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Transnational Migrant Workers and the Politics of Culture: Conceptual Discussion

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Abstract_South Korea, long considered an ethnically homogenous country, faces unprecedented demographic changes: long life expectations, rock-bottom birth rates, changing family structures, and migration. Migration in particular poses challenges to the South Korean nation-state, as it did (and continues to do so) in European countries. These challenges have produced debates about multiculturalism in South Korea. In this article, I map a conceptual landscape of the issues surrounding migration and multiculturalism in Korea, including the social changes precipitated by international migration. I place these issues in the context of past histories and present anxieties by doing a comparative analysis of Northern European experiments in multiculturalism. Like South Korea, Northern European countries were historically ethnically homogenous but faced demographic changes in the wake of international immigration. Although these countries initially welcomed immigrants and implemented liberal policies to protect their rights, recent economic downturns have generated a backlash against this embrace of multiculturalism. The successes and failures of these countries' multiculturalist policies have much to offer in mapping the conceptual landscape of a newly-branded multiculturalist society like South Korea (hereafter Korea). In addition to this comparative analysis, I will also critically examine conceptual and theoretical discussions on international migration and multiculturalism, together with an analysis of policy trends. Past discussion on international migration has focused on foreign spouses and their families, but I will widen this focus to include transnational workers. This wider focus expands the discussion beyond multiculturalism in order to examine other topics raised by a diverse society, including cultural diversity and social pluralism.

Keywords_Transnational, Migrant, Workers, Multiculturalism, South Korea, Scandinavia

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South Korea, long considered an ethnically homogenous country, faces unprecedented demographic changes: long life expectations, rock-bottom birth rates, changing family structures, and migration. Migration in particular poses challenges to the South Korean nation-state, as it did (and continues to do so) in European countries. These challenges have produced debates about multiculturalism in South Korea.

In this article, I map a conceptual landscape of the issues surrounding migration and multiculturalism in Korea, including the social changes precipitated by international migration. I place these issues in the context of past histories and present anxieties by doing a comparative analysis of Northern European experiments in multiculturalism. Like South Korea, Northern European countries were historically ethnically homogenous but faced demographic changes in the wake of international immigration. Although these countries initially welcomed immigrants and implemented liberal policies to protect their rights, recent economic downturns have generated a backlash against this embrace of multiculturalism. The successes and failures of these countries' multiculturalist policies have much to offer in mapping the conceptual landscape of a newly-branded multiculturalist society like South Korea (hereafter Korea).

In addition to this comparative analysis, I will also critically examine conceptual and theoretical discussions on international migration and multiculturalism, together with an analysis of policy trends. Past discussion on international migration has focused on foreign spouses and their families, but I will widen this focus to include transnational workers. This wider focus expands the discussion beyond multiculturalism in order to examine other topics raised by a diverse society, including cultural diversity and social pluralism.

In doing a case study of international migration and its resulting multiculturalism on a country such as Korea, I adopt what Nina Glick Schiller and Thomas Faist call a "global perspective on migration." This global perspective takes into account inequalities between the global North and South and East and West, and acknowledges migrants as a major force in reshaping social and political formations (Glick Schiller and Faist, 2010: 12). Nation-states are positioned and transformed within

global fields of power, and these fields affect the migration process, including movement, settlement, and transnational connection (*Ibid:* 27). I will examine Korea's influx of international migration with these global fields of power in mind.

1. Capitalism and Migration

The movements of highly-motivated individuals alone cannot account for the current trend of global migration. The global economy has transformed, and in order for accumulation to proceed, "capital must be able to mobilize world labor without restriction" (Luxemburg cited in Foster, 2011: 8). Many scholars in international migration studies have offered another explanation to global migration: the world system theory. These scholars take into account the global circulation of labor and capital. For instance, sociologist Saskia Sassen attributes migration to uneven development, viewing migration as a "global labor supply system" (1988: 31-6) that supplies cheap labor to labor markets in economically advanced countries. She emphasizes the fact that uneven allocation of economic and political power in the global economy facilitates international migration. Rich countries use their capital to exploit the resources of poor countries, particularly labor, thereby becoming richer. This perpetuates uneven development, and by extension, international migration.

However, the world system theory cannot explain the complex nature of current global migration, where the conceptual as well as the geographic line between center and periphery becomes blurry (Keane, 2006, cited in Ahn, 2013: 31). Traditionally, migration is thought to flow from the (less developed) global South to the (more developed) global North. It is time that we revise that conventional thinking. Today, migration can flow from the South to the East, the South to the South, or even from the North to the South. In this globalized world, capital flows in more than one direction, and therefore labor does as well. Like countries in the global North, countries in East Asia are now resolving labor shortages with imported migrant labor (Massey, 1998). Developed countries such as Japan, Singapore, and South Korea

face labor shortages in 3-D (difficult, dangerous, and dirty) industries, which have expedited the rise of inter-Asian and West-East migration (Haines, 2012; Yamashita, 2008). This new phenomenon indicates the rise of regionalism in the midst of globalization. In other words, newly-emerged regional centers have attracted migrant workers not only from faraway countries but also from nearby ones.

It may also be productive to view this new migration pattern as a reflection of the new international division of labor, in particular the rise of the East Asian economy (Castles and Miller, 2009). Change in the capitalist system during the post-Fordist era entailed new international division of labor in terms of capital flow and labor mobilization. Anthropologist Jonathan Friedman, who employed a macro-historical and systematic framework, sees globalization as "a phase of decentralization of wealth and power in the world arenas that is a hallmark of a decline in economic hegemony, a phase accompanied by enormous dislocations and migrations of people, by class polarization and cultural fragmentation, and by the rise of new powerful regions (2003: 744). Anthropologist Don Kalb similarly observes that since the 1970s, Western capital has been divested and liquidated in response to over-accumulation and a declining rate of profit. Abstract wealth flowed out, first to the global South and later to the global East, where much larger, more disciplined, and better-educated proletarians were to be found as well as to be made (2013: 262). Accordingly, countries in East Asia have become regions of rapid growth (Friedman, 2002: 30), which has attracted labor from many places, including the global West.

2. Emigration to Immigration

Few predicted that there would be a reversal in the flow of migration in European countries such as Spain, Portugal, Italy, and Greece. These countries were known for their outflow of immigrants to the Americas, as well as to other Western and Northern European countries. However, they have recently become destinations for other migrants. For instance, Italy is a "new" country of immigration thanks to its highly

segmented and informal labor market (Caponio, 2008: 445, 449). Whereas before Italy had been a linguistically and culturally homogenous society, it has now become a magnet for migrants from African and Middle Eastern countries. There are 4.9 million foreign nationals in Italy as of 2014, in addition to an estimated 670,000 (2008) illegal immigrants.[1] Since the expansion of the European Union, more migrant workers have come from surrounding European states, particularly Eastern Europe, as well as Asia and North Africa. This change signals the strong relationship between immigration and job opportunities.

