this paper. When forming the empirical basis for this study, data were obtained from the study of primary and secondary sources dealing with the depiction of relations between North Korea and South Korea from the end of the Cold War until the March 2013. The research itself was undertaken in the second half of year 2013, including the most recent data possible at that time. The main data sources chosen were individual states' policies, declarations of their representatives, official documents and studies, newspaper articles, news agencies articles, press releases, historical-analytical works and studies focused on particular topics, such as Six-Party Talks, economic cooperation or armed border conflicts. Altogether, almost fifty different sources mentioned in the Bibliography were used for data collection. To obtain these empirical data, no specific time pattern (month, week or day) was selected, as it is in the afore-mentioned works; events were chosen according to their importance on the grounds of how often and to what extent they are mentioned in the particular primary and secondary sources and also on the bases of neorealist hierarchy of dimensions – greater value was given to security, political and economic data than cultural and social events.

After the data are gathered, the next step is coding the data and putting the individual events on a scale according to which it will be possible to determine the level of confrontation or cooperation in the individual events. It is solely up to the researcher how wide and detailed the scale will be – e.g. **Goldstein**

(Goldstein, 1991, p. 200) compares the COPDAB scale ranging from +92 to -102 with the WEIS scale (from +6 to -6), to which he assigns particular confrontational-cooperative categories,² and distributes into them individual actions and counteractions. Thanks to the assigned numerical value, these selected data can be placed in a graph or table that will graphically illustrate the development of confrontation and cooperation for the given dyad in the period under examination. It must be pointed out that both actions and counteractions are presented in a single graph.

Based on the combination of **Cashmen's** (Cashmen, 2000) and **Goldstein's** scale together with the examined empirical data, a more detailed scale was formed better illustrating the categories of events that occur between the examined actors. Events are ordered in it from the most cooperative ("voluntary unification of countries") to the most conflicting ("use of nuclear weapons") and that with an emphasis gradually placed on security, political-diplomatic and economic relations. The order of individual events in the direction from point 0 to marginal values expresses the growth of escalation or de-escalation evoked by these steps. A lower value is assigned to verbal actions, while political or economic actions are connected to a higher point value. Most points are assigned to military actions, as according to the neorealist perspective of international relations, they affect confrontation and cooperation the most, since they are superior to others agendas. Such ordered behaviour categories were consequently assigned a point scale, the range of which is purely arbitrary. The result is a scale ranging from +80 to -80 points with thirty-four categories of events. Consequently, the events were placed on the scale and assigned a numerical value on the basis of which a cooperation-confrontation graph for the analysed relations was drawn.

Goldstein analyses several problems that can occur in this type of research (Goldstein, 1991, pp. 197-198). The most important of them are problems with data: they can be unreliable, they can be selected, coded and assigned to the individual categories subjectively, or they can be loaded due to their nature by subjectivity and prejudice. Therefore, the researcher must triangulate the data meticulously and obtain them from a wide range of primary and secondary

² For example, the categories on the COPDAB scale from the most cooperative to most conflicting are signing treaties, economic and military cooperation, reciprocal political and economic visits, cultural delegation exchange, neutral relations, verbal assaults, economic or diplomatic sanctions, mobilisation of military forces and war.

sources. Data for this paper were gathered from different sources, thus triangulation should prove them reliable. Readers can see the list of events with assigned point scale in the Appendix.

Table 1: Data coding categories

Points	Categories of events
80	voluntary unification of countries
70	establishing strategic alliances
60	high-level meetings
50	signing agreements and treaties
45	giving economic and food assistance, establishing economic cooperation
40	nuclear program termination
38	allowing inspections, military means withdrawal, propaganda restriction
35	lifting economic sanctions
33	visits of ministers, special ambassadors
30	dialogues, negotiations
25	cultural, economic and sports visits
23	cancelling pulling out of the NPT
20	policy declarations (official verbal support of policy)
10	verbal declarations of intentions (mild verbal support)
5	apologising, hotline restoration, industrial complex re-opening, termination of mil. exercises
0	neutral or minor events
-10	verbal disagreement with opponent's steps
-15	policy aimed against the opponent
-20	termination of negotiations, cancelling dialogues
-23	interrupting all contacts at the highest level
-25	expelling international inspectors
-27	restoration of military exercise
-30	military exercise and transfer of military vehicles, demonstration of power
-35	passing resolutions and sanctions
-38	cutting off economic and food assistance
-40	launching/restarting the nuclear program
-43	breaking treaties and cease-fires
-45	military steps of an unarmed character
-50	restricted armed conflicts
-53	missile testing
-55	nuclear testing
-60	armed conflicts of a greater extent
-70	open war
-80	use of nuclear weapons

