

## Moving toward Multicultural Society?: South Korea's Migration Trends and Immigration Policies with the Focus on Foreign Labor

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### **Abstract**

**Background:** South Korea's attempt to achieve multiculturalism and attract more foreign labor; ranged from unskilled manpower to highly skilled foreigners, is very intrigued why the nation with its homogeneous myth and strong ethnocentric nationalism would yearn for multicultural society. With large numbers of the prospective immigrant influx, the newcomers who would bring along with them diversities might be viewed as an intimidation to the nation and the society, therefore the nation should require for a proactive response to the change.

**Objective:** This paper will explore South Korea's recent immigration policies that have been established to respond to national interest in more foreign manpower. Furthermore, it will go beyond the discussion about the homogeneous myth and the source of Korean ethnocentric nationalism that could obstruct South Korea's process of moving toward a multicultural society. The study aims to address how South Korea, at the policy level, acts upon the recent immigration situation and prepares the nation and its citizens for the societal change as a result of the fast growing numbers of immigrants.

**Discussion and Conclusion:** South Korea's recent immigration policies reflect national interest in attracting more foreign talents and manpower in response to the labor market demand. Aiming to move toward multicultural society, multiculturalism and social integration have been adopted in order to dissolve with the problems and concerns over the immigrations. The study concludes with the societal challenges that might hinder the approach to multicultural society and ends with the suggestions to overcome with the challenges.

**Keywords:** Immigration policy, Labor immigrants, Multiculturalism, Nationalism

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## Introduction

From 1960s to 1980s, almost 2 millions of South Koreans emigrated overseas for temporary employments. However, recently, South Korea, a former major labor sending, has transformed itself to a major receiving country when 1.2 millions of foreigners including female migrants, return overseas Koreans, and foreign labors constitute 2.4 percent of the total population. If this trend of immigration influx continues, the number of foreign residents in South Korea would reach 2.5 millions in 2020, and plausibly rise up to 4.1 millions by 2050, considering 9.2 percent of the total populations (Kim, 2010). This huge number of immigrant influx requires the policy adjustment to respond to the change in society as well as the reinforcement of the border control and the migration management in order to prevent the conflicts deriving from the immigration. Moreover, with regard to the homogeneously nationalistic and patriotic sentiments that had been provoked throughout Korean history and the consequent traumatic feelings from the colonization, Cold War and Korean War, seemingly, it is hard for the Koreans to open to foreigners. Hence, South Korea's intention to transfer the nation to a multicultural society becomes very interesting.

This paper explores South Korea's recent immigration policies, namely *'The First Basic Plan for Immigration Policy 2008-2012'*<sup>1</sup> and other related policies that have been established to respond to the national interest in attracting more foreign manpower. Claiming that South Korea's intent to adjust the policies

is to bring in more foreign labor force due to the economic driven needs, I noticed that the rationale underlying in the immigration policies, that are centered on social integration and multiculturalism, is not only for managing the fast growing number of the immigrants, but also for solving the humanitarian problems regarding foreign workers themselves and the natives' negative attitudes toward foreign workers. I also pay close attention to the nationalism and ethnocentrism that were cultivated throughout Korean history as it reveals the societal challenges that could hinder the state approach to multiculturalism.

In this paper, I will utilize the neoliberalism approach or the migration management, that was designed to promote economic competitiveness by directing the right types and numbers of migrants, as a mean to analyze South Korea's characteristic of migration control or policy and its related consequences. Moreover, I will use the national identity approach that highlights historical experiences, cultural idioms and social conflicts that have shaped past and current immigration policies, to explain the uniqueness of South Korea's national identity and history that strongly influenced its immigration policy.

## South Korea's Proactive Open-door Policy

As recent South Korea's immigration policy reveals the national interest in pursuing the 'proactive open door policy' and the demand for more foreigners in order to enhance

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<sup>1</sup> The First Basic Plan for Immigration Policy 2008-2012, by Korea Immigration Service, Ministry of Justice, Republic of Korea (Jun, 2009)

the national competitiveness the global arena, I will firstly discuss over the motive in pursuing the open-door in order to explain why and what encourage the homogeneous nation to desire for more foreigners and achieve multicultural society.