In his book *Darkness before Daybreak: African Migrants Living on the Margins in Southern Italy Today,* anthropologist Hans Lucht (2012) examines the trajectories, experiences, and life worlds of Ghanaian fishermen residing illegally in Naples, Italy. To understand illegal migration, Lucht argues, one must take into consideration the wider global economy and, in this particular instance, those who are cut off from that globalized world. By moving from a fishing village in Ghana with dwindling fish, the fishermen attempt to "reposition themselves within the circulation of goods both symbolic and material by travelling illegally to Europe…as a strategy of recovering their lives and livelihoods from a discouraging future" (2012: x).

While living in overcrowded high-rise flat buildings on the rundown outskirts of Naples, Ghanaian fishermen are subject to periodic racist attacks, attempted sexual abuse and targeted muggings, on top of physically exhausting construction work. These trials inevitably postpone their hope for "existential reciprocity": the human need to live in a world (human and extra-human) that is willing to repay, or at least react to, one's efforts, suffering, sacrifices and work. Then why is poverty and suffering in Naples preferred over staying in the village with one's family? Even if suffering in Europe may have come as a surprise to many, few regretted making the journey. As a research subject stated: "It is always better to leave than to rot away in the village. If one is already dead, socially and existentially, there is not much to lose" (2012: 83). In other words, migration has become a journey towards not only economic success but also towards the possibility of feeling existentially connected to, and re-

1 *Resident Foreigners on 1st January by age and sex, Year 2014*. Retrieved from Istat. 1 October 2014.

ciprocated by, one's surroundings.

The South Korean case for international migration is similar to Italy's for several reasons. Like Italy, there has been a dramatic U-turn from emigration to immigration in Korea since the 1980s. In addition, Italy was ethnically and linguistically homogenous before the influx of immigration. There have never been one or a few prevailing ethnic minorities, such as there were in other European countries or the U.S. This ethnic and linguistic homogeneity also prevailed in South Korea prior to change in international migration. As in Italy, migration toward South Korea developed in a spontaneous and unplanned manner, without a coherent immigration policy or, until the mid-2000s, any integration programs.[2] Finally, the case of Ghanaian fishermen in Italy may provide a framework for understanding the motivations of international migrants to Korea, who face similarly harsh conditions.

3. Foreign Migrant Workers in South Korea: Structural Phenomenon

Historically, the Korean diaspora had much to do with colonialism and the Cold War. The Korean diaspora dates back to the Japanese colonization of 1910-45, when many Koreans left the country to escape political and economic hardships or carry on independence movements. Most settled in China, the former Soviet Union and Japan. Contemporary transnational Korean migration, on the other hand, has much to do with South Korean developmental transition and globalization, albeit within a series of neoliberal shifts in global political economies.[3] South Korea has trans-

2 See BBC – Italy: North African migrant and racism: http://youtu.be/RqzMzQ1egkk

3 Harvey offers a clear definition of neoliberalism as a system of "accumulation by dispossession," which has four main components: 1) the "privatization and commodification" of public goods; 2) "financialization," in which any kind of good (or bad) can be turned into an instrument of economic speculation; 3) the "management and manipulation of crises"; and 4) "state redistribution," in which the state becomes an agent of the upward redistribution of wealth (2007: 159-164 passim).

formed from a labor-exporting country in the 1960s and 70s to a labor importing country since the 1980s.

During its initial phase of rapid capital industrialization in the 1960s and 70s, South Korea primarily exported labor through transnational out-migration. Much of this out-migration was state-directed and the direct payments and remittances from migrants amounted to $375 million in 1973 (Korea Development Institute, 1975, cited in Lim, 2010: 54). Thousands of Korean workers migrated annually to other countries in the 1960s and 70s, notably to West Germany. By 1974, there were 12,000 South Koreans in West Germany: 7,300 nurses, 2,240 miners, and others (Chun, 1995: 336). During the construction boom in the Middle East in the 1970s and 80s, South Korea sent tens of thousands of Koreans to work as construction workers for Korean companies. These companies captured almost 7 percent of the market, and Korea became the sixth-largest international contractor in the region (Eckert et al., 1990: 402). South Korea also dispatched a total of about 300,000 troops to Vietnam between 1965 and 1973, reaping important benefits from its role as America's chief ally in the Vietnam War. For instance, the war accounted for 40 percent of South Korea's crucial foreign-exchange receipts (Eckert et al., 1990: 397, 398). More importantly, following liberalized immigration policies in the United States and Canada and emigration policies in South Korea, large numbers of South Koreans began to emigrate.

By the mid-1980s, however, South Korea began to import labor due to growing labor demands within South Korea and a diminished need for direct foreign exchange remittances. In South Korea, foreign migrant workers have played the role of a "reserve army of labor." As Marx argued, "the spread of capitalist production in [Marx's] time-and after it-relied on pools of workers on the margins of metropolitan economies, 'reserve armies of labor,' to ensure the flexibility of production costs, holding down wages in upswings of the business cycle and cutting payrolls in downturns (Marx cited in Surak, 2013: 87). South Korean capitalism has expanded regionally and globally, while labor supplies at home have diminished. One response to these diminishing supplies is the outsourcing of manufacturing jobs to cheap-

wage locations in China or Southeast Asia. Another response has been robotization. However, neither construction nor service work lends itself readily to such solutions, so a "reserve army of labor" comprised of migrant workers remains necessary. These immigrant workers include not only ethnic Koreans (descendants of earlier Korean emigrants) but also those from South and Southeast Asian countries such as the Philippines, Bangladesh, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Pakistan, Indonesia, etc.

Several factors led to the increased demand for foreign workers. In 1987, small- and medium-sized manufacturing firms were increasingly experiencing labor shortages, especially in the 3-D industries. They faced rapid wage increases and difficulty hiring Korean workers to take jobs considered undesirable.[4] Sociologist Andrew Kim has pointed out the accelerated labor market segmentation as another cause of international migration. Since the 1990s, large firms have subcontracted some of their labor-intensive production lines to smaller firms (with 5 to 29 employees) in order to cope with escalating national and international competition (2009: 74, 75). This subcontracting has brought about uneven labor shortages. Hyuk-Rae Kim and Ingyu Oh (2011) provide additional context by noting three broad demographic changes in Korea: a decline in fertility, a rapidly aging population, and a lopsided sex ratio.[5]

Until 1990, South Korea's immigration policy restricted admission of foreign migrants for employment unless they were professionals and/or investors (Kong et al., 2010: 254). Thus South Korea experienced a phenomenon called the migration transition, or a change from emigration to immigration, later than other industrial-

4 Korea has experienced a deceleration in the growth of its labor force as the rural labor surplus became exhausted and the youth (15-19 age group) in the labor force declined significantly due to longer schooling.