3 Data analysis and discussion

From the whole range of mutual relations conducted between North and South Korea in the examined period, first there were selected the so-called *breaking points* (see Table 2) in which a change of cooperation or confrontation was a priori assumed, on the basis of their character (they fall within events connected to security issues), and on the basis of attention they were paid in the media or academic publications. The relations between individual actors were reduced to those that are crucial from the neorealist point of view. Therefore we can hierarchize events based on the following sequence, from those able to affect cooperation/confrontation most to those who have the least potential to do so: 1) security, 2) political/diplomatic, 3) economic, 4) human-rights and 5) cultural, sport and social events.

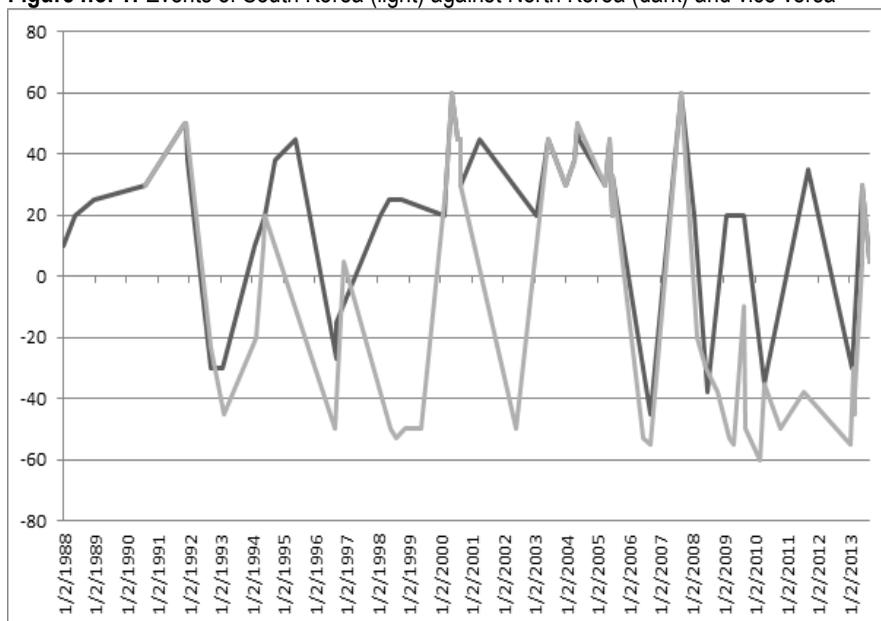
Due to this effect and also to the limited extent of this work, we intentionally selected the representatives of the first three categories. It does not mean, however, that there have not been any other contacts between DPRK and Republic of Korea, except those used in presented analysis. There have been plenty of minor exchanges – cooperative, as well as confrontational – which were not included due to their limited effect on overall cooperation/confrontation pattern. However, as the authors believe, inclusion of those minor exchanges would not change the results of this analysis. Without them the pattern of the change of cooperation and confrontation between North and South Korea in the course of the examined period is much more visible.

Table 2: Breaking points

Year	Breaking points
1990	launching high-level North-South negotiations
1991	Joint Declaration on Denuclearisation
1993	the DPRK's plan to pull out of the NPT, threat of US intervention
1994	Agreed Framework
2000	first North-South summit
2002	end of Agreed Framework
2003	the DPRK pulled out of the NPT, launching Six-Party Talks
2006	first North Korean nuclear testing
2007	second North-South summit, end of SPT
2009	second North Korean nuclear testing
2010	sinking the ship Cheonan
2013	third North Korean nuclear testing

Furthermore, for the relations between the Korean states, eighty-five events were identified directed from Pyongyang to Seoul and vice versa (see Appendix 1), which were placed on the cooperative-confrontational scale with thirty-four categories. The result is presented in Figure no. 1, in which the North Korean events towards Seoul are marked in dark and South Korean events towards the DPRK in light.

Figure no. 1: Events of South Korea (light) against North Korea (dark) and vice versa



Source: authors.