The trend of the low fertility rate and rapidly aging population in many developing countries generated much concerns over the working population declines and the labor shortage that might lessen national productivity and national competitiveness. Inevitably, the trend intruded South Korea. Before the Korean War in 1950, the total fertility rate was approximately at 6 children per woman (Phang, 2005). However, after the war broke out until 1980s, the number had plunged to 1.7 and continued to fall until it reached 1.23 in 2012 (est., CIA world fact book, 2012) making South Korea's fertility rate descended to the world lowest when the other OECD<sup>2</sup> countries' rate is at the average of 1.63 children per women (KIS, 2009). Moreover, apart from the extremely low fertility rate, in the midst of modernization and intense economic development, South Korea is also confronting with another challenge which is the rapidly aging population as it was forecasted that by 2050, 38 percent of its total population will be aged 65 and older making the total cost benefits to the elderly plausibly exceed to 25 percent of its GDP (Howe, et al, 2007).

The consequence of the total population declines plunged the amount of the Korean

workforce as most advanced countries have experienced. Unfortunately, unlike the other advanced countries, South Korea could have to confront with the labor shortfall in the midst of its high economic development. This extremely challenges the government in finding how to prevent the decrease of its working population, to procrastinate the decline as well as to replace the vacancy in the labor market. The concerns over the potential loss in international competition and the economic downturn caused by the shortage of labor provoked the Korean government to seek for the opportunity to increase the working population by encouraging the opening for more foreign labor.

With much of the world populations that are still young and growing when working age population in the developing country could fill in the labor gap of the aging country (Kent and Haub, 2005), the UNPD<sup>3</sup> (2000) suggested the '*Replacement Migration*'<sup>4</sup> as an alternative solution to the population and working age population declines. Regardless the pursuit of the population stability, replacement migration could at least serve as an optional solution to the labor shortage caused by the working age population declines as many countries have turned to immigration as a partial remedy.

Expectedly, the recent South Korea's immigration policy displays high degree of correspondence to the UNPD's replacement migration scheme. The first task of 'the First Basic Plan of the Immigration policy 2008-2012'

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<sup>2</sup> The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (<http://www.oecd.org>)

<sup>3</sup> UNPD —United Nation Population Division (<http://www.un.org/esa/population/>)

<sup>4</sup> 'Replacement Migration' refers to the international migration that would offset the declines of the size of the population, the working age population as well as aging populations. (UNPD, 2000)

is to enhance national competitiveness through proactive opening in order to secure growth potential by attracting highly skilled foreigners to help Korea with technological innovation, develop value-added industries and lead global management. The plan aims to attract highly skilled foreigners with an improved visa system, the more convenient immigration services for entry, sojourn and exit, and the improvement of the nationality system by allowing the dual nationality and relaxing the requirements for general naturalization. Additionally, at the national-level, the policy reveals its support to the effort in finding and attracting highly skilled foreigners via 'Contact Korea'<sup>5</sup>, overseas job consulting and arrangement through KOTRA's<sup>6</sup> 'overseas offices, 'HuNet Korea System'<sup>7</sup>, and overseas job fairs<sup>8</sup>. Apart from attracting more highly skilled labors, the policy also aims to attract foreign manpower for the balanced development of the national economy. Although the implementation of the Employment Permit System and Work-Visit system could reduce the unskilled labor shortage in manufacturing sectors, the shortage still continues. In order to attract skilled foreign labor in responding to regional and industrial demand, the policy was planned to improve the skilled production labor introduction system and expanding access channels for skilled labor. Moreover, to attract unskilled labor to reflect corporate demand

and social costs, the foreign workers are being introduced to meet the demand of companies by the Ministry of Labor through the selection of skills, experiences, and other qualifications along with Korean language fluency, based on their training performance and qualification levels. In addition to the simplified employment procedures and the rationalized employment cost by the Ministry of Labor and the Ministry of Justice, the policy also attempts to improve the quota system for unskilled labor, to create the better working environment, to reinforce safety and health training and to support for the improvement of the foreign workers' life in Korea through the consultation services and the support centers for the foreign workers under the local government.