5 Firstly, the fertility decline has progressed to a point where the conventional level of population growth—i.e. at least replacement level—is no longer tenable. Secondly, the rapidly ageing population in each country has dramatically increased the population dependency ratio (i.e. the total population divided by the total economically active population). Finally, Korea and Taiwan, in particular, experienced a skewed sex ratio in favor of male babies at birth in the early 1990s, although the tendency subsided in the 2000s. The Korean sex ratio at birth in fact reached 116.5 male per 100 female babies in the 1990s (Kim and Oh, 2011: 1564).

ized countries. Foreign newcomers (primarily unskilled workers) began migrating to Korea beginning in the 1980s. From 1990 to 2007, the number of foreign residents in South Korea grew from just under 50,000 to over 1 million, or 2 percent of South Korea's population. Two percent is considered a significant number; it challenges the myth of South Korea's homogeneity and the assumption that South Korea is only for "Koreans." These demographic changes hint at South Korea's slow transformation into a *de facto* country of immigration (Lim, 2010: 51, 52).

Guest Worker Scheme

The Korean approach to migrant workers can be characterized as a "guest worker" model, where immigration is induced "by needs of the economy and is defined as temporary" (Entzinger cited in Kong et al., 2010: 260). Wary of incurring the well-known unintended consequences of *de jure* guest workers like Japan, Korea instituted small *de facto* versions in the form of "intern" and "trainee" programs. When South Korea's labor shortage in the manufacturing sector peaked at around 11 percent in the early 1990s, the government initiated the "Foreign Industrial Trainee System." Between 1994 and 1997, the government brought in, on average, about 50,000 trainees per year (J. Kim, 2011: 1585).

The South Korean government issues four different types of work permit to manage and control the influx of foreign workers: Professional Work Permit Systems [PWPS], Industrial Training Systems [ITS], Employment Management Systems [EMS] (for less-skilled overseas Koreans) and Employment Permit Systems [EPS] (for unskilled foreign workers) (A. Kim, 2009: 75). The ITS was implemented in 1991. This training program consists of one year's training and a two-year work permit system. The four main sectors in which these trainees first work are manufacturing, construction, agricultural industry and inshore and coastal fisheries. However, the trainee program engendered many problems. It turned out to be a labor recruitment scheme designed not only to underpay migrant workers, but also to repatriate them once their economic utility had been exhausted. Trainees often became undocu-

mented workers because they ran away from the program for better pay elsewhere. Just as Japan's program has been criticized by the U.S. and UN for implementing forced labor akin to slavery, in Korea such abuses have faced sharp criticism.

Concerted civil-society criticism of extensive rights violations obliged the Korean government to shift to a formal guest worker scheme in the early 2000s. The formal guest worker scheme aimed to undercut the role of brokers and check the multiplication of illegal workers, who by this time outnumbered trainees (Surak, 2010: 98). The government implemented the EPS for less-skilled or unskilled foreign workers in 2004 and abolished the problematic ITS in 2007. The new system aims to provide equal treatment to foreign workers, including basic labor rights, employment insurance and legal minimum wages. All activities of the EPS are strictly regulated by government agencies, unlike the ITS, which was controlled and operated by business associations. Although workers receive more protection under the EPS, they are still banned from changing workplaces on their own and are allowed to work in Korea for up to three years (later extended to five years).

To establish labor migration through bilateral agreements between the sending and receiving countries, the South Korean government established a memorandum of understanding [MOU] with six Asian countries in 2004: Thailand, Vietnam, Mongolia, Sri Lanka, Indonesia and the Philippines. It established MOUs with other countries in the following years: Uzbekistan, Pakistan and Cambodia in 2006; and China, Bangladesh, the Kyrgyz Republic, Nepal, Myanmar and East Timor in 2007 (A. Kim, 2009: 77). More than 80 percent of foreigners in Korea come from Asian countries. More recently, however, foreign migrant workers have come from dozens of countries from all over the world, including Russia, Pakistan, India, Uzbekistan, Brazil and Nigeria. In 2007, nationals from China accounted for 47.2%, followed by the USA (10.5%), Vietnam (6.7%), the Philippines (4.8%), Thailand (4.5%), Japan (3.9%) and Mongolia (3.0%). Accordingly, the number of such workers entering Korea increased from 33,861 in 1994 to 49,345 in 2000, 106,688 in 2004 and 99,232 in 2005 (A. Kim, 2009: 87). These workers are typically employed in agriculture, fishery and the service industry, as well as construction, dyeing, auto-

parts, tanning, textiles, furniture manufacturing and other small-to medium-sized manufacturing industries.

Like various citizenship regimes around the world, which tend to privilege the inclusion of migrants designated as "co-ethnics," South Korea has encouraged the migration of ethnic Koreans residing in China, the former USSR (classified as Korean Russians) and Mongolia. Unlike other foreigners, Joseonjok (overseas Koreans in China)[6] have more labor-market freedom and can either renew their visas indefinitely or apply for permanent residence (Surak, 2013: 98). Since 2005, approximately 65 percent of Chinese immigrants to Korea have been ethnically Korean.[7] In addition, ethnic Koreans are often allowed easier entry into the country and provided wider choices in employment than non-Koreans. The government embraced them by creating visas especially for ethnic Koreans. Former Korean nationals can now restore their Korean nationality or reside in the country with one of the visa categories, such as F1-1 and F1-2, which are easily renewed and lead to permanent residence or naturalization after two to three years. Later in 2007, ethnic Koreans were given additional privilege such as multiple entries within five years and wider choices of employment, including some service sectors in which non-Koreans are not permitted to work. However, scholars note the contrast between the allocation of relative privilege to these ethnic returnee migrants and their systematic exploitation as a cheap labor force just like all other undocumented workers. In addition, Joseonjok are socially prejudiced or discriminated against in ways that critically challenge the homogeneity myth.

Even though migrant workers are increasingly important for economies and communities, they continue to face institutional discrimination, human rights violations and exploitation in workplaces, communities and households. According to Sociologist Dong Hoon Sul (2009: 65), who has conducted research on migrant workers extensively, 92 percent of migrant workers and 100 percent of undocumented work-

6 I apply the official South Korean Romanization system to Joseonjok, which appears as Chosunjok according to the McCune-Reischauer Romanization.