In some points the curves entirely overlap proving that the mutual relations of the given states were absolutely reciprocal at that time. However, in other points the curves differ. Around 1990 there was a growth in cooperation between Pyongyang and Seoul, which was caused by the policy of the South Korean President **Roh**, who wanted to change the approach not only towards North Korea, but also towards the former enemies Russia and China. Hence cooperation was started by South Korea and Pyongyang responded reciprocally to it. This cooperation stage reached its climax at the turn of 1991 and 1992 when the Korean states signed the so-called *Basic Agreement* and *Joint*

Declaration for Denuclearization, by which they expressed their interest to further improve their relations as well as contribute to the non-nuclear Korean peninsula. The deterioration of inter-Korean relations occurred with the announcement of Washington and Seoul to resume the Team Spirit military exercise for 1993. Pyongyang responded to this confrontational event by restricting bilateral contacts and declared a semi-war state at the time the manoeuvres were being carried out.

The second stage of cooperation started after the so-called *first North Korean nuclear crisis* in 1994 when the United States was considering a pre-emptive attack on North Korean nuclear facilities. DPRK's relations with both Washington and Seoul had improved after the visit of the former President **Jimmy Carter** in Pyongyang in June 1994. Even though the arranged summit of the heads of the Korean states did not take place due to **Kim Il-sung's** death, Seoul further continued in the unilateral cooperation – it suspended the Team Spirit exercise and sent food assistance to the North, whose behaviour did not reach as cooperative values as the South Korean ones. Several deviations of Korean relations towards confrontation were represented by armed incidents of a smaller extent provoked by Pyongyang, which took place in 1996, 1998 and 1999. Only the 1996 incident was responded by South Korea partially reciprocally – it passed a resolution aimed against the DPRK, which apologised for the incident at last. Seoul did not respond to other armed disputes in the same manner, which can be partially attributed to the *Sunshine Policy* of President **Kim Dae-jung**, who tried to improve mutual relations by an appeasement approach and dividing politics from economy – hence the mutual projects of both Korean states could be launched in the Kumgang tourist resort and the Kaesong industrial complex. Therefore, Seoul's cooperative events were of a greater extent than and Pyongyang only “counterbalanced” them and did not come up with its own initiatives, sometimes it even used cooperative incentives from Republic of Korea and respond in confrontational manner. This stage had led to the first summit of the heads of states, which is one of the turning points of the inter-Korean cooperation in the post-Cold-War era. If we omit the second battle of Yeonpyeong from June 2002, the cooperative period lasted from President Kim's Berlin speech in 2000 up to missile and nuclear testing in 2006. President **Roh** directly followed the *Sunshine Policy* of his predecessor with the *Peace and Prosperity Policy* and aimed at developing inter-Korean relations. Despite the stagnation that occurred in North Korean-American relations after President **Bush's** inauguration, the relations between

Pyongyang and Seoul kept its cooperative character – among others, both states signed a maritime treaty and agreed to restrict its propagandist actions. In 2006, the reciprocal pattern changed from cooperative to confrontational one. South Korea did respond to the DPRK's 2006 nuclear and missile testing by declaring combat readiness and restricting the aid sent; however, in the medium-term horizon nothing had changed about President **Roh's** policy, he even met the North Korean leader **Kim Jong-il** in the following year. A change towards confrontation did not take place until President **Lee** took power in February 2008. With his policy based on conditionality to which North Korea responded by interrupting all bilateral contacts with the South, a confrontational period started lasting up until the end of examined period. The most noteworthy events at this stage of inter-Korean relations were missile tests (2009, 2012 and 2013), nuclear tests (2009 and 2013), sinking the Cheonan ship, and the so-called *Korean Crisis* from 2013. Even though Seoul proposed plans for intensifying cooperation, Pyongyang did not respond favourably to them. If there had been any deviation towards cooperation in the relations, it was more likely returning to the pre-crisis level than an actual improvement.