Believing that international migration can be a constructive economic and social force contributing to national economy, and with the demand for more working population to sustain the national productivity and to procrastinate the population shortfall, the open-door immigration policy could be a favorable way out. South Korea's migration management strategy acts in accordance with the neo-liberal approach that aims to ensure the right number and the right types of the migrants to reflect the national demand. Its direction is now to pursue and to attract more highly skilled foreign labors with the opening door to a very friendly and pleas-

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<sup>5</sup> A comprehensive service support system to attract highly skilled foreigners by Ministry of Knowledge Economy, Ministry of Foreign Affairs & Trade, Ministry of Labor, and Ministry of Justice

<sup>6</sup> Korea Trade-Investment Promotion Agency (<http://english.kotra.or.kr>)

<sup>7</sup> An online visa recommendation and inspection system by Ministry of Justice

<sup>8</sup> The oversea job fairs held by Ministry of Knowledge Economy, Ministry of Foreign Affairs & Trade and Ministry of Education, Science and Technology

ing atmosphere by believing that they could help South Korea achieve the more advanced economic development. Still, South Korea is at the same time carefully assorting the right kind and the right number of the skilled and unskilled labor with Visa, the Employment Permit System, and the Work-Visit system.

The possibility that the foreigners could contribute to the economic development and help strengthening the national competitiveness is so high that South Korea could not turn down. Regardless the conflicts and the problems the immigration would produce, the benefits of the on-demand immigrants are still desirable and undeniable. Conventionally, it comes to the Koreans now to judge how wide the door of their homogeneous land should be left open.

### **Homogeneous Korea: Single-race nationalism and patriotism**

The open-door policy might put a great contribution to the national economy. However, the policy works as a double-edge sword; on one hand, it reflects the national demand for more labor, but on the other hand it could open up to social problems regarding the social frictions and the discrimination against the newcomers.

In the recognition of the 'national identity' approach, the country's history, national

identity and social conflicts are viewed as a construction of the immigration policies. Then, the understanding of Korean national identity and the Korean's attitudes and beliefs is required for the explication of Korean's migration management strategies underlying the immigration policies.

Noted that the myth of ethnic homogeneity remains widespread in Korean society and believed that it is still prevailing the component of the national identity (Yang, 2009), it is a conventional consequence of the state nationalism and patriotism acculturation that has provoked the homogeneously nationalistic sense from time to time in order to create the feeling of togetherness and to draw the citizen's participation in helping the nation achieve the same goals.

Scrutinizing Korean history of the state-led nationalism and ethnocentrism acculturation, the advent of the ethnic homogeneity or the single race nationalism displayed the state exploitation of the nationalistic and ethnocentric consciousness to overcome with the national crisis dated back to the 14<sup>th</sup> century. By emphasizing the 'Dangun'<sup>9</sup> myth, it provoked the sense of unity among the Koreans as sharing the same ancestor and the sense of being superior to other neighboring countries as being distinctly civilized as old as China.