7 See Caren Freeman's excellent ethnography, *Making and Faking Kinship: Marriage and Labor Migration between China and South Korea* (2011).

ers reported experiencing traumatic experience since living in Korea. Some migrant workers have suffered severe discrimination. At workplaces, they were subject to prejudice/discrimination, insults or verbal abuse and wage theft, while in their everyday life they experienced prejudice/discrimination and violence. The undocumented workers reported fear of inspection and deportation. Sul also presented a sociological explanation for foreign migrant workers' discrimination that included five factors: chauvinism, racism, xenophobia, hierarchical nationhood, and hierarchical concept of occupation. My revised list includes global hierarchy of race and gender or global white supremacy, classism, xenophobia, and ethno-nationalism.

In spite of these challenges, conditions for foreign migrant workers are improving, particularly from a legal-institutional perspective (Lim, 2010). The wage gap between non-professional foreign workers and native-born Koreans in similar workplaces has narrowed over the past decade. In 2007, the average hourly wage for non-professional foreign workers was 85.7 percent of that for Koreans (Kong et al., 2010: 265). When productivity is factored into the equation, the pay gap between foreign workers and Koreans is minimal. All contract workers are protected under the Korean Labor Standard Act, the Minimum Wages Act, and the Industrial Safety and Health Act. Except for unemployment, the major social insurances that apply to Korean nationals (work injury, medical and retirement pension) are also available to foreign workers. Since 1994 and 1997, work injury and retirement pensions are available to everyone in the workplace, including undocumented foreign workers. (Kong et al., 2010: 266). Permanent residents, three years after acquiring permanent resident status, can vote in local elections (Kong et al., 2010: 267).

Foreign workers were not given these labor and human rights: they fought for them. Migrant workers had moderate success in organizing a migrant workers' movement, partly benefitting from the then-active democratization movement. They also had strong support from non-governmental organizations (NGOs). As scholars agree, from a very early stage, foreign workers formed a strong and crucial link with Korean NGOs, which provided foreign workers with resources and also imbued their struggle with an important degree of legitimacy in the eyes of many South Ko-

rean citizens (D. Kim, 2011: 1650). NGOs in Korea contributed significantly to the expansion of migrant rights and status.[8]

Examples of migrant-advocacy activism are particularly noticeable in Korea, largely due to the legacy of labor struggle there. Migrant workers who have failed to peacefully reach an agreement on desired goals with their employers have often turned to militant responses, including street demonstrations, sit-in strikes occupying symbolic buildings, and hunger strikes by important figures. Since the mid-1990s, the migrant workers' movement has struggled against the so-called industrial trainee program; and since the early 2000s, in a more organized and militant way about the introduction of a work permit program. The government reformed this employment permit program in 2007 with an extension of the stay term from three to five years. They also allowed a change of work place up to three times.

Migrant workers have provided stable human resources with low wages in the irregular labor market which now comprises over 50 percent of the national labor force. At the same time, migrant workers also compete with Korean irregular workers, especially in the construction, chemical, and service industries. While democratization has empowered workers to organize, globalization has undermined the strength of the organized workers, segmenting regular workers from contingent workers (K. Y. Shin, 2010: 211). The fragmentation of the working class has grown with an influx of foreign workers since the early 1990s (Ibid., 223). Now foreign workers comprise more than 10 percent of the total employees (K.Y. Shin, 2010: 224). Instead of unions, social movement organizations or churches help them adjust to the new environment and protect their legal rights.

A decade after opening to foreign workers, South Korea essentially became a migrant-receiving country. South Korea is a "new" country of immigration with the consolidation of the immigrant presence and the acknowledgement of immigration

8 Improvements include compensation for work-related injuries for undocumented workers in 1994; the expansion of the Labor Standard Act to industrial trainees in 1995; and the application of severance pay to undocumented workers in 1997. These enhancements culminated in the enactment of the Employment Permit System in 2003 and the termination of the trainee program in 2006 (D. Kim, 2011: 1658).

as a structural phenomenon. In 2007, the South Korean government acknowledged permanent immigration and the economic importance of immigrants (Hugo, 2008).[9] Additionally, whereas "European nations took eight or nine decades to complete their transition, South Korea did it in three or four" (Massey, 2003: 18).

There are now over 1,200,000 foreigners in South Korea, or about 2.3 percent of the total population in South Korea. This demographic change signals a new level of ethno-racial diversity (J. Ahn, 2013: 29). Out of the total numbers of foreigners, foreign workers accounted for 60 percent in 2007 (Kong, 2010: 255). If this trend continues, the number of foreigners will reach more than two million by 2020 (Kong et al., 2010: 255). By the year 2050, the foreign population is expected to rise to over 4 million, reaching 9.2 percent of the total population (Y. Lee, 2009: 367).[10]

Migrant workers in South Korea are considered temporary residents who earn money and bring it back to their home country, which makes them an object of exclusion (Ahn, 2013: 41). In other words, migrant workers are excluded from multiculturalist governance and support. However, the presence of such a large number of migrant workers, along with a sizable number of foreign brides and professional foreign workers marks a significant departure from the proverbial image of Korea as an ethnically homogeneous society. Ethnic national identity was "a crucial source of pride and inspiration for Koreans during the turbulent years of the country's transition to modernity through periods of colonialism, territorial division, war, and authoritarian politics" (G. W. Shin, 2006). With its newly diverse demographics, South Korea must begin to consider what a national identity not based on ethnicity

9 Since the 1980s Japan has been importing foreign workers to meet the demand for cheap labor from small-to mid-sized forms. The country now has about 2 million registered foreigners (1.57 percent of the population) (A. Kim, 2009: 71). This is noteworthy because Japan initiated the so-called trainee system a good decade earlier and still relies heavily on the temporary guest worker program that has generated controversy over labor and human rights violations.

10 Seoul districts such as Sungdong, Dongdaemoon, and Guro are now known as South Asian, Vietnamese, and Korean-Chinese towns, respectively. Ansan and Masuk, satellite towns of the capital city, have employed and sheltered workers and their families from several South Asian countries. Ansan is called a "town without borders," with the settlement of new residents from twenty-one different countries who work in nearby industrial complexes (Y. Lee, 2009: 368).

will look like.

4. Multiculturalism and Diversity in Northern Europe (Sweden, Norway, and Denmark)

Philosopher Charles Taylor's classic essay "The Politics of Recognition" (1994) considers whether the institutions of liberal democratic government make room--or should make room-for recognizing the worth of distinctive cultural traditions. For instance, in the United States the Civil Rights Movement criticized ideals of assimilation that often led to prejudices against those who did not act according to Anglo-American standards. It led to the development of academic ethnic studies programs as a way to counteract the lack of attention paid in classrooms to racial minorities' contributions. As for multiculturalist experiments, there have already been a number of works comparing South Korea with other East Asian societies such as Japan and Taiwan (Chung and Kim, 2012; Kim and Oh, 2011). Such comparisons have been useful to some extent, as more similarities have been pointed out rather than differences.