Figure no. 1 shows that in the period under examination South Korea started the relations by a cooperative offer, by doing which it had started the "game" exactly according to the **Axelrod's tit-for-tat strategy** – as opposed to **Leng's carrot-and-stick method**, this method requires starting relations by a positive offer for cooperation. North Korea responded in a similar way and a period of cooperation started in which the DPRK counterbalanced its opponent's actions but did not increase cooperation itself. However, that ended with resuming military exercises of Seoul and Washington, which was responded by Pyongyang by escalating tensions – i.e. relations had gone from de-escalation led by Seoul to escalation started by USA and South Korea and further supported by Pyongyang's actions. This pattern of behaviour between Korean states had recurred during the examined period a few more times – cooperative impulses came from South Korea whilst confrontational impulses arose in North Korea. Moreover, the other state's reactions were, to a great degree, much milder than the impulses to which it had responded. For example, South Korea responded to the 1996 incident with a North Korean submarine "only" by passing a resolution, not by an action with the same value of confrontation, which would be a military intervention of a limited extent.

The South Korean behaviour can be divided into three stages – the first from 1988 to 1998 is characteristic of alternating confrontation and cooperation,

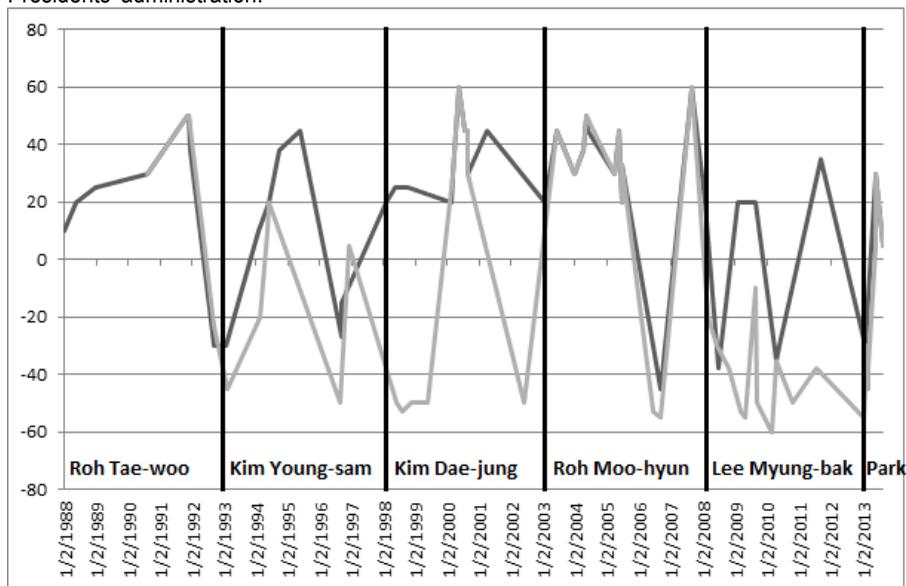
which corresponds more or less with North Korean actions in this period (even though North Korean cooperative actions were milder and its confrontational actions were, on the other hand, stronger); the second from 1998 to 2006 is typical of a great degree of South Korean cooperation, even despite North Korean confrontational actions (Seoul did not use confrontation behaviour, despite some Pyongyang's hostile actions); the third period from 2006-13 again goes back to the pattern from the first stage with the alternation of cooperation and confrontation, more or less corresponding to North Korean actions.

Hence over the years South Korea had tried both the reciprocal and reconciliatory approach towards the DPRK. Even though there was a period of reciprocal cooperation within the second stage, North Korea did not cease its hostile actions, and thus we cannot say that a moderate and cooperation-oriented approach of the South could have forced the North to an absolute reciprocity. Taking a look at the North Korean behaviour during the entire period under examination, Pyongyang appears to have alternated between cooperation and confrontation with great regularity. Moreover, it was not made to leave this pattern by Seoul's appeasement policy, which could be interpreted as a failure of the reciprocity theory and confirmation of the bullying theory. However, reciprocity as stated by **Leng** and **Wheeler**, is not appeasement, under which the actor responds to its opponent's non-cooperative behaviour by other positive offer – and this happened under South Korean President **Kim Dae-jung**, who separated political and economic dimensions in the relations with its northern neighbour. The reciprocity has to be based on presumption that stimuli will form directly the reaction, and this was not the case during **Kim Dae-jung**.

