

# **South Koreans' Attitudes toward Foreigners, Minorities and Multiculturalism<sup>1</sup>**

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## **Abstract**

As a result of international migration and growth of racial/ethnic minorities, South Korean society has entered the first phase of multicultural society. Because multicultural values that acknowledge and respect cultural diversity and minority groups' rights are an important pre-condition of a multicultural society, we examined the current situation of South Koreans' attitudes toward foreigners, minorities, and multiculturalism and their willingness to support the government's policies to support racial/ethnic and cultural minorities. For this purpose, we used a set of large-scale sample surveys that examined South Koreans' notions of national identity, attitudes toward foreigners and racial/ethnic minorities, and social distance feelings toward foreigners and minority groups. Main findings are as follow. South Koreans are more open and tolerant toward foreigners and immigrants living in South Korea than previously believed. They are, however, defensive and protectionist toward foreign capital and culture that compete with South Korean capital and culture. They are willing to confront foreign countries to protect South Korea's interests. I attribute these attitudes to South Koreans' different level of perceived threat which they believe immigrants and foreign countries pose to South Korea. South Koreans tend to think immigrants living in South Korea are not a serious threat to South Korean economy and culture because they are a small and powerless minority group. Also, the public perception that they are disadvantaged and mistreated helps South Koreans to have sympathy toward them. On the contrary, South Koreans believe competition from foreign countries at the economic and cultural level is real and serious enough to weaken the local economy and culture.

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## **I. Introduction**

In the era of globalization that accelerates personal and cultural exchanges across countries, understanding and respecting other cultures has become more important than ever. This is particularly true for South Korea as it experienced a rapid increase of foreign visitors and residents since the 1988 Seoul Olympic Games. During the past decade, the number of foreign visitors to South Korea increased 64% from 7,506,804 to 12,312,871 in 2006, and the number of foreign residents increased 135% from 386,972 in 1997 to 910,149 in 2006. In August 2007, the number of foreigners residing in South Korea reached 1 million, representing 2% of the total South Korean population. Economic development of South Korea has also made it possible for more South Koreans to travel around the world, and South Korean firms to establish overseas factories and branch offices in search of new markets and lower labor costs. However, it has been frequently reported that South Korean firms' personnel in developing countries of Asia such as China, Vietnam, Indonesia, and Malaysia, are face with labor disputes and criticisms due to former racial prejudice against local people, and lack of understanding in local cultures. For better labor-management relations and public relations abroad, South Koreans need to learn and internalize multicultural values and practices.

As a result of increasing entry of foreign migrant workers, international marriage women, ethnic Koreans from China, and North Korean migrants, South Korea society has become more multiracial and multiethnic than ever. The current trend is a challenge for South Korean society known for strong homogeneity and nationalism. In order to adapt to increasingly multicultural environments, South Koreans need to develop a new concept of national identity and systems of social integration.

Minorities of different racial, ethnic, social, and cultural backgrounds became more visible than ever and require societal attention and intervention. As of 2007, 1,066,291 registered foreigners were residing in South Korea. More than 400,000 migrant workers are now working in so-called 3-D industries where South Koreans are reluctant to work. 110,362 immigrants entered in 2007 to marry South Korean husbands or wives and the cumulative number of international marriages increased to 364,000 during the 1990-2007 period. In 2005, 13% of all marriages in South Korea were interracial or interethnic marriages and the rate of international marriages was even higher in rural areas where about one-third of all marriages were interracial or interethnic. North Koreans often called defectors or refugees begun to enter South

Korea since the end of the Korean War in 1953 but their entry accelerated in the mid-1990s as a result of deepening economic hardships and political persecution in communist North Korea. The cumulative number of North Korean immigrants reached 100,000 in 2007 and now approximately 9,000 North Korean migrants are residing in South Korea.