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<sup>9</sup> Dangun Myth: The Korean history started when Dangun founded a nation in 2333 BC. He was a son of Hwanung and Wungnyo, a bear-woman. Hwanung, who was the illegitimate son of Hwanin, the heavenly lord, descended to earth with his magical power and the four guardian gods to rule human world. One day, a bear and a tiger came to ask Hwanung to turn them into human. To fulfill the wish, the bear and the tiger had to stay in the cave without the sunlight and to eat only garlic and mugwort for a hundred days. Only the bear endured and was transformed into a woman. The bear-woman got married with Hwanung and begot Dangun who grew up and founded the old Joseon. (Moon, 1997)

Traditionally invented in Joseon Dynasty (1392-1910), the myth of Dangun was not meant to create the public sense of being homogeneous. However, later during the colonization by Japan (1910-1945), the Koreans developed the idea of ethnic homogeneity as a counter measure against the Japanese propagandist notion of '*naisen ittai*' or 'the Korea and Japan are one and the same' (Han, 2007). Then, in order to gain the recognition, the Koreans emphasized their unique identity and the Korean national characters to differentiate themselves from the Japanese as well as to provoke the nationalism at the same time.

Apart from utilizing the homogeneously nationalist sentiments and the national identity as a counter measure to the Japanese assimilation during the colonization, the Koreans adopted the idea of ethnic homogeneity and transformed it into the Korean nationalism that was later reinforced by economic growth, democratization movement and foreign currencies crisis. Regardless the forming of the Korean nationalism, each time the nation faced with dilemmas, the nationalism was always pulled out as a secret weapon to quietly strike back the difficulties that were created externally. Throughout the Korean War, nationalistic elements were strengthened as the competition occurred between North Korea and South Korea over which side was more nationalistic and therefore more legitimate (Han, 2007). There were reports stating that the nationalism induced by the anti-communist sentiment was very strong during the civil war as a consequence of the civil war triggered by the communist North Korean's invasion. Under the first Republic (1948-1960), nationalism was based

on the anti-japanism and the anti-communism and it is also believed that President Rhee Syngman utilized these sentiments to secure the legitimacy of his regime as well as President Park Chunghee manipulated it during his authoritarian regime.

Under his presidency, Park Chunghee (1961-1979) emphasized the nationalist consciousness by strengthening it through the education and acculturation. He utilized the Korean tradition and anti-communist sentiment in order to provoke the sense of nationalism by expecting to create the unity of the Koreans and the sense of sacrificing for the nation to help together revitalizing the country through the economic development. He launched the ideology of official nationalism with the themes of 'self-reliant economy' and 'self-reliant defense', together with '*tongdo sogi*', meaning 'Morality of the East and Technologies of the West', the nationalist concern that shared by the Third world elites, aiming to modernize the nation with the capitalist industrialization, defend the communist in the North and establish a national identity with the goal to achieve the economic development. (Moon, 1997)

Nationalism and ethnic homogeneity were emphasized most of the time throughout Korean history. With these feelings that have been instilled to the heart of the Koreans and aroused occasionally, whether or not Korea is homogenous, it is believed to be a magnificent tool in encouraging Korean people to sacrifice their own personal life and goal and contribute to the national achievement, although it might covertly create the negative feelings toward foreigners as the Korean have tried to exclude them for centuries.

### **From nationalism to international immigrants conflicts**

As responding to the global movement of people as a consequence of the globalization era, most wealthy states centered their immigration policies to attract necessary foreign human resources. South Korea, with the experience of the speedy cumulative economic growth contributing the nation to enter the OECD in 1996, is as well attempting to pursue open-door policies by encouraging foreigners to migrate in order to secure the people who have the knowledge, information and the capacity to lead technological innovation, recognizing as the highly skilled foreigners, as announced in the present plan for immigration policy. Moreover, besides attracting foreign talents, South Korean government foresees the openness as a contribution to the national competitiveness.

Earlier claimed that the open immigration policy works as a double-edge sword, still, it seems that most developed nations have adopted the open policy for longer than half a century. However, they could not deny that it also engraved the frictions onto the society regarding the conflicts between the minority and majority.