Even though one can trace the occurrence of North Korean confrontational actions throughout the entire post-Cold-War period, the second stage of inter-Korean relations was the most cooperative one. On the contrary, the third phase of inter-Korean relations was marked with most confrontational acts by Pyongyang. This phenomenon can be attributed to reciprocity – North Korea responded to stimuli sent by Seoul, which in the second stage pursued the reconciliatory *Sunshine Policy* and *Peace and Prosperity Policy*, which were replaced by President Lee's more confrontational policy in the third stage. These changes prove the importance of South Korean policy towards its neighbour influencing these countries' overall relations. It is evident from Figure 2 that the period of greatest cooperation corresponds with the governments of President **Kim Dae-jung** and **Roh Moo-hyun**. Even though in this period North

Korea did not cease to carry out its confrontational actions either, the amount of cooperation was higher at that time than ever before or after. From this perspective, both presidents' policies can be regarded as successful. How we can explain that not all actions in second period followed pattern according to stimulus-response theory? It was due to South Korean approach which was closer to appeasement than to reciprocity. However, the **Lee Myung-bak** administration did not continue with it, since it regarded them as unilateral concessions towards Pyongyang; therefore, President **Lee** stiffened his declarations towards the North, to which North Koreans responded by increasing confrontation. As is evident from Figure no. 2, during the entire period of **Lee Myung-bak's** administration, Pyongyang acted in a very hostile way, on which Seoul responded mildly.

Figure no. 2: South Korean actions (light) against the DPRK (dark) with South Korean Presidents' administration.



Source: authors.

When focusing on different North Korean leaders, neither of them can be attributed with either period of prevailing cooperation or confrontation. Pyongyang's behaviour towards its Southern neighbour did not change significantly during period under scrutiny as all three Kims (**Kim Il-sung**, **Kim**

Jong-il and **Kim Jong-un**) undertook both cooperative and confrontational actions.

However, it can be argued that although the South Korean policy towards its neighbour cannot change the nature of inter-Korean relations in a significant way, as it was attempted by **Kim Dae-jung** and his successor **Roh Moo-hyun**, it can at least partially affect the level of confrontation and cooperation. Although there is no absolute reciprocity in the examined period, one can claim that the relations between Seoul and Pyongyang show a high degree of reciprocity, both in cooperative and confrontational behaviour. It is only the extent of the answer to the individual actions that is different – as was already mentioned; North Korean cooperative actions are of a milder character than South Korean ones, whilst South Korea does not respond by such strong confrontational actions, as are sent to it from the North. A higher degree of reciprocity is exhibited in cooperative behaviour, as the events of Seoul and Pyongyang reached the same point values, while in confrontation the North Korean acting was more confrontational. If Pyongyang did not follow the same level of reciprocity in cooperative way, Seoul did not follow the same level of reciprocity in confrontational way.

On the other hand, also the second pattern of behaviour is present in mutual relations, i.e. bullying, even though its occurrence is restricted only to individual cases or situations; hence it cannot be referred to as the prevailing pattern of behaviour. For example, it occurs in 1998-99, when despite the declared South Korean *Sunshine Policy*, North Korea carried out a series of confrontational actions – the submarine incident, missile testing, naval battle of Yeosu and the first battle of Yeonpyeong. Bullying can be found also in the North Korean provocation of the second battle of the Yeonpyeong Island in 2002, or in the 2011 events when Pyongyang at first expropriated the Kumgang tourist resort and in spite of that the South lifted economic sanctions passed a year before that. When seeing those deviations, one can say that stimulus-response theory did not find supportive evidence through the whole examined period. There were events, on which reactions did not copy their nature – the DPRK's confrontational behaviour was not followed by same response from Republic of Korea. For the explanations of those deviations we should go inside the states, which is out of the scope of stimulus-response theory. It sees states as black boxes, whose internal processes are not important for analysis, because their behaviour is driven only by stimuli coming to them. Here we came across the most controversial premise of stimulus-response theory: its non-interest in other

possible causes of states' external behaviour. Let's discuss the nature of those deviations. In the period of **Kim Dae-jung** conciliatory politics, several confrontational events by North Korea occurred, so they can be labelled as bullying. What should happen after them in pure reciprocity would be the confrontational response from Seoul – and it did not come due to Sunshine Policy. So it was due to South Korean decision that stimulus-response theory did not work. The same can be said about 2002 armed naval skirmishes, which must be seen within the framework of trilateral relations, as Pyongyang used them to respond to confrontational declarations of President **Bush**. Similarly, the reasons for lifting South Korean sanctions in 2011, by which Seoul actually “bullied” itself, can be found on the home ground – President **Lee** could have responded to the expropriation in a similar way, yet in spite of that he decided to lift economic sanctions. Hence also manifestations of bullying can be found in inter-Korean relations, which partially proves the existence of this strategy in inter-Korean relations.

