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## The Insider vs. Outsider Mentality and the Need for a New National Identity: Examining South Korea's Multiculturalism\*

*Reginald J. Lee*

Hanyang Cyber University, South Korea

### Abstract

As the foreign population steadily grows in South Korea, the government is continuing its efforts to socially integrate its new members under the ambiguous banner of multicultural and multiculturalism. In addition to the inconsistencies involving definitions of those terms with other related labels including “foreigner,” “multicultural family,” “global family,” and even “Korean,” there are lingering questions about how Korea’s long-term, legal residents, including naturalized Koreans, can be categorized and whether they can be accepted as new Koreans in mainstream society. These questions are highlighted particularly with the perpetuation of the insider versus outsider mentality historically used in Korea. The government has outlined its official multiculturalism policies via The First Basic Plan for Immigration Policy (2008-2012) and The 2nd Basic Plan for Immigration Policy (2013-2017), but absent is a discussion on a new national identity to help lessen the divide. This paper discusses the background of multiculturalism in Korea and examines the efficacy of the government’s approach towards social integration especially in terms of ways to mitigate the longstanding insider versus outsider mentality in Korea. Finally, this paper suggests the creation of a new shared national identity as a means to help better integrate “new Koreans” as accepted members of Korean society.

■ **Keywords** : multicultural, immigration, assimilation policy, national identity, Korea

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\* This paper is based on (portions taken from) my dissertation published at Hanyang University in 2017.

## Introduction

South Korea (hitherto Korea) has been for some time a mostly homogenous, ethnically-Korean country with small yet relatively growing multi-ethnic communities. However, multi-ethnic does not automatically translate into multicultural or the sharing of various cultures. Critics warn against the loss of identity and urge the need to maintain identity when discussing the interactions of majority and minority populations. One of Korea's multiculturalism challenges is the public's uncertainty of how to categorize and/or relate to Korea's legally residing foreigners with the perpetuation of the insider and outsider or "us vs. them" mentality. For instance, while a survey in 2015 conducted by the Sogang Institute of Political Studies found that 82.9% of those surveyed responded that they believe Korea was a multicultural society, a study in the same year by the Ministry of Gender Equality and Family (MOGEF) found that 41.3% of multicultural families claimed to have experienced discrimination (Kang, 2013).

Thus, one of the greatest obstacles to the acceptance of these foreigners as new Koreans into mainstream Korean society seems to be their lack of proper identification. Traditionally, in Korea, as a collectivistic society, there have been generally two types of groups of people, 1) Koreans or *hanguk saram/han-gukin* i.e., Korean person and 2) foreigners or *waeguk saram/waegukin* i.e., outside person or in other words, "us and them". This stems from the social structure of Korean society which has existed for centuries and based on the Confucian ideology of family, where the us and them refers to those perceived as members of one's in-group versus others who are not.

The government's multiculturalism endeavors have been based on three main objectives: population growth via "multicultural families" – i.e., families consisting one ethnic-Korean and one foreign parent and their ethnically mixed children; social integration via assimilation policies of "multicultural families" – the foreign parent and ethnically mixed children; and maintenance of the population of the foreign workforce through

a policy of differential exclusive or work permit system through the Employment Permit System (Kim, 2009). Because not all foreigners conveniently fit into these categories, there continues to be general ambivalence regarding both the status and identity of long-term, legally residing foreign residents.

Hence, in order to render Korea's "multiculturalism" efforts more practical and effective, firstly, the label "foreigner" should be clarified and redefined where needed. For example, according to the definition of the Korean Ministry of Government Administration and Home Affairs (Eum, 2015):

"Foreign residents" includes people without Korean citizenship whose period of sojourn in the country is 90 days or more, people who have attained citizenship in South Korea, and the children of these naturalized citizens as well as those who acquired residence through marriage.

This official definition is overly broad and obviously inaccurate as a foreign resident described above can refer to either a short-term foreign exchange student or a long-term, naturalized, non-ethnic Korean resident. Subsequently, the continued lack of an inclusive, generally accepted national identity is one of the main barriers responsible for the persistent yet unnecessary mental, emotional, and physical separation of local Koreans and their "new Korean" counterparts. Timothy C. Lim, professor of Political Science at California State University at Los Angeles, opines that Korea's "multicultural problem" is in fact an existential one: "[Koreans] have generally viewed Korea's ethno-racial purity as an almost singular characteristic. To the large majority of Korean, therefore, the very idea that their country would become a significant destination for hundreds of thousands of foreigners had been, for many generations, virtually unthinkable" (Snyder, 2015).

As a result, this paper seeks to answer the following questions:

- 1) What are the barriers to successful social integration in the Korean government's multiculturalism policy?

- 2) How does the Korean perspective of *insider* versus *outsider* affect Korea's multiculturalism efforts?
- 3) What forms would a new national identity take?

By analyzing the Korean government's multiculturalism policies through its First and 2nd Basic Plan(s) for Immigration Policy, this paper examines its limitations particularly in relation to the concept of a national identity, and suggests a new direction in the form of the creation of a shared national identity.