All those statistics indicate that South Korean society has entered the first phase of multiethnic and multicultural society and the current process seems irreversible. If the current trend continues, the proportion of foreigners residing in South Korea will increase to 2.8% in 2010, 5% in 2020, and 9.2% in 2050 (Song, 2007: 91). In the increasingly multiracial/ethnic society, people's values and social policies need to be multicultural enough to accommodate new members and achieve social integration and unity out of diversity.

For this reason, it is important to know the current situation of South Koreans' attitudes toward foreigners, minorities, and multiculturalism and their willingness to support the government's policies to support racial/ethnic and cultural minorities.

This study aims at studying South Korean's attitudes toward foreigners, minorities, and multiculturalism. A number of surveys have already been conducted in recent years to find out South Koreans' conception of Korean national identity, social distance feelings toward foreigners and minorities, and the level of people's support for the government's multicultural policies. To name a few, Professor Soo-Young Uh at Ehwa Women's University conducted the Survey of Life and Value Changes of South Koreans in 2001 and 2006, respectively. Professor In-Jin Yoon and his MA student Sang-Hak Kim at Korea University conducted in 2002 a survey of college students to know about their attitudes and social distance feelings toward minorities. The Survey Research Center at Sungkyunkwan University conducts the Korean General Social Survey annually, and the 2003, 2004, 2007 KGSS survey contain modules on Korean national identity and attitudes toward foreigners and multicultural policies. The East Asia Research Center at Korea University conducted a survey of Korean identity in 2005. The Korean Information Agency, the Korea Women's Development Institute, and the Institute of Social Research at Korea University conducted independent surveys in 2006 and 2007 to find out South Koreans' attitudes toward foreigners, minorities, and multiculturalism.

The above surveys are different from each other in sample size, sampling methods, and questions asked so that it is difficult to generalize findings from

single survey to the general population. Thus, we decided to use findings of those surveys collectively to draw more reliable and consistent results.

The composition of this paper is as follows. First, it will examine universal social values of South Koreans such as ideological orientation and tolerance toward extreme social groups. Second, it will analyze South Koreans' ideas about what constitutes Koreanness when people of different ethnic and cultural backgrounds become Koreans by immigration, marriages, and naturalization. Third, it will observe South Koreans' attitudes and social distance feelings toward foreigners and minorities.

## **II. Analysis**

### **1. Universalistic social values**

According to previous research, universalistic social values people have about equality and social justice lead people to have more positive attitudes toward minority groups and to support policies for minorities. For example, Hea Sook Kim (2002) found that people who support equality and social justice are more likely to feel emotionally closer to North Koreans, support the government's engagement policy toward North Korea, and attribute regional animosity to politicians rather than to ordinary people. Also, Sang-Hak Kim (2004) found that ideological propensity such as conservatism vs. progressivism influence over people's attitudes toward minorities. According to his study of college students' attitudes toward minorities, attitudes toward minorities were found to be more influenced by subjective factors such as political views and ideology than by demographic characteristics and family backgrounds. For example, more progressive college students feel emotionally closer to minorities. Jung-Mi Hwang (2007) reached the same conclusion in her study of ethnic exclusionism; social values were more significant than gender and educational attainment in determining the level of South Koreans' ethnic exclusionism against foreign migrant workers and members of different racial/ethnic groups.

In our study, we regarded political ideology and tolerance to public gatherings of anti-social groups as indicators of universalistic social values.

#### **1) Political ideology**

According to 2003 KGSS data, the percentage of people who identified themselves as conservatives was 32.2 percent, slightly higher than the percentages of moderates (25.4%) and liberals (24.6%). In 2004 KGSS data, the percentage of conservatives was 34.5 percent which was slightly higher than that of liberals (31.8%). The 2006 Koreans' Consciousness and Values Survey conducted by the Korean Information Agency showed that moderates were the most numerous at 42.4%, followed by conservatives (28.1%) and liberals (24.7%). The 2007 Koreans' Conflict Consciousness Survey showed somewhat different results: the percentage of liberals was higher (43.9%) than that of conservatives (29.2%). The average score of the conservative-liberal scale was, however, 5.32 in the range of 0 (very conservative), 5 (moderate), and 10 (very liberal), indicating that Koreans' political ideological propensity is moderate as a whole. Considering the survey results above together, Korean's political ideology centers around moderate views with similar percentages of conservatives and liberals on each side.