Formerly notable in conforming the exclusionary approach, or 'not very friendly' one, even if the South Korean government is now in pursuing the open-door policy, along with the multiculturalism, there were numerous cases showing the recent serious conflicts regarding the immigrant workers and the

natives. Witnessed the conflicts caused by the openness policies in the European countries, South Korea must have already had calculated seriously over the cost and benefits the nation would have to risk. In relation to the nationalism and patriotism whether or not they were a consequence of the homogeneous belief or the patriotism and nationalism acculturation by the Korean political leaders, it is undeniable that they last in Korea. As the sentiments and attitudes are considered to be very much elusive, it is hard to identify whether there are marks on the Koreans regarding much love toward their nation or their own believe-to-be single race and whether or not this would obstruct the open of the country to the international immigration.

Examining South Koreans' notions of national identity, attitudes toward foreigners and racial/ethnic minorities, and social distance feelings toward foreigners and minority groups, in '*South Korean's attitudes toward Foreigners, Minorities and Multiculturalism*'<sup>10</sup>, it revealed that South Koreans tends to think that the immigrants in South Korea are not a serious threat to South Korean economy and culture because they are small and powerless minority group. Moreover, the South Koreans tend to have sympathy toward the immigrants as they are disadvantaged and mistreated. However, it was noted that even if they are more open at the individual level, at the international level, South Korea still remains at defensive nationalism. (Yoon, et al, 2008)

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<sup>10</sup> Paper prepared for presentation at the annual meeting of the American Sociological Association, Boston, MA, 2008 done by In-Jin Yoon, Young-Ho Song and Young-Joon Bae (Korea University)

Although it is widely perceived that South Korea tends to be ethnocentric and exclusive to foreigners, the research shows that nowadays the Koreans' attitudes become more open and the Koreans tend to have better acceptances toward foreigners. However, in the public society, the reality might not go in accordance with the research in which the conflicts caused by the misunderstanding and bias still occur from time to time to fortify that the sentiments and beliefs cannot be eased so easily.

Widely believed that the immigrants could provoke strong public sentiment in the host countries caused by differences in racial, language, religions, ethnic backgrounds and diverse cultural traditions, it unquestionably leads to problems caused by misunderstanding. Moreover, the native-born could somehow perceive the immigrants as the threat to their jobs and their own ethnic cultures. Then, the government's determination in transferring South Korea into a multicultural society is beyond question, first, on how the government would manage to achieve the multicultural society on the land of enduring homogeneously nationalistic and patriotic sentiments that had been provoked throughout its history of national building, and second, whether or not the strong pride of Korean national identity and the ethnocentric consciousness would obstruct the state desired approach.

Current report of Korean Times and Busan Haps (2012) revealed the survey result conducted by the Joint Committee with Migrants in Korea (JCMK) that 73 percent of migrants workers had experienced verbally abused, 26.8 percent suffered from physically abused,

and nearly 14 percent claimed that they were sexually harassed. Even though, it seems that the government had tried to lessen the conflict regarding humanitarian issues and working conditions of migrant workers via numbers of policies and programs, the human right conditions of the foreign workers seem not to improve much. This might imply that may be the problems cannot be easily diminished in reality.

Regardless of the foreign workers human rights violation that either caused by miscommunication, racism, cultural superiority or just pure individual bias, there revealed the conflicts caused by the immigrants as well. Recently, Chosun Ilbo (19 Jan, 2012) reported the conflicts in the 'Chinatown neighborhood' in Seoul. With the work-visit program that allows ethnic Korean from China and Russia to stay and work in South Korea for 3 years, the number of the return Koreans has increased sharply. This provoked the conflicts in Seoul in which that the residential areas of those ethnic Koreans from China have been spread out in wider area triggering the complaints by locals that the influx of the foreigners cause the drop of the property price due to the increasing crimes and other problems. Moreover, there were also reports of the increasing crimes led by foreigners involving in gambling, prostitution, illegal smuggling, drug trafficking and loan sharking.

In pursuing the open-door policies and multicultural society, the government should act immediately to assault with those problems mentioned. Moreover, the program and the policy to prevent and to cope with the discrimination and to promote understanding between the natives and the newcomers should be well considered.