### **Multiculturalism vs. Multicultural**

One of the challenges of multiculturalism is the ambiguity that exists between its various definitions. As an approach it is "based on the respect for and protection of cultural diversity within a framework of shared belonging" (Rodriguez-Garcia, 2010) as exemplified in the U.K., Australia, Canada, the U.S., and Singapore. More specifically, UNESCO (2017) identifies three separate but interrelated "referents of multiculturalism" as follows: The first is the "demographic-descriptive" phrase that simply describes the presence of various ethnic or racial minorities in the majority population. The second is "programmatic-political" which refers to specific programs or initiatives in response to and as a means to manage ethnic minority populations. Finally, "ideological-normative" is the controversial aspect of the multicultural discussion as it emphasizes the recognition of ethnic diversity, the safeguarding of "the rights of individuals to return their culture" while being able to have "full access to, participation in, and adherence to, constitutional principles and commonly shared values prevailing in the society." In other words, it is a "separate but equal" approach that in reality has been troubling many countries in recent years whose majority and ethnic minority populations are becoming increasingly segregated. In the case of Korea, the terms multicultural and multiculturalism have been used interchangeably at times to describe both policy and demographics. However, multi-ethnic

more accurately describes the Korean case at present.

Countries recognized as being multicultural, such as Canada, Australia, the U.S., and Singapore to name a few, owe their nationhood to the U.K (despite Canada being recognized as the world's first country to adopt an official policy of multiculturalism in 1971) (Government of Canada, 2017). However, the U.K.'s approach to multiculturalism has been criticized as being "divisive, failing to create a common set of values or sense of nationhood" even though "British policy-makers welcomed diversity, but tried to manage it by putting people into ethnic and cultural boxes, defining individuals' needs and rights by virtue of the boxes into which people are put, and using those boxes to shape public policy (Malik, 2015)." In other words, minority communities have been viewed stereotypically as separate and homogeneous entities consisting of unified members bound together by a shared view of their culture and beliefs. Not surprisingly, many have criticized the multiculturalism policies such as those in the U.K. being as similar to that of assimilation, like in France. Meanwhile, obvious similarities can be seen in other countries employing this type of multiculturalism policy including Australia, Canada, the U.S., etc., in which heavily concentrated ethnic minority enclaves appear to be the norm. Despite the maintenance of an approach that emphasizes community cohesion and particularly, shared values and common identities, policy makers in the U.K. (and elsewhere) are continuing to struggle to find an appropriate approach that addresses the "growing concerns about the perceived impact of multiculturalism in contributing towards fractured societies in which minority groups are thought to live in segregated and 'parallel lives' to those of the mainstream" (Choudhury, 2011). It is important to note that while not a truly multicultural society, Korea continues to model its multiculturalism policies with those described above.

### **Korea's Multiculturalism Challenges**

Confucianism has persisted in Korea and permeates in virtually every

aspect of Korean life, most notably in the Confucian-based familial and hierarchical basis of the Korean language and culture by extension. Although Confucianism originated in China, it has been argued that Korean Confucianism is distinct and a preserved form of the original, particularly as it directly applies and reinforces the concept of family and social hierarchy in virtually every organization in society through its various terminologies, language hierarchy, and communications styles (Shim, Kim, & Martin, 2008).

One of its lingering legacies has been in the successful continuation of the insider versus outsider mindset. There are other languages that also apply honorifics to address individuals of varying ages and social statuses in relation to the speaker and even those that also use familial terms when addressing strangers, including “uncle” or “aunt” such as Chinese. In studies conducted by Chu et al. (1991), Koreans were found to more steadfastly maintain Confucian traditional values than their Chinese and Japanese counterparts, and that among the three, Korea was found to be the most Confucian, followed by Japan, and then China as the least Confucian, despite the younger generation moving away from the traditional values strictly observed by their parents. Stowell (2003) concludes that despite Confucian traditional values heavily influencing Korean, Japanese, and Chinese communication, “they seem to be more well preserved in Korean society based upon the educational system of teaching moral values, nationalism, and arrested cultural evolution.”

While many other countries can be described similarly, Rhee et al. (1996) state, “In South Korea, perhaps due to its relative ethnic homogeneity, a distinct collectivism has evolved, distinguished from the collectivism in other Asian countries.” In other words, there are implicitly shared norms that still ultimately bind citizens and residents together whereby according to Na and Min (1998):

The importance of emotional relatedness can be found in the emphasis on *cheong* (emotional connection) and *woori* (sense of we) in interpersonal relationships in which “Koreans tend to strongly identify

with an in-group and develop *woori* toward this group, as well as a sense of out-groups as ‘others’ who are clearly distinguished.”