Alternatively, I propose to examine the multiculturalist situation in several Northern European countries. They are more or less of modest size; monocultural; and experienced a migration transition some time ago, just like Korea. They are more homogeneous countries than settler societies such as the United States, Canada, or Australia. Scandinavian countries are well known for their favorable programs for refugees, asylum seekers and immigrants, as well as their highly developed welfare states. For a long time, these programs served as a model for other countries. In recent decades, however, these countries have gone through some backlash against immigrants and refugees. By relating the Korean case to that of Northern European countries, I would like to examine how effective these best "integration" programs were and what implications it holds for South Korean society. I would like to caution that my comparison is limited for heuristic purposes, and to fully acknowledge that

these European countries' cultural tradition and history differs from that of South Korea. State multiculturalist policies in South Korea are seen as a useful set of strategies to combat racism; to protect minority communities of all types; and to undo policies that had prevented minorities from having full access to the opportunities for freedom and equality promised by liberalism. However, in some senses they are assimilationist policies. This assimilationist bent limits multiculturalist policies by failing to address notions of exclusivity based on the Korean national identity as a "one race nation." Moreover, mere recognition of minority populations tends to entrench rather than erode ethno-cultural hierarchies; it simply re-inscribes notions of exclusivity, exceptionality and even superiority.

Indeed, scholars have demonstrated the cultural and social challenges engendered by multiculturalism. They have examined the salience of race, gender, ethnicity and class in the structuring of immigration policies as well as the social integration of international migrants (Parreñas and J. Kim, 2011: 1555). While the large proportion of foreign migrant workers in South Korea is male, in certain sectors of the economy migrant women dominate. In 2005, for example, women migrant workers accounted for 85.1 percent of the total migrant workforce in the service industry (e.g., catering, cleaning, private nursing and domestic service). What is more, we can see an ethno-national division of job categories: the service sector is essentially reserved for Joseonjok women, while the "hotel entertainment" sector is primarily the province of Filipina migrants (Lim, 2010: 63). We need to attend to the ways in which these patterns form social and spatial practices of inclusion and exclusion and engender ethnic and racial inequalities. Instead of merely celebrating the rise of a multicultural society, we must examine the politics and poetics of belonging.

Scandinavian Countries are well-known for their embodiment of virtue and universalistic values. They have received a substantial number of refugees and asylum seekers, including many Muslim immigrants. However, in recent decades it has become apparent that these countries are not easy places for newcomers to arrive in and thrive. Since the mid-1990s, Muslim immigrants in particular have been subject to scrutiny. The concern is not only over security but also over the failures of mul-

ticulturalist policies to integrate and offer real economic opportunities to foreigners and their descendants. Muslim immigrants are said to be reluctant to integrate or incapable of accepting such Scandinavian liberal values as religious tolerance, secularization, gender equality, gay right, and democracy. They are criticized and denounced in universalist, multiculturalist, or ethno-nationalist terms.

As a result, despite the international reputation of Sweden as a classless, race-less model country and the world's most outspoken critic of racism in the United States and South Africa, commentators decry and condemn "the denials, displacements, and collective amnesia often associated with Sweden's widespread cultural racism since the late 1980s" (Pred, 2001: 138, 119). In Denmark, during my visit this summer, I came to hear that if you were non-Danish, it would be hard to rent a place to live in. In 2011 there was a terrorist attack in Norway which killed 69 youths and 8 adults, allegedly to punish Muslim-friendly multiculturalists. From the Danish assimilationist model to the official multiculturalism of Sweden, multiculturalism has become problematic for all modern nation-states.

Sweden As a socially democratic country, Sweden maintains a Nordic, conscientious social welfare system that provides universal health care and tertiary education for its citizens. It has one of the highest per capita incomes in the world and ranks highly in numerous comparisons of national performance, including quality of life, health, education, protection of civil liberties, economic competitiveness, equality, prosperity and human development.[11] Thus Sweden has been seen as "a tolerant, rational, and generous society" and Swedes are said to be more "democratic, progressive, and egalitarian than other nations" (Pred, 2001: 138). According to Eurostat, in 2010 there were 1.33 million foreign-born residents in Sweden, corresponding to 14.3 percent of the total population. Of these, 477 000 (5.1 percent) were born in another EU Member State and 859 000 (9.2 percent) were born outside the EU.[12]

Sweden started its guest worker program in the 1950s and 60s and had the world's

11 World Economic Forum. (5 September 2012). *Global Competitiveness Report 2012–2013*: http://www.weforum.org/reports/global-competitiveness-report-2012-2013

12 European Commission (7 July 2011). *6.5% of the EU population is foreigners and 9.4% are born abroad* (PDF). Retrieved from Eurostat.

most generous refugee policy during the 1970s and 80s (the refugee policy was terminated in 1994). Since the early 1970s, immigration to Sweden has been mostly comprised of refugee migration and family reunification, with migrants coming from countries in the Middle East and Latin America. The four largest foreign-born populations in Sweden come from Finland, Yugoslavia, Iraq and Iran. However, in the 1990s Sweden suffered its most severe economic downturn, along with high levels of unemployment rates. These downturns coincided with the most significant increase in the immigrant working-age population. Because of this, the Swedish became unfavorable towards increasing the number of immigrants, refugees, or asylum seekers in their country (Wisebrock, 2011: 60). Sweden's current strict policy—including frequent denial of admission to torture victims—has been criticized on numerous occasions by the UN High Commission for Refugees and other international agencies. It has now become almost impossible for people of color or those of Muslim background to migrate to Sweden (Pred, 2001: 152).

According to Anja Wiesbrock (2011), in 2006 the Migration Policy Group still rated Sweden's integration program as most favorable. Sweden's program scored more points than 28 other countries in terms of labor market integration, long-term residence and family reunification rights, political rights, access to nationality, anti-discrimination policies and public opinion. This was in contrast to other EU countries, which were increasingly adopting restrictive policies towards migrant workers.

Sweden's Integration Program is voluntary, but it is important to note that it is employment-oriented. Because the Program is decentralized, Swedish municipalities are in charge of providing and administering the introduction program: housing, language courses and a general introduction into Swedish society, as well as social support and psychological treatment if needed (Wiesbrock, 2011: 55). However, Sweden's program is not without any problems. For instance, when scrutinized, there are still unfavorable integration outcomes when it comes to the gap in employment rates between the native and foreign-born populations. This limited success has been attributed to Sweden's tradition of social engineering and its "clientalization" of migrants. The policies have also been criticized for creating "learned helplessness"

in immigrants' lives by subjecting them to a rigid bureaucratic regime (Wiesbrock, 2011: 62).