What was mentioned above leads to several conclusions: 1. the actors behave towards each other mostly reciprocally; 2. neither of the actors uses the bullying strategy to a greater extent; 3. North Korea cooperative actions were in milder extent than South Korea's, which, on the contrary respond mildly to confrontational stimuli.

Conclusion

The data listed above support the empirical relevance of the stimulus-response theory. During the examined period, e.g. since the end of the Cold War till year 2013, the reciprocity was prevailing pattern of relations between Seoul and Pyongyang. In general, both actors mostly responded in the same manner to incoming stimuli and the relations between Seoul and Pyongyang show a high degree of reciprocity, both in cooperative and confrontational behaviour. It is only the extent of the answer to the individual actions that is different – North Korean cooperative actions are of a milder character than South Korean ones, whilst South Korea does not respond by such strong confrontational actions, as are sent to it from the North.

In several instances, however, the reciprocal pattern was not followed. Specifically, North Korea came several times with confrontational actions which were not responded by the reaction of the same nature. It can be attributed to South Korean internal decision, which in those moments followed more

appeasement than reciprocity approach. This is, however, outside the scope of stimulus-response theory. It focuses only on observable international behaviour of actors, whose reactions are shaped only by stimuli sent to them by other actors. This is the limitation of stimulus-response theory, which should be overcome, if the scholars want to still use it and increase the explanation of their observations.

Even though the reciprocity was not pure in the examined period, it was prevailing pattern of interaction; neither of the actors used bullying to the significant extent. Notwithstanding North Korea's confrontational actions in 1998-1999 and 2002, the most cooperative, or the least confrontational period was since 2000 till 2006, e.g. the period of *Sunshine Policy* and *Peace and Prosperity Policy*. On the other hand, the most confrontational period copy the administration of President Lee. Thus, it can be concluded that stimuli sent to DPRK by South Korea influenced overall level of confrontation/cooperation in given period.

Based on those findings, if the state intends to increase cooperation, it should send cooperative offers and eschew actions that would be regarded by its opponent as confrontation. It is essential that this algorithm is true also for the Korean peninsula, which has a crucial practical impact. It would mean for the relations in the regional complex of the Korean peninsula that South Korea and the United States should avoid all actions that could be viewed by Pyongyang as confrontational – for instance, it would concern cancelling large military exercises that have led to the escalation of confrontation several times (e.g. in 1992 and 2013). Washington and Seoul should eschew strong declarations and policies aimed against the DPRK – tensions were escalated also due to the declarations of President **Bush** and **Lee**, whose policies differed from their predecessors by increased toughness. However, why should it be South Korea (and the USA) that should come up with these steps? The data analysis has shown that North Korea responds reciprocally to positive offers of other actors, yet it never comes up with their own. The DPRK initiates only confrontational actions to which Washington and Seoul should respond only by restricted actions, as it is possible to anticipate that a stronger response would evoke a much stronger counter-reaction and that would lead the actors into an escalatory spiral. In the end it might be pointed out, that the influence of the United States on Korean Peninsula, as well as the US-DPRK relations will be studied thoroughly in following research.

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Appendix 1. List of events of the DPRK-South Korea in 1990-2013 and their coding

1.2.1988	North, President Roh's policy	10
7.6.1988	Special Presidential Declaration	20
13.1.1989	founder of Hyundai visits the DPRK	25
4.9.1990	first round of inter-Korean talks	30
8.11.1991	South Korean denuclearisation initiative	20
13.12.1991	DPRK and SK signed the Basic Agreement	50
18.12.1991	South Korean territory is nuclear-free	20
26.12.1991	DPRK proposes the denuclearisation of the peninsula	10
31.12.1991	DPRK and SK signed the Joint Declaration for Denuclearization	50
7.1.1992	DPRK suspended the Team Spirit for that year	38
1.10.1992	SK and USA announced resumption of the Team Spirit for the following year	-30
1.10.1992	DPRK suspended all high-level talks with SK	-23
1.3.1993	SK and USA hold the Team Spirit exercise	-30
8.3.1993	DPRK declares a semi-state of war	-45
25.2.1994	President Kim expresses his intention to meet Kim Il-sung	10
19.3.1994	DPRK cancels bilateral talks with SK	-20