Again, the impact of language on thoughts, actions, perceptions, and ultimately culture should not be underestimated particularly in the Korean context where “we”, “us”, or “our” are embedded in the language and reinforced daily; some examples include *woori nara* or “our country” i.e., Korea; *woori nara mal* or “our country’s language” i.e., Korean; *woori nara saram* or “our country’s people” i.e., Koreans, etc. Cho et al. (2010) states that strong emotional bonds and relatedness through networks of extended family relationships increase in-group identification, and because Koreans are all related under Korean Confucianism whereby even total strangers are referred to as “uncle” (*ajeossi*) or “aunt” (*ajumma*), non-Koreans become that much more “foreigners.”

Furthermore, as Shim et al. (2008) states in her book, *Changing Korea: Understanding Culture and Communication*:

for Koreans, the basic core of social relationship is not an individual but the we-relationship. An individual in social, interpersonal relationship of Korean is a relational individual contributing to forming one-ness with others rather than a separated individual.

Thus, according to Choi & Choi (1994), this we-ness relationship develops from a shared sense of “mind and spirit” or *ma-um* in the process where we-ness or “human affection” or *jeong* is a major element. As a result:

the notion of *we* is a psychological construct as well as a real entity which is constructed on the formation of inter-subjectivity through sharing *ma-um* among the inner members. Therefore, in the we-ness relationship of Koreans the other party involved becomes a participant psychologically, and the first person in turn becomes a related participant.

In other words, “the people in we-relationships are deeply involved

in a complex human relationship, each other being an active participant. In sum, the social relationship of Koreans is characterized as the social relationship of the participants psychologically involved.” (Choi & Choi, 1994) Moreover, social behavior differs greatly when Koreans interact with members of an in-group rather than with those from out-groups and vice versa, due to the different perceptions attached to each group. Thus, the objective of international interactions of Koreans is to develop “we-ness relationships” and therefore, “the social psychological and human relationships of Koreans should be approached from the perspective of the we-ness relationship” (Shim et al., 2008). When considering these kinship terms in a Korean Confucian context, the us versus them perspective is subtly yet firmly underscored.

As a result, the manner in which Koreans interact with others can be said to generally fall into two categories of communicating and identifying with: 1) those who automatically fall within the same societal structure, i.e., fellow ethnic Koreans, and 2) others including or non/partly-ethnic Korean foreigners. For instance, the convenient grouping of tourists and other short-term visitors as “guests” or *sonnim*, “tourists” or *gwangwang gaek* or just generally “foreigners” or *waejukin* presumably works well in the minds and communications of everyday Koreans, as they can simply perceive and linguistically use the prescribed honorific for these non-Korean members. However, when considering long-term, legally residing foreign residents particularly non- or partly-ethnic Koreans such as naturalized Koreans, there has yet to be appropriate terminology used that successfully recognizes traditionally defined non-Koreans as fully integrated members of Korean society, or “Koreans”. In addition, there is also the descriptive labeling of “Korean” to foreign nationals of Korea descent. This is similar to Germany where there are categories of “Germans” including *Aussiedler* (ethnic German “resettlers”) who are automatically granted German citizenship although they have never lived or even visited Germany. Korea also allows citizenship to most ethnic Koreans who can provide documentation of their family registry. These ethnic Koreans, who may never have previously visited Korea are referred



to as *dongpo* which can be translated as “people of the same ancestry” or *gyopo* i.e., “our countrymen” (Kim, 1999). For instance, in the case of those who possess the F4 visa, they are known as holders of the “People of Korean Heritage” visa, while these individuals and other ethnic Koreans are collectively referred to as “Overseas Koreans” which in turn has subcategories such as “Korean nationals residing abroad” and “Foreign nationality Koreans (Hi Korea, 2017).” While such categorizations and terminologies have served well in unifying each country’s people together under an ethno-national banner, it is impractical to over-emphasize or even maintain them in societies that seek to promote “multiculturalism.”

In addition, the *us* versus *them* mentality is problematic because it creates barriers to cooperation, which in turn can lead to miscommunication, misunderstandings, discrimination, and conflict. The UN-affiliated organization, CERD (Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination) reportedly urged the Korean government to implement effective measures to eliminate discrimination against foreigners stating:

the emphasis placed on the ethnic homogeneity of Korea may represent an obstacle to the promotion of understanding tolerance and friendship among the different ethnic and national groups living on its territory and request the government campaign against the use of the phrases “pure blood” and “mixed blood.” (Bae, 2007)

On this subject in the same article, a researcher of the National Human Rights Commission of the Republic of Korea (NHRCK), Susan Kim rhetorically asked, “What is blood purity? Is there such a thing as pure blood? If so, is mixed blood not pure but dirty?” (Bae, 2007) The obvious answer is no, but failure to address and eliminate biases in language and communication style when referring to “new Koreans” can only serve to subtly reinforce stereotypes and thus, social and other barriers.