Other commentators point out that "people of color and Muslims, regardless of whether they were born in the country, were subject to extreme forms of labor-market discrimination despite frequently being highly educated; housing conditions that were becoming ever more segregated through processes of racialization, (under) classification and spatial apartheid; and frequent encounters with state-bureaucratic paternalism" (Pred, 2001: 139).

Norway Norway maintains a combination of a market economy and a Nordic welfare model with universal health care and a comprehensive social security system. The country has the fourth-highest per capita income in the world. Norway has extensive reserves of petroleum, natural gas, minerals, lumber, seafood, fresh water, and hydropower.[13] As of 2013, the number of immigrants or children of two immigrants residing in Norway was 710,465 or 14.1 percent of the total population.[14] Children of Pakistani, Somali and Vietnamese parents made up the largest groups of all Norwegians born to immigrant parents.[15]

Norway has developed a reputation as a tolerant and egalitarian society, demonstrated by the development of a strong welfare state. It recently became the Scandinavian leader in global peacemaking and humanitarian aid. Immigration became a part of the country's political discourse in the early 1970s with the growth of non-Nordic workers from Pakistan, Morocco, and Yugoslavia. Norway put a temporary end to immigration in 1975. However, since the mid-80s there has been a sharp increase in refugees and asylum seekers, leading to increased backlash towards these newcomers. This backlash has combined with other issues (high taxation, the strengthening of the welfare state, and divisiveness over joining the EU), as well as xenophobia and the rise of a far-right party.

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13 CIA. *CIA – The World Factbook – Country Comparison: Oil – production*: https://www.cia.gov

14 Norway. (n.d.). In *Wikipedia*: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Norway, accessed on October 25, 2014.

15 Statistics Norway. (26 April 2012). *Immigrants and Norwegian-born to immigrant parents 1 January 2012*: http://www.ssb.no/en/innvbef/, accessed on October 25, 2014.

In 2011, there was a terrorist attack targeting multiculturalists in Norway.[16]

Anders Behring Breivik, a white Norwegian "anti-communist," killed eight people with a bomb at government headquarters in Oslo. He also shot and killed 69 youth at the Labor Party's youth summer camp (Bangstad, 2012: 352). He was apparently inspired by Islamophobic literature and targeted Norwegian social democrats for their supposed support for "multiculturalism." Breivik's moral enemies were listed in his 1,500 page manifesto: from Marx and Freud, the Frankfurt School, Raymond Williams, and gender and postcolonial studies to cultural anthropology.

In spite of these events, Harald Moore's comparison of Denmark and Norway has found that their typical roles have been reversed in regard to their governments as well as their attitudes towards xenophobia, discrimination, and human rights (2010). There is a difference in attitude toward the far right within Norwegian politics. "Despite the popularity of the far right and anti-immigrant Fremskrittsparti [Progress Party], [there is also] a definite resistance from both the left- and right-leaning parties to any association with them" (Moore, 2010: 355). The mainstream Norwegian press reacted to immigration differently from their Danish counterparts and even indirectly criticized them for their coverage. More importantly, Norway outlawed discrimination and actively promoted human rights both at home and abroad. Its policies look outward and engage the world, an approach which makes Norway a valuable model for Korea to follow as it moves toward a multicultural society.

Denmark Danes enjoy a high standard of living, and the country ranks highly in numerous comparisons of national performance, including education, health care, protection of civil liberties, government transparency, democratic governance, prosperity and human development.[17] Cross-national studies of happiness frequently rank Denmark as the happiest country in the world.[18] This has been attributed to

16 See BBC This World - Norway's Massacre: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GvZ8ZIWsj_4

17 United Nations Development Program "Denmark Country Profile: Human Development Indicators:" http://hdrstats.undp.org/en/countries/profiles, accessed on October 25, 2014.

18 (2013 October 22). Denmark Is Considered The Happiest Country. You'll Never Guess Why. *Huffington Post*: http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/10/22/denmark-happiest-country_n_4070761.html?ncid=txtlnkushpmg00000029&ir=Business, accessed on October 25, 2014.

the country's highly-regarded education and health care systems and its low level of economic inequality, as well as one of the highest per capita incomes. Some 10.4 percent of the population is immigrants—or descendants of recent immigrants—who came mainly from Turkey, Iraq, Somalia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, South Asia and the Middle East. Of the 10.4 percent, approximately 200,000 (34 percent) are of a Western background, and approximately 390,000 (66 percent) have a non-Western background.[19]

Danes are known for their tolerance and liberal views, as well as their emphasis on social cohesion and equality. However, Danish attitudes toward immigrants began to shift toward the negative in the early 1980s as demand for their labor began to fall (Moore, 2010: 361). Since the mid-1980s, there has been a rise in xenophobia and racism much like the rest of Europe. High unemployment rates influenced attitudes toward immigrants as Denmark struggled with rising unemployment in both the unskilled labor and lower-level management sectors (Moore, 2010: 358). Since a new center-right coalition headed by Anders Fogh Rasmussen came to power in November 2001, Denmark's progressive tightening of its immigration laws has led to charges that its strict rules violate European norms.[20]

Discrimination based on race is illegal, but this law excludes acts of discrimination by government departments, public authorities, the labor market, and the media. Penalties in the court of law for racial discrimination are also minor (Moore, 2010: 361). The media played a crucial role in the mainstreaming of Danish neo-racism, populism, and Islamophobia (Bangstad, 2012: 352). For instance, in 1997 a reality TV series about a Somali refugee man who collected approximately $75,000 annually in government assistance popularized the notion that refugees abused the

19 (1 January 2012). *Immigrants and their descendants – Statistics Denmark*: http://www.dst.dk/en/Statistik/emner/indvandrere-og-efterkommere/indvandrere-og-efterkommere.aspx

20 A third successive center-right Rasmussen, Lars Lokke, took over as prime minister in April 2009. His government, dependent as it is on the right-wing populist People's Party to push through legislation, has witnessed the emergence of immigration and integration as major issues of public debate. "BBC NEWS Europe: Denmark profile:" http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-17929661, accessed on October 25, 2014.

welfare system. The Danish media's campaign to reduce welfare benefits for refugees led the Danish government to implement benefit reductions (Moore, 2010: 362).