## **Korean Multiculturalism and Social Integration**

South Korea's intention to adopt the 'social integration'<sup>11</sup> as a mean to mobilize the country toward multiculturalism is obviously seen through its new immigration policies and programs that were established to lay the foundation in the society preparing the Koreans for the influx of the immigrants as predicted as well as creating understanding among the Koreans regarding the immigrants. Not only the discrimination toward immigrants that has been concerned, but also the better living condition and the assistance to the new arrivals are also the main focus of the policy.

South Korea seems to be in the process of adjusting themselves according the changing world situation. Just like other countries, the phenomenon of globalization intruded Korea. With the movement of people coming in and out, in order to attract the talented and the potential ones, the society as well calls for an adjustment not only to attract those foreign labors, but also to assist them once they arrive in, in order to prevent the conflicts and to keep the social cohesion strong.

Realizing the situation, in the last decade, South Korea established 'The Korea Immigration Service Foundation', aiming to

assist citizens of other countries residing in Korea to feel at home here. Later in 2009, the first basic plan for immigration policy was released with the aim to involve better education of both Koreans about immigrants and of immigrants about Korea. As of the policy initiative, the pilot version of 'the Korean Immigration and Integration program' (KIIP) was designed and implemented by the Ministry of Justice through social integration division. The program consists of two halves: Korean language training and Understanding Korea Society. In the Korean Language programs, there are 5 proficiency levels to be completed before move up to the Understanding Korean Society where the immigrants will be taught about Korean society and culture. Now, most people who are taking KIIP are foreign laborers who hope to become Korean citizens and to have greater freedom in changing jobs. (Korea.net 2009)

Moreover, in '*The First Basic Plan for Immigration Policy*', the direction and the action plan to promote social integration were stated clear. To achieve high-quality social integration, the policy revealed the emphasis over the needs to improve public understanding of multicultural society by raising awareness through school education, social education, boosting promotional efforts for multicultural

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<sup>11</sup> OECD defined 'social integration' as "the process by which people who are relatively new to a country (i.e. whose roots do not reach deeper than two or three generations) become part of society". However, the concept of the 'European integration' refers to shaping a new structure out of individual entities, the nation states emphasizing on the new, collectively determined unity could be useful for conceiving a two-way process of integrating migrants and established nationals (OECD, 2003) Moreover, the process of the integration is explained as the process for the immigrants to learn a new culture, to acquire rights and obligation, to gain access to positions and social status, to build personal relationship with members of the host society and to form a feeling of belonging to and identification with that society

society, reinforcing participation and communication between the local communities and the foreign migrants in addition to the enforcing of the immigration law in order to prevent the conflicts that would be invoked by the illegal migrations and the immigrants themselves.

### **Conclusion**

South Korea migration trends and situation as well as the immigration policies reflect national interests both state and civic society. The policies' direction shows its aim to attract more foreign labor and achieve multicultural society with social integration with the hope to make South Korea a desirable destination of migration and create social cohesion where the Korean nationals and foreigners could live together in harmony.

By studying South Korea's recent immigration policies and society regarding the migration trends, societal conditions, history and national identity, it reveals the powerful determinants that have influenced greatly on the immigration policies. First, the immigration policies in South Korea are shaped by the economic driven factors majorly. In order to reflect the demand of the labor market regarding foreign labor due to the labor shortage and the business sectors that desire for foreign talents or foreign human capitals that could contribute to the national competitiveness, South Korea, therefore, is in pursuing of the openness in order to attract more foreign manpower. Secondly, social driven factors also serve as a determinant to the immigration policies as well. The challenge that South Korea is facing and becoming more seriously in the near future would be the problem of the working population

declines. In order to attract foreign manpower or create a 'Pull' factors drawing immigrants into the country, South Korea might need to adjust the national atmosphere to be more open, and friendly for foreigners. Therefore, to battle with discrimination toward the foreign labor and foreigners as a whole and to reconcile social frictions becomes highly significant and, hence, should be concerned as a priority once designing the immigration policies and immigration control.