Further complicating the ambiguity surrounding the foreigner’s place in Korea is the ranking of nationalities and/or ethnicities in “hierarchical

nationhood” described by Dong-hoon Seol and John Skrentny (2009). They state that while Koreans had already differentiated between ethnic-Korean immigrants including Korean-Americans, Korean-Chinese, and so on, they have only recently begun a distinguishing between non-ethnic Korean migrants and immigrants. “When a Korean person is married to a (white) citizen of Western country, his or her family is referred as a “global family” with a positive connotation by hosts on TV programs, while families consisting of a Korean man married to a woman from a Southeast Asian country is called a “multicultural family,” a term that is rather stigmatizing and discriminatory among Koreans” (Lee, 2014a).

In an effort to address needed improvements in Korea’s official immigration policy, the Korea Immigration Service under the Ministry of Justice released, The First Basic Plan for Immigration Policy for 2008-2012 for the purpose of, “granting the temporary or permanent right of abode to foreigners who would like to migrate to the Republic of Korea and on providing foreigners with the proper environment conducive for their political, economic, social, and cultural participation” (Ministry of Justice, 2009). However, the definition of foreign residents again appears to be over-inclusive and lacking the necessary differentiation among subgroups, as shown in the following table:

Table 1.

*Foreigners in Korea by Residence Classification as of June 2008*

Classification	Number	Percentage
Korean diaspora on Work-Visit program	297,329	26.0%
Unskilled labor	212,778	18.6%
Immigrants through marriage	118,421	10.3%
International students (including language trainees)	68,441	6.0%
Skilled workers	29,895	2.6%
Legal permanent residents	17,809	1.6%
Investors	8,376	0.7%

Source. Ministry of Justice (2009)

Again, these are very broad definitions of foreigner and the danger of such overgeneralizations is that they serve to perpetuate the “us” versus “them” mentality, and no distinction is made among the various types of legal permanent residents (e.g., ethnic Koreans, mixed-ethnic Koreans, non-ethnic Koreans). Fortunately, there has been some modification in the 2nd Basic Plan for Immigration Policy finalized in 2012 that posted the following information under “Statistics of Sojourn of Overseas Koreans” (Ministry of Justice, 2013), but still missing is terminology to appropriately recognize new Koreans. In Table 2 for instance, Overseas Koreans is listed as F-4 visa holders. By definition, to be eligible to receive the F-4, individuals must submit a record of family registry proving Korean ethnicity. However, uncertainties still remain as Permanent Residence or the F-5 visa can also include ethnically Korean individuals, and the Working Visit (H-2) along with General Training (D-4) designations can involve an ethnically Korean person who simply cannot provide family registry documentation.

Table 2.  
*Statistics on Sojourn of Overseas Koreans*

Status/year	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Total	421,155	430,104	477,029	550,931	553,737
Working Visit (H-2)	299,332	306,283	286,586	303,368	263,142
Overseas Koreans (F-4)	41,732	50,664	84,912	136,702	181,567
General Training (D-4)	439	351	19,212	15,447	247
Permanent Residence (F-5)	311	1,007	20,692	36,162	48,645
Family Visitation (F-1)	18,916	17,983	15,574	14,781	15,525
Other	60,425	53,816	50,053	44,471	44,611

Source: Ministry of Justice (2013)

### The Development of Multiculturalism in Korea

In modern times, the influx of foreigners into Korea began in the

late 1980s with ethnic Korean-Chinese, as a result of improved relations between Korea and China which was also a time that the Korean construction industry was suffering from a shortage of workers. Consequently, the Korean government introduced the “Industrial Trainee System” in 1993 wherein foreign workers from 15 Asian countries were invited to be members of the workforce. It was around this time that a “critical shortage of marriageable women in farming and fishing villages in Korea” was noticed and thus began the boom of international marriages involving Korean men and women mostly from China, Mongolia, Indonesia, and other parts of Southeast Asia (Kim, 2011). The impetus for this phenomenon was the exodus of eligible single women from rural communities to urban areas which is well documented, while the reasons for this migration continues today; better educational and work opportunities, rejection of the so-called traditional rural lifestyle, pursuit of more individual and social freedoms, and so on.

Consequently, to compensate for the shortage of brides was the advent of the previously unimaginable wave of foreign spouses (typically from China or Southeast Asia) in homogenous Korea, particularly foreign wives for which the country has found itself in a precarious position; Koreans have traditionally prided themselves on their so-called homogeneity or “pure bloodedness”, a rallying phrase that had served well to promote solidarity for a country in turmoil, during the Japanese occupation (1910-1945) (Shin, 2006) and later in the 1960s to the 1980s under dictatorships. Since the 1990s, marriage and birthrates have continued to fall and conversely, to meet population demands, primarily in the workforce, the foreign population has continued to grow, giving rise to a broader, new range of residents including international couples consisting of spouses (still typically wives) from other countries including Europe and North America, their half ethnically Korean mixed children, and an assortment of non-ethnic Korean individuals, couples, and their offspring.