17.6.1994	Kim Il-sung expresses willingness to meet Kim Young-sam	10
28.6.1994	DPRK and SK agreed on holding the heads-of-state summit	20
21.10.1994	SK and USA agreed on cancelling the Team Spirit '95	38
21.6.1995	SK sends food assistance to DPRK	45
15.9.1996	North Korean Gangneung submarine incident	-50
1.10.1996	SK resumes Team Spirit '97	-27
12.10.1996	South Korean Parliament passed a resolution against DPRK	-15
29.12.1996	DPRK apologised for the incident	5
25.2.1998	South Korean President announces Sunshine Policy	20
18.6.1998	founder of Hyundai offers econ. cooperation to the DPRK	25
22.6.1998	North Korean Sokcho submarine incident	-50
31.8.1998	DPRK testing missiles	-53
18.11.1998	first South Korean tourists in DPRK	25
17.12.1998	naval battle of Yeosu	-50
15.6.1999	first battle of Yeonpyeong	-50
10.3.2000	President Kim's Berlin speech	20
10.4.2000	SK and DPRK announced the first inter-Korean summit	30
13.6.2000	first inter-Korean summit, signing of Joint Declaration	60
15.8.2000	first reunion of divided families	25
23.8.2000	DPRK and Hyundai agreed on opening the Kaesong complex	45
12.9.2000	DPRK and SK announce Kim Jong-il's visit to SK	30
18.9.2000	launching the construction of railways connecting DPRK and SK	45
25.9.2000	talks of ministers of defence and economic working group	30
26.4.2001	SK sends food assistance to DPRK	45
29.6.2002	second battle of Yeonpyengdo	-50
25.2.2003	President Roh announces Peace and Prosperity Policy	20
30.6.2003	launching the construction of the Kaesong complex	45
1.2.2004	DPRK and SK bilateral ministerial talks	30
1.5.2004	DPRK and SK agreed on restricting propaganda	38
5.6.2004	DPRK and SK signed Inter-Korean Maritime Agreement	50
23.6.2004	SK supplies the North with 200,000 tons of fertilizer	45
1.5.2005	resuming inter-Korean talks	30

19.6.2005	SK supplies the North with food assistance	45
12.7.2005	SK promises DPRK to supply energy for denuclearization	20
17.7.2005	meeting of Kim Jong-il and South Korean Minister of Unification	33
4.7.2006	DPRK testing missiles	-53
9.10.2006	DPRK carries out nuclear testing	-55
9.10.2006	SK suspends assistance and declares combat readiness	-45
30.7.2007	SK provides the North with food assistance	45
2.10.2007	second inter-Korean summit	60
25.2.2008	President Lee mentioned the Vision 3000 policy	20
29.3.2008	DPRK suspended all high-level talks with SK	-20
11.7.2008	South Korean tourist shot at Kumgang	-30
1.8.2008	Hyundai suspends tourist stays	-38
1.12.2008	DPRK closed access to the Kumgang resort and restricted traffic to SK	-38
1.3.2009	SK suggests talks without any prerequisites	20
5.4.2009	DPRK testing missiles	-53
25.5.2009	DPRK conducts nuclear test	-55
21.9.2009	President Lee proposes the Grand Bargain Plan	20
30.9.2009	DPRK rejects the Grand Bargain Plan	-10
10.10.2009	armed clash of South- and North Korean ships along the NLL	-50
26.3.2010	Cheonan sinking	-60
24.5.2010	South Korean sanctions against DPRK	-35
25.5.2010	North Korean sanctions against SK	-35
1.7.2010	USA and SK conduct greatest mil. exercise in years	-30
23.11.2010	DPRK bombards Yeonpyeong Island	-50
22.8.2011	DPRK expropriated the Kumgang resort	-38
11.10.2011	SK cancels most of its previous sanctions against DPRK	35
12.12.2012	DPRK tests missiles	-53
12.2.2013	DPRK conducts nuclear test	-55
1.3.2013	SK a USA launch annual military exercise	-30
8.3.2013	DPRK ends non-aggression pacts with SK	-43
20.3.2013	DPRK launches a cyber attack on SK	-30
27.3.2013	DPRK cuts hotline with SK	-45