The rationales to explain why South Korea desires for more foreign labor and attempt to achieve multicultural society is that South Korea is in need of more working population in a short time in order to serve an immediate need of the business sectors in fulfilling the vacant positions. Moreover, to prevent the crisis that would cause by the instant shortfall of labor as a result of the total declines in population; the working population in the nations with young and growing population could serve as an option that South Korea might consider to acquire. In addition, to gain more competitiveness in the fierce global market competition, the talented human capitals are, as well, very tempting to possess, regardless of their nationality and ethnic backgrounds. In order to develop the economy with the full potentials, the highly skilled foreign labors that correspond to the market demand are also attractive enough. Therefore with multicultural society, South Korea will appear more attractively to those prospective foreign workers.

In addition to South Korea's immigration policies' aims to pursue the openness and to attract more foreign labor, they also try to promote the multicultural society where native

Koreans and foreigners could live together happily. Practically, with the enduring history of being homogeneously nationalistic, to achieve the openness, it would take greater endeavor than of the government to overcome with the challenges. However as to lay the foundation to the society and design the action plan to overcome with the challenges, South Korea planned to utilize 'social integration' as a tool to mobilize the nation with the homogeneous nationalism toward multicultural society. To prepare the citizen for the societal change, the policy shows its plans to acknowledge the citizen about the multicultural society through public education. Moreover, it plans to assist the new arrivals with language and culture education, and the consultation program helping them adjust themselves to their new home. In addition, the plans also encourage the participation of the foreigners in the local communities so that both the native residents and the newcomers could create better understanding within each other and live together in harmony.

Whether or not the ethnocentric nationalism would obstruct the attempt to become multicultural, it still remains unclear to answer that the ethnocentrism was a cause of discrimination or conflicts between the origins and the immigrants as the problems occurred recently show more conflicts that not only caused by the natives rejecting the immigrants with the discrimination towards race or ethnic backgrounds, but the rejections also seem to be affected by the miscommunication: verbally and physically, more than just by the ethnocentric feelings purely. Nevertheless, since the public consciousness is elusive, the judgment is hard to define. South Korea as a very homogenous

and racist country could be just a myth and the world's perception of South Korea has been deceived by this myth for too long now. Therefore, to judge whether or not South Korea could overcome with the statement and achieve multicultural society, as they long for might be a time-consuming event.

The Korean society has been a close society that excluded foreigners for a long time. Therefore, it is hard to integrate the segmented pieces into one. Besides the support of the language and cultural education to the foreigners, the government should also encourage the citizens to adjust their attitudes and behaviors toward foreigners in order to make the government's achievement more comprehensive. The conflicts in the society are not only caused by the foreigners do not understand the Korean society, but also the Koreans do not understand foreigners and do not aware of the harmless differences. The emphasizing of education on various ethnic backgrounds and foreign cultural differences might create better acceptance toward foreigners among the Koreans, as it is the foundation of the mutual understanding achievement. Moreover, the government should also point out the advantages the nation could gain from the immigration to the people because without it, it would lead to numbers of economic problems.

The immigration should be a win-win situation for the South Koreans and the immigrant labors; the immigrants could access to a better life in South Korea and the South Koreans could benefit from them regarding the labor substitution and the foreign talents and innovation. However, it might be a long journey of the South Korean's government

in achieving multicultural society unless the better understanding between the Koreans and the foreigners can be settled and that is when they can live together happily in South Korea.

As this paper has focused only on the response of South Korea's at the policy level that acts upon the national interest regarding the immigration and the recent migration situation, further study on the issue of the civic society's response and action plans to support and to respond to the national policy shall be

done in order to provide with more preferable and advantageous resolutions to the concerns over the immigration in South Korea.

### **Acknowledgement**

This paper is a revision to the paper to be presented in the National Conference on Korean Studies on July 16<sup>th</sup> 2012 at the Faculty of Humanities, Ramkhamhaeng University, Bangkok, Thailand

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