In order for these new members of Korean society to better acculturate into Korean society, the government has been very active in its efforts, initiating a wide range of policies and programs in response. Some of

these include the Multicultural Families Support Act enacted in 2008 (Ministry of Government Legislation, 2011); Employment Training for Foreign Workers (Employment Permit System, 2016); and Support Centers for Multicultural Families with 200 locations around the country to provide services (such as Korean language courses, counseling, various events to celebrate the cultural aspects of other countries, and employment opportunities) (Seoul Metropolitan Government); Open ‘Dasom schools’ for multicultural youth vocational and job training (Vankova, 2013); and the Seoul Global Center facilities (Seoul Global Center), to name a few among many past and ongoing efforts. In monetary terms, the Korean government has been investing large sums, hundreds of millions of dollars, in multiculturalism through its various ministries (Korea Immigration Service). These efforts are continuing as the foreign population grows. In 2014, the number of legally residing foreigners in Korea was recorded at 1.57 million, with those married to Koreans accounting for 240,000 (Korea.net, 2016).

Moreover, in a landmark event in Korea on April 11, 2012, Korea’s National Assembly welcomed its first ever ethnic minority lawmaker, Philippine Native, Jasmine Lee, who became a naturalized Korean through her marriage to her late Korean husband. This unprecedented representation officially highlighted the growing presence of migrants and immigrants in still mostly yet transforming homogeneous Korean society, particularly those with families who consider Korea their home (Kim, 2012).

However, as of yet, there is no precise, uniformly agreed upon definition for multiculturalism, nor is there an all-encompassing policy or successful model that is applicable to most scenarios. For instance, it should be noted that there is a distinction between multicultural or many cultures residing together, and multi-ethnic or various ethnicities residing together. This is an important distinction because for example, while China and Russia are prime examples of both, housing many cultures and various ethnicities, neither can truly claim to be “multicultural” countries due to their use of highly oppressive, assimilation-based policies.

Similarly, while Korea's multi-ethnic population is growing, the country cannot truly claim to be a multicultural nation despite its so-called multiculturalism efforts.

### **Scholarship on Korea's Multiculturalism and National Identity**

There have been numerous studies conducted on the subject of Korea's multiculturalism efforts, particularly in relation to discussions on national identity, demographics, nationalism, ethnicity, and etc. Typical focus is on identifying the formation, transformation, perpetuation, description, respectively, or on the histories involving each topic. For instance, in their extensive work covering 2005-2015, Lee and Yoon (2016) examine ways Korean identity and values have transformed and continued using data from surveys in relation to views on foreigners. In her work on Korea's demographic changes, Moon (2015) describes "New Koreans" in her discussion of new immigrants who are nationalized citizens of Korea, and their political participation. Han (2016) examines "nouveau-riche nationalism" in relation to Korea's multiculturalism, explaining what factors are involved that render Korea inhospitable to 'new' or temporary Koreans. In her research, Ahn (2018) describes the myth of Korea as a "one-blooded nation" and argues "that the rhetorical transformation from a (presumed) monoracial Korea to a multiethnic Korea is as much a discursive shift in people's general understanding of what the Korean nation should be as it is a demographic change in Korea's racial/ethnic minority population." While criticisms towards Korea's multiculturalism endeavors are plentiful, particularly in regard to shortcomings in the area of successful integration of foreigners into mainstream society, scarce are specific recommendations on how the country's "new Koreans" can be mutually identified as such.

In their research on multicultural identity integration, Yampolsky, Amiot, and de la Sablonniere (2013) investigated three different multiple identity configurations in the cognitive-development model of society identity integration: 1) categorization, in which individuals choose to

identify with only one among various cultural identities they may possess; 2) compartmentalization, that involves people maintaining their various identities but separately; and 3) integration, in which individuals maintain all their cultural identities by connecting them in order to create a more adaptable stance. Not surprisingly, the researchers determined that the latter group that chose identity integration, “was significantly and positively related to narrative coherence” or consistency with previous studies which link identity integration with greater levels of life satisfaction, self-esteem, well-being, etc. In other words, when individuals believed they were able to maintain various cultural identities such as their ethnic identity and national identity simultaneously without having to sacrifice one for another, they reported experiencing a high degree of belonging with society as a whole. It should be noted that their study was conducted in Canada, which is well known and well documented for its multicultural, social integration policies, as the country has a history of international immigration. In Korea however, with a comparatively much shorter multicultural history, and still mostly ethnically homogenous Korean population, the notion of identity integration and ways to achieve it are still relatively new concepts. Finally, Huntington (2005) contentiously argues in favor of a unifying national identity based on defined core values to overcome challenges that if left unchecked could threaten a country’s very existence (namely the U.S.). The identity crisis he perceives to be taking hold in the U.S. is the result of overly focused efforts to promote multiculturalism, diversity, bilingualism that he contends are serving to reinforce racial, ethnic, and other “subnational identities” at the expense of a shared national identity. While critics consider this work provocative, many others similarly assert that developing a shared sense of national identity should be a priority. This differs from the nationalistic view found in strictly assimilation-based policies. Kymlicka (2012) states for example:

Many studies have shown that immigrants do best, both in terms of psychological well-being and sociocultural outcomes, when they

are able to combine their ethnic identity with a new national identity. Scholars often call this an “integration orientation,” as opposed to either an “assimilation orientation” (in which immigrants abandon their ethnic identity to adopt a new national identity) or a “separation orientation” (in which immigrants renounce the new national identity to maintain their identity).