5. The Demise of Multiculturalism?

The unavoidable influx of foreigners to South Korea in the last few decades challenges the popular social imaginary of South Korea as a homogeneous region. Although many debates still take place as to whether Korea really is a multicultural society or not, it is generally agreed that Korea has entered a stage of multiculturalism and has moved away from its homogeneous identity. Since 2006, there has been a burgeoning public debate on multiculturalism that forces Koreans to rethink existing social attitudes and practices that exclude, marginalize, and/or oppress "non-Koreans." The debate has also produced a significant change in the long-held conception of Korean identity and belongingness. Much of this change has been due to the agency of foreign workers themselves. It is also due to a critical but evolving nexus between foreign migrant workers and Korean civil society (aligned against an array of state actors and business interests), which has led to concrete and significant legal and institutional changes and a meaningful expansion of labor and human rights for foreign migrant workers.

In this section, I related the Korean case to that of Northern European countries and examined how effective their multiculturalist discourses, practices and politics and their best "integration" programs to accommodate immigrants, refugees, and asylees, together with underlying theoretical frameworks, and what implications it holds for Korean society, newly emerging multiculturalist society or what they can do.While reviewing the European experience with migration, I would like to note the ways Korea's experience both resembles it in some areas (especially in the difficulties of managing labor migration) but also differs (especially in the official attitudes about cultural diversity). What follows, I'll also explore the converse: various critical debates on multiculturalism and alternatives as a way to suggest what South

Korean should not to do.

Anthropologist Geon-Soo Han (2007) noted, "As the increase of foreign migrants in Korea transforms a single-ethnic homogeneous Korean society into [a] multiethnic and multicultural one, Korean government and the civil society pay close attention to multiculturalism as an alternative value to their policy and social movement." He argued, however, that "the current discourses and concerns on multiculturalism in Korea" lacked "the constructive and analytical concepts for transforming a society". Similarly, communications scholar Ji-Hyun Ahn maintained that "multiculturalism is a way the Korean nation-state controls its population and racial order" (2012: 108).

Whereas South Korea has recently adopted a multiculturalist policy, several European countries have admitted failure in attempts at multiculturalism and are seeking alternatives. At the start of the 21st century, there is talk of retreating from multiculturalism as a normative ideal and as a set of policies in the West. The principle of multiculturalism has faced criticism on the grounds that it has failed to sufficiently promote social integration, although some commentators have questioned the dichotomy between diversity and integration that this critique presumes. Critics have argued for assimilation of different ethnic and cultural groups to a single national identity. Liberal critiques of multiculturalism attempt to go beyond the static, reified categories of state multiculturalism, pointing out its folklorising and depoliticizing effects. Cultural pluralism, interculturalism, diversity and hybridity have been presented as alternatives, although these frameworks are often confused with or related to multiculturalism.

Chancellor Angela Merkel of the conservative Christian Democratic Union judged attempts to build a multicultural society in Germany to have "failed, utterly failed."[21] She continued to say that immigrants should integrate and adopt Germany's culture and values. This has added to a growing debate within Germany on the levels of immigration, its effect on the country and the degree to which Muslim

21 (2010 October 17). Merkel says German multicultural society has failed. *BBC News*: http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-11559451

immigrants have integrated into German society. Similarly, since 2001 the UK government has moved away from policy characterized by multiculturalism and towards the assimilation of minority communities. In 2006, Prime Minister Tony Blair stated that Britain has certain "essential values" and that these are a "duty." He did not reject multiculturalism outright, but included British heritage among the essential values.[22] Despite this backlash against multiculturalism, these European immigrant countries remain *de facto* multicultural in their language, religion, ethnicity, etc., and do not have an explicit policy against multiculturalism.

Rather than focus on recognizing cultural differences, the European Union attempted to put emphasis on migrant workers' rights and various other gender and family-sensitive migration policies under the rubric of cultural pluralism (W.T. Lim, 2013). According to Horace Kallen, cultural pluralism is a term used when smaller groups within a larger society maintain their unique cultural identities, and their values and practices are accepted by the wider culture provided they are consistent with the laws and values of the wider society.[23] The EU operates under this rubric to work towards banning labor exploitation; guaranteeing the right to health and social security; allowing for a return option; and adopting a gender-sensitive migration policy.

The Council of Europe (2009) adopted interculturalism, which pays attention to aspects of secularity, integration and reciprocity between countries of origin and settlement (H. K. Lee, 2014: 148). Interculturalism involves moving beyond mere passive acceptance of multiple cultures effectively existing in a society and instead promotes dialogue and interaction between cultures (Penas & López Sáenz, 2006: 15). In Germany all universities are required to have a section on intercultural competence in their social work programs. These sections train students to be open to listening and communicating with people of different cultural backgrounds; to have

22 "When it comes to our essential values — belief in democracy, the rule of law, tolerance, equal treatment for all, respect for this country and its shared heritage — then that is where we come together, it is what we hold in common." (2006 December 8). Conform to our society, says PM. *BBC News*: http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/politics/6219626.stm

23 Horace Kallen is credited with coining the term "cultural pluralism."

knowledge of the backgrounds of cultural groups; to have knowledge of existing stereotypes and prejudices involving cultural groups; and other criteria (van Ewijk, 2010: 136).

Anthropologists Mette Louise Berg and Nando Sigona (2013) pointed out the "*diversity*" turn within studies of migration and multiculturalism. They argue that diversity is a helpful concept because it avoids the essentialism and bias towards ethnic affiliation that often characterizes studies within the multiculturalism framework. Under this framework of "diversity," differences other than cultural ones are also observed, and processes of everyday intercultural encounters and practices are examined. Scholars are expected to observe migrants' local-level dynamics and processes of belonging with a transnational sensibility. Studying diversity requires acknowledging that "'multicultural drift,' the visible presence of immigrants and ethnic minorities in all aspects of social life as an ordinary and inevitable part of the social landscape, is here to stay" (Berg and Sigona, 2013: 349).

Berg and Sigona also discussed three dimensions of diversity (*Ibid*: 350-353). Diversity as narrative is needed to counter nostalgic narratives of past harmony and homogeneity set against present diversity. This dimension of diversity is needed in South Korea. In stories of the national past and people, the past is often described as an ethnically and racially "pure" society and racism is strategically located to specific transnational spaces and time periods outside of South Korean society. Diversity exists as social fact, reflecting the dynamics of globalization and time-space compression and facilitating the intensification of migrant transnationalism. Diversity exists as policy. There are governmental and corporate policies managing integration and social cohesion. These sometimes resonate with a neoliberal discourse, but definitely move focus away from the immigrant who is expected to integrate or assimilate and instead open the possibility of discussing the responsibilities of mainstream institutions. For instance, at my institution, UCLA, college faculty approved the proposed diversity requirement for the College of Letters and Science.[24]

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24 There is plenty of research indicating that diversity requirements have positive outcomes for students and university campuses. Many students speak to their desire to be fully prepared for the

As critics pointed out, multiculturalism, although initially a reaction against assimilationism, tends to essentialize and reify difference between cultural and ethnic groups while obscuring power differentials within. In fact, multiculturalism has always been contested and multivalent (with a wide range of differences and similarities between and within groups). Thus, scholars also challenged multiculturalism with representations of a society that emphasize fluidity, hybridity and cross-fertilization. Accordingly, there has been a shift from focusing on entities to focusing on relations between ethnic groups.