<Table 1> Political Ideology (Conservative-Liberal Scale) (%)

	2003	2004		2006		2007
N	1,315	1,312	N	2,580	N	1,500
very conservative	5.9	3.0	very conservative	2.5	very conservative	0.6
fairly conservative	32.2	31.5	conservative	28.1	1.00	0.9
moderate	25.4	27.7	moderate	42.4	2.00	5.4
fairly liberal	24.6	27.9	progressive	24.7	3.00	10.2
very liberal	4.1	3.9	very liberal	2.3	4.00	12.1
don't know/DK	7.8	6.0			moderate	27.1
Total	100.0	100.0	Total	100.0	6.00	15.8
					7.00	16.9
					8.00	8.1
					9.00	2.4
					very liberal	0.7
					Total	100.0
Balance	9.4	2.7%	Balance	3.6%	Balance	-14.7%

Data: the 2003 and 2004 KGSS, the 2004 Koreans' Consciousness and Values Survey, and the 2007 Koreans' Conflict Consciousness Survey

Note: Balance is the percent of conservative responses minus the percent of liberal responses. The greater the number is, the more conservative political ideology is.

2) Tolerance to anti-social groups

The 2004 KGSS examined people's tolerance to such anti-social groups as religious extremists, people who want to overthrow the government, and people prejudiced against racial or ethnic groups. The 2007 Korean's Conflict Consciousness Survey added homosexuals to the list of anti-social groups. Results show that the overwhelming majority of respondents opposed public meetings of the four groups. Very few approved public meetings of those groups. For example, 96.2% of respondents opposed public meetings of those who want to overthrow the government by force while only 3.8% approved. Among the four groups, homosexuals met the least opposition, indicating that people think this group is not as threatening to society than religious extremists and people who want to overthrow the government or have prejudice against racial and ethnic groups.

<Table 2> Attitudes toward Public Meetings of Anti-Social Groups

	Religious extremists		People who overthrow the government		People prejudiced against racial and ethnical groups		Homosexuals	
	2004	2007	2004	2007	2004	2007	2004	2007
N	1,313	1,500	1,312	1,500	1,312	1,500	-	1,500
Should definitely not be allowed	25.0	41.9	39.7	61.7	29.6	46.5	-	24.5
Should probably not be allowed	50.8	46.3	47.0	34.5	48.5	46.7	-	36.7
Should probably be allowed	16.7	10.9	7.5	3.6	15.3	6.4	-	33.3
Should definitely be allowed	2.3	0.8	1.4	0.2	1.5	0.5	-	5.5
don't know DK	5.3	-	4.4	-	5.1	-	-	-
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	-	100.0
Mean score	1.96	1.70	1.69	1.42	1.88	1.60	-	2.19

Data: the 2004 KGSS and the 2007 Koreans' Conflict Consciousness Survey

Note: 1 = 'Should definitely not be allowed', 2='Should probably not be allowed', 3='Should probably be allowed', 4='Should definitely be allowed'

## 2. National identity

South Korean's nationalism and identity have been known as exclusive and closed. Researchers point out that Japanese colonization, two Koreas under the Cold War regime and nationalism under military government have brought exclusive nationalism and identity (D. Kim, 1995; Shin et al., 1999; Choi, 2003). Yet, whether South Korean nationalism is really closed or not has not been empirically and systematically verified. There have been empirical surveys, but there were limitations in generalizing the results due to unscientific sampling and not enough samples. We examined the level of national identity by using the 2003 and 2007 KGSS data.

After the emergence of modern civic states, civic factors congruent with the concept of modern nation-state began to be included in the national identity in addition to ethnic factors. The 2003 KGSS data contains question items of both ethnic factors and civic factors to take into account such a trend. Ethnic factors refer to lineage and cultural elements like myth, history, and language. By contrast, civic factors refer to territory, common laws and institutions, legal and political equality among members, and common culture and civic ideology. The civic factors gave birth to citizenship and through it members of a nation-state came to recognize that ethnicity, nation, and nationality are the same (Smith, 1986: 9-11).