### **Korea’s Official Multiculturalism Policies**

The Korean government’s official comprehensive approach to multiculturalism was first outlined in The First Basic Plan for Immigration Policy (2008-2012) (Ministry of Justice), launched through Article 5 of the Act on the Treatment of Foreigners in Korea, which stipulates that a Basic Plan for Immigration Policy is to be established every 5 years. Under the supervision of the Ministry of Justice, other various ministries are involved including those of Knowledge Economy; Foreign Affairs & Trade; Labor; Education, Science & Technology; Public Administration & Safety; Culture, Sports & Tourism; Land, Transportation & Maritime Affairs; Health, Welfare & Family Affairs; Food, Agriculture, Forestry & Fisheries; Gender Equality; as well as the Supreme Court; the Korean National Police Agency; and the Small & Medium Business Administration. The first edition was considered significant because it brought together the “fragmented policies of ministries into a comprehensive and systematic long-term policy (ibid.).” In this first plan, the government’s immigration policy and multiculturalism efforts by extension are stated as follows:

These are comprehensive policies on granting the temporary or permanent right of abode to foreigners who would like to migrate to the Republic of Korea and on providing foreigners with the proper environment conducive for their political, economic, social, and cultural participation.

This first version was born primarily out of economic concerns, “that is, while the goals of the national immigration framework influenced so-



cial policies, they were ultimately servicing an economic goal of supplying short-term labor for the sake of Korea's global economic competitiveness" (Snyder, 2015). Opponents have pointed out that the first plan often lacked specifics in the proposed programs to bridge the gap between the local and foreign populations, and about what precise steps would be undertaken to achieve goals. Thus, in The 2nd Basic Plan for Immigration Policy (2013-2017), a number of notable changes were made including the addition of members to the Immigration Policy Committee (responsible for these Basic Plans) such as the Prime Minister's Office, the Korea Coast Guard, the Korea Communications Commission, and the Ministry of Strategy and Finance. The meaning of the 2nd Basic Plan is stated by the Ministry of Justice (2013) as follows:

Immigration policy refers to policies encompassing matters on border control, immigration, nationality, and social integration for immigrants. It does not deal with emigration issues.

Meanwhile, for the purpose of socially integrating foreigners, the following is stated:

The purpose of this Act is to stipulate the basic provision concerning the treatment of foreigners in Korea; to help foreigners in Korea to adjust themselves to the Korean society to reach their full potentials and to create a society where Koreans and foreigners in Korea understand and respect other with the aim of contributing to the development of Korea and the social integration.

Whereas the First Basic Plan focus on economic considerations, the 2nd Basic Plan "attempted to address some of the issues of integration the immigrants - particularly the so-called multicultural families - face in daily life in South Korea" (Snyder, 2015). However, according to a report by the Asian Institute for Policy Studies, "most of Korea's "multicultural" policies and programs have been culturally assimilating - 54.4 percent - were educational programs for foreign wives on Korean manners and customs, while classes on Korean culture made up 16.1

percent of the programs” (Lee, 2014b).

In the 2nd Basic Plan, while there is a category of “shared national identity” there is no mention of ways to help unify both the mainstream and ethnic minority communities and instead, under the heading “2. High-quality social integration” the plan states the following (Ministry of Justice, 2013):

2.1 Improving public understanding of a multicultural society background and need

- The increased number of foreign immigrants in Korea necessitates a culture and lifestyle where people with diverse ethnic and cultural background can live together harmoniously.
- Koreans need to cultivate, through education and promotion, the ability to accept immigrants as important members of society.
- Mutual understanding must be fostered by forging continuous and close social relationship between Korean nationals and immigrants.

In terms of improvements mainly in the form of clarifications from The First Basic Plan, the 2nd Basic Plan states the following:

- The term “Foreigners in Korea” means people who do not have obtained Korean citizenship and legally stay in Korea for the purpose of residence in Korea.
- The term “Treatment of foreigners in Korea” means the proper treatment from national, municipal, and local government(s) to foreigners in Korea according to their legal status.

While nominally by definition, “foreigners” may refer to anyone who does not possess Korean citizenship, the reality is quite different; namely, that the term “foreigner” is descriptively used to describe any non-ethnic Korean national regardless of legal status, or formally used to indicate an ethnic Korean with foreign citizenship. Furthermore, for the category of “shared national identity, the plan states:

- A growing concern over the crisis of national identity  
Most Korean still do not recognize or embrace cultural diversity.

This is prompting growing concerns over an identity crisis among immigrants and their children who fail to fully grasp Korean social values (p. 20).

- Elevate national identity to incorporate Non-Koreans as citizens by improving immigration and citizenship policy (p. 44).
- Create the educational, social, and living environments that allow immigrant children to grow in society without suffering an identity crisis (p. 45).