As for the emergence of new cultural forms from multiculturalism, there has been discussion of hybridity. There exists a "third culture" that is based on neither compliance to the dominant culture nor resistance. Post-colonial theoretician Homi Bhabha argues that cultures must be understood as "narrative" constructions that arise from the "hybrid" interactions of contending cultural milieus.[25] "It is in the emergence of the interstices—the overlap and displacement of domains of difference—that the intersubjective and collective experiences of *nationess*, community interest, or cultural values are negotiated (Taylor, 1994: 2). In this way, hybridity can unsettle the narcissist demands of colonial power, and reform its identifications in strategies of subversion that turn the gaze of the discriminated back upon the colonist.

Lastly, in social science, the question of citizenship has received much attention as newcomers or displaced people attempt to settle in a new place or country. There have been questions about how to negotiate a relationship or contract between newcomers and a polity or political community: their rights and duties, which may include the right to vote, work and live in the country; the right to return to the country; the right to own real estate; legal protections against the country's government; and protection through the military or diplomacy. A citizen may also be subject to certain duties, such as duty to follow the country's law, to pay taxes, or to serve in the military.

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complexities of the world they will face after graduation.

25 Thus hybridity demonstrates how cultures come to be represented by processes of iteration and translation through which their meanings are vicariously addressed to –or through—an Other.

Going beyond legal and political dimensions, the social and cultural dimensions of citizenship question the idea of membership or belongingness. This question has attracted much attention from sociologists, anthropologists, and other scholars. Social citizenship was a term first coined by sociologist Thomas Humphrey Marshall, who analyzed the development of citizenship as a development of civil, then political, then social rights, assigned to the 18th, 19th, and 20th centuries respectively. His distinctive contribution was to introduce the concept of social rights understood as the welfare rights.[26] Anthropologist Renato Rosaldo defines cultural citizenship as "the right to be different" (in terms of race, ethnicity, or native language) with respect to the norms of the dominant national community, without compromising one's right to belong, in the sense of participating in the nation-state's democrative process (Ong, 2003: 5).[27] For instance, laws controlling the "normal" timing and use of public spaces conform to middle-class norms but undermine the civil rights of immigrant workers who cannot avail themselves of the public spaces in the same way because of work-schedule constraints and other concerns.

In brief, the prevailing view of migration as an economically driven phenomenon relegates the social, political, and cultural dimensions. The social costs of migration and human rights and social justice issues as well as the role of migration in social and political transformations have not been given due consideration. This article is best treated as an anthropological commentary of a phenomenon in progress and introductory overview, which would push to know and to understand migration and its ramifications and stimulate the reader's appetite to explore the themes further. It illustrates how the arrival of foreigners may affect the very nature of the nation-state or the concept of national identity and can challenge collective self-consciousness and sense of belongingness, which presupposes the existence of a territorial bounded political community. Migration isn't only about bringing in temporary workers. We need to think through the long-term socio-cultural consequences of increased

26 Marshall's analysis of citizenship has been criticized on the basis that it only applies to men and ignores the social rights of women and impediments to their realization.

27 Aihwa Ong criticized such calls by minority groups for a unilateral claim of cultural citizenship, pointing out that cultural difference isn't free of regulation from above (2003: 6).

migration and complex process of social transformation, sparking public debate over citizenship/nationality and political concern over integration and distributive justice of foreign migrants.

Korea has faced a rapid demographic change that has transformed it from an ethnically homogenous country to one which is becoming multicultural. It remains to be seen how Korea's multiculturalist policies will turn out. Multiculturalism is not a real thing, but an arbitrary term, or just a tactic to deal with the human consequence of current transnational migration or deal with the situation behind the real story of the great influx of foreigners to labor in Korea. However, through a comparative analysis of multicultural discourses, practices and politics, we remain optimistic for the future of multicultural ideals, despite the usage or not of the term. Regardless of the outcome of its current policies, South Korean society's increasing social and cultural diversity creates a real need to critically examine how that diversity is included in South Korea's political as well as social spheres. Rather than questioning the borders of difference/sameness, we should move towards a broadening of the borders of humanness.

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외국인 노동자와 문화의 정치학: 개념과 논의

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요약_한국은 오랫동안 단일민족국가를 지향해 왔으나 최근 예상치 못했던 고령화와 저출산 그리고 급변해 가는 가족구조와 외국인 노동자 대거 유입 등의 대대적인 인구학적 변화를 겪게 되었다. 특히 외국인 노동자 유입으로 인해 한국사회는 급격히 다문화사회로 전환되었다. 본 논문은 종합적이고 체계적인 다문화주의 정책이 부재한 한국사회에서 적절한 정책을 위한 이론과 사례 및 외국 노동자 유입에 따른 사회변화들을 종합적으로 검토하고자 한다. 일찍부터 다문화주의 정책을 시행해 온 북유럽국가들의 이론과 사례를 '귀감(龜鑑)'으로 삼을 것을 제안한다. 이들 다문화국가들은 한국과 마찬가지로 민족의 동질성을 유지해 왔으나 이민은 물론 난민들을 대거 받아들이는 가운데 대규모 인구학적 변화를 겪게 되었다. 오랫동안 이민을 받아들였고 또한 진보주의에 입각하여 이들의 권익을 보호하는 정책을 펴 왔으나 근래 경제성장이 둔화되는 가운데 시민들의 반발이 심하게 되었다. 이들 국가의 다문화주의 정책의 성공과 실패 그리고 그저변의 이론적 배경을 분석해 보면 한국 같은 신흥 다문화주의 표방국가에서 배울 점이 많이 있다. 또한 외국 노동자 유입에 대한 개념적 이론적 분석과 관련된 정책변화도 검토하고자 한다. 한국의 경우 아직까지 다문화주의 정책이 결혼이주자에게만 한정되어 있어 이 기회에 외국 노동자층까지 확대시키기를 주장한다. 동시에 이민 및 이주자들에 관계된 다문화주의와 또는 대안적 이론들인 문화적 다양성과 사회적 다원론 등의 이론 및 정책적 배경에 대해서도 살펴본다.

주요어_초국적, 이주노동자, 다문화주의, 한국, 스칸디나비아

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