To know what qualifications South Koreans think important for being a true South Korean, the respondents of the 2003 KGSS were asked to report their opinions by using a four-point Likert scale. The 2003 and 2007 KGSS asked the respondents what qualifications South Koreans think important for being truly South Korean. In the two surveys, almost the same questions were used except the following two; (1) 'To have Korean ancestry' (2003) → 'Father is Korean' and 'Mother is Korean' (2007), and (2) 'To comply with Confucian disciplines' (2003) → 'To inherit Korean culture and traditions'(2007).

<Table 3> Qualifications for being truly Korean

2003	2007
To have been born in South Korea	To have been born in South Korea
To have South Korean ancestry	Father is Korean

To have lived in South Korea for most of one's life	Mother is Korean
To comply with Confucian disciplines	To have lived in South Korea for most of one's life
To be able to speak South Korean	To inherit South Korean culture and traditions
To respect South Korean political institutions and laws	To be able to speak South Korean
To feel South Korean	To respect South Korean political institutions and laws
To have South Korean citizenship	To feel South Korean
	To have South Korean citizenship
	To contribute to South Korea development

Results of the 2003 and 2007 KGSS reveal that Koreans regard 'To feel South Korean', 'To be able to speak South Korean' and 'To have South Korean citizenship' the most important qualifications of being truly Korean. When we group the 8 or 10 qualifications into two factors by using a factor analysis, mean scores of civic factors (such as the sense of belonging, citizenship and respect for Korean institutions and laws) were 3.2 in 2003 and 3.38 in 2007, while mean scores of ethnic factors (such as birth in South Korea and Korean blood lineage) were 2.9 in 2003 and 3.37 in 2007. We tentatively conclude that South Koreans think civic factors more importantly than ethnic factors as qualifications of Korean national identity.

<Table 4> Factors of Korean National Identity

Factor	Qualification	2003 KGSS	2007 KGSS
Ethnic factor	To have been born in South Korea	3.2	3.34
	To inherit South Korean culture and traditions	2.3	3.30
	Father is South Korean	3.1	3.43
	Mother is South Korean		3.41
	Total	2.9	3.37
Civic factor	To be able to speak South Korean	3.4	3.48
	To have South Korean citizenship	3.4	3.47
	To have lived in South Korea for most of one's life	3.0	3.07



	To respect South Korean political institutions and laws	3.0	3.36
	To feel South Korean	3.4	3.51
	Total	3.2	3.38

Similar findings were reported by the 2005 Korean Identity Survey conducted by the East Asia Research Center at Korea University. The main finding was that Koreans put greater importance on the sense of belonging to the political community than on blood or regional ties.

Following Kiseon Chung (2004), who studied Korean national identity by using the 2003 KGSS data, we conducted a factor analysis with the eight items and found that they were grouped in one factor rather than being separately grouped in ethnic factors and civic factors. One explanation Chung offered for this result is that Koreans do not distinguish clearly between ethnic factors and civic factors because they have lived in a homogenous country where ethnicity and nationality are often regarded as the same. When she compared national identity of 23 countries by using the 1995 ISSP data, however, she found that birth, citizenship, long-term residence, and religion were grouped in ethnic factors, while respect of institutions and laws, identification, and language were grouped in civic factors.

Hyun Choi (2007), however, contended that the division of ethnic (lineage-culture) and civic (political-law) is not realistic because his factor analysis that used the 2007 KGSS showed that language and culture were grouped together with political and legal qualifications while blood lineage and regional ties were grouped in a separate factor. Thus, it makes more sense, according to Choi, to distinguish between the ascription factor (birth and blood lineage) and the achievement factor (identification, respect for Korean law and political system, contribution to society, and language).

### 3. Attitudes toward Multiculturalism

Multiculturalism is a concept reflecting wide and various values