Still, there is no official recognition regarding the need to create a shared national identity that incorporates all legally residing, long term members of Korean society. Instead, the focus remains on attempting to promote greater public tolerance (versus acceptance) of immigrant “foreigners.” Worse yet, under the category of III-3 Build an International Environment where Koreans and Foreigners Can Interact” (p. 74), the plan states: “2) Make the foreigners-concentrated regions into specially-developed zones”, which is precisely part of the segregating aspect of the multiculturalism policy’s “separate but equal” approach exemplified in ethnic enclaves around the world.

### **Suggestions for a New National Identity**

Recognition of Korea’s growing diversity has been slow and subsequently, so has Korea’s acceptance of new Koreans, including non-ethnic Korean residents with or without Korean citizenship (such as Korea green card holders or permanent residents) such as a) naturalized, non-ethnic Koreans, b) long-term, non-naturalized legal residents and their c) offspring born in Korea without Korean citizenship who include, d) non-ethnic Koreans (e.g., Russians); e) ethnically Korean but non-Korean-nationals (e.g., Korean-Americans); and f) mixed Koreans (e.g., offspring of one ethnically-Korean parent and one non-ethnically Korean parent) with or without Korean citizenship.

In the volume, *South Korean identity: Change and continuity, 2005-2015* edited by Lee and Yoon (2016), a survey was conducted to

“objectively measure South Koreans’ national and ethnic identities, attitudes towards foreigners and minority groups” (Denney, 2016). Among the interesting findings, survey results in 2015 reveal that 49.7% claim Korea should be multicultural or multi-ethnic versus ethnically homogenous (38.9%), which is a marked decrease from 60.6% who supported the idea of multiculturalism versus those who favor ethnic homogeneity (37.1%) in 2010, as the Figure 1 shows below (Denney, 2016).

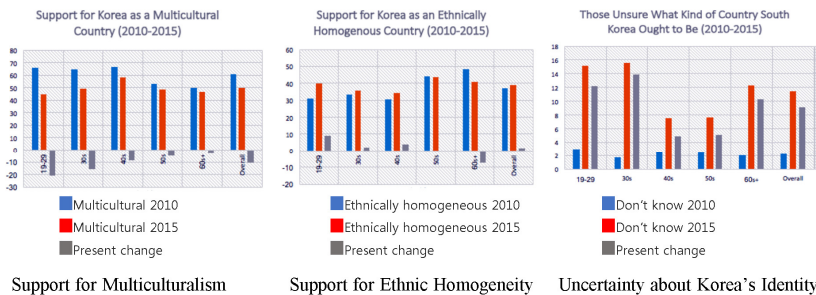


Figure 1. South Koreans perceptions toward ethnic minority groups

Furthermore, the authors conclude that their survey results indicate that Koreans are becoming less inclusive as time progressive. This runs contrary to proponents of a “new nationalism” such as Campbell (2015) who argue that “global cultural characteristics” are changing the perception of Koreans toward who they considered can be “imagined” as full members of Korean society. On the contrary, Denney (2016) states that the Lee and Yoon’s research results suggest “South Koreans are erecting a wall of difference between themselves and minorities in society, especially those who do not share a similar ethnicity or culture.” It is important to note however, that the research focused on six specific groups including North Korean migrants, migrant workers, marriage migrants, children of international marriages, Chinese-Koreans, and Chinese citizens from North Korean referred to as *hwagyo*. Therefore, a more inclusive survey should be conducted to include Korean perception of the six other groups of residents mentioned at the beginning of this section.

Still, it is unclear what the determinants are of those who do or do not “share a similar ethnicity or culture”; whether similar ethnicity could entail physical resemblance, full or partial Korean ethnicity, shared cultural aspects such as Korean language proficiency, adherence to traditional Korean values and/or traditions, etc.

Resolution of these ambiguities while simultaneously promoting a new national identity could come in the form of terminology in various forms including a reintroduction of the word “insider” or *naegukin* and/or the introduction of the hyphenated identities commonly used in countries like the U.S. (and Singapore) to reflect for example, a Caucasian Russian in Korea who has been naturalized and therefore referred to as a “Russian-*naegukin*”. Alternatively, “*Russia-gye Hangukin*” could be used. The possible efficacy and acceptability should not be surprising as Koreans have already been using similar labels to identify ethnic Koreans in and from various parts of the world including those from the U.S, Japan, China, Russia, etc., as *Jaemi gyopo*, *Jaeil gyopo*, *Joseonjok*, or *Goryoin*, respectively. There is also *Hangukgye Migukin* already in use to describe “Korean-American” and *Iljeomosae* to describe the so-called 1.5 generation of ethnic Korean nationals.

In addition, Korea’s continuing drive toward globalization and its use of mass media have led to increasing acceptance of traditionally non-Korean members of society, namely ethnically mixed Koreans (i.e., the children of one Korean and one foreign parent) or “successful” naturalized or non-ethnic Koreans. For instance, in the case of the former group, American football star, Hines Ward, who won the 2006 MVP award “became an overnight sensation in this “motherland” [...] (and) “[...] received a “hero’s welcome” on his first visit to his “motherland” (Lim, 2009).” In the case of the latter group (naturalized or non-ethnic Koreans), there are Ida Daussey (originally from France), Robert Holley (originally from the U.S.), Lee Charm (originally from Germany), all of whom are naturalized non-ethnic Koreans who have been in the public eye for years now. More recently TV personalities Sam Hammington (Australia), Fabien (France), Daniel Lindermann (Germany), Sam Okyere

(Ghana), Mina Fujii (Japan), to name a few are among others in music, fashion, sports, etc. who are legally residing, long term foreign residents enjoying success in Korea as members of the “us” or insider group. However, such acceptance is still not widespread and all of these individuals would still officially be considered “foreigners” as non-ethnic Korean residents.

### Conclusion & Limitations

While the government’s previously promoted claims of homogeneity served to foster national unity in times of national crisis and during post-occupation development, today many Koreans particularly in the younger generation are adhering less to ethnic nationalism than their conservative, older counterparts. Fortunately, Korea appears to be comparatively more active in its efforts to promote multiculturalism than many of its counterparts and the country seems to be genuinely interested in finding appropriate solutions. In fact, Korea’s progressive endeavors to implement a wide range of policies and programs to foster multiculturalism are noteworthy, as seen in the enormous investments the government has already made. But more needs to be done to effectively cope with Korea’s rapidly growing non-ethnic and/or non-full-blooded Korean population. For instance, as the so-called “foreign” population continues to grow in Korea, so too will the number of a) naturalized, non-ethnic Koreans, b) long-term, non-naturalized residents and their c) offspring born in Korea without Korean citizenship who include, d) non-ethnic Koreans (e.g., Caucasian); e) ethnically Korean but non-Korean-nationals (e.g., Korean-Americans); and f) mixed Koreans (e.g., offspring of one ethnically-Korean parent and one non-ethnically Korean parent). To this new population of 1) naturalized Korean, 2) Korea-born, non-ethnically Korean, and 3) mixed-ethnically Korean residents, being referred to as “outsiders” i.e., *waegukin* or “foreigners” is neither appropriate nor accurate. The perpetual usage of foreigner for these members will only serve to create unnecessary distinctions between “us” and “them”.

At present there are no policies, legislation, programs or campaigns in operation to effectively address Korea's multiculturalism efforts that include all the aforementioned individuals, namely naturalized, non-ethnically Korean individuals or legally residing, long-term, fully/partially ethnic-Korean residents as "Koreans." One of the primary reasons is because among the policies and various programs in effect, the vast majority were designed for families consisting mostly of a Korean husband/father, non-ethnically Korean wife/mother, and mixed offspring, who are automatically granted Korean citizenship through their Korean parent (father). While this demographic may still be the majority, there is clearly a need to seriously consider other long term, residing and/or naturalized members of the other aforementioned groups. Korea appears to be comparatively more active in its efforts to promote multiculturalism than many of its counterparts and the country seems to be genuinely interested in finding appropriate solutions. In fact, Korea's active endeavors to implement a wide range of policies and programs to foster multiculturalism are indeed noteworthy, as seen in the enormous investments the government has made and continues to make in policies and programs focusing on multiculturalism, and the Korean government has already revised its definition of the "multicultural family" to include families composed of naturalized Koreans and their non-Korean or naturalized spouses and children (Yoon, 2011).

This paper examined the concepts of multiculturalism and multicultural and the Korean government's approaches to promote social integration through its official First and 2nd Basic Plans. The insider versus outsider mentality was discussed as a barrier to national unity among Korean locals and their so-called foreign counterparts in the form of long-term, legal resident. Finally, the paper suggested the introduction and/or creation of terminology such as the hyphenated identity, to reflect a more realistically and mutually understandable multi-ethnic environment in Korea. To determine the potential efficacy of the proposed terminology to describe "new Koreans", national surveys should be conducted that include both ethnic Korean nationals and their long-term, legally

residing “foreign” counterparts. Long-term, legally residing residents of Korea was the primary focus of this paper as opposed to short-term, and/or illegal residents due to the presumed obvious differences in legal status, residence motivation, future residence intention, etc., between the two groups. Moreover, in the case of the latter group, there is ample research on their undocumented status and related obstacles they face due to their illegality and thus, the creation of a new national identity would presumably not be deemed as important to them as it would to long-term, legally residing residents.



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### Biographical Note

**Reginald J. Lee** is an associate professor of the English Department at Hanyang Cyber University in Seoul, Korea. He is a recent graduate of the Korean Studies Department in the Graduate School of International Studies at Hanyang University, Seoul, Korea. His interests are in Korean culture, multiculturalism, and English Education. E-mail: [reggilee@hycu.ac.kr](mailto:reggilee@hycu.ac.kr)

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Date of the submission of the article: April 10, 2018

Date of the peer-review: June 11, 2018

Date of the confirmation of the publication: July 10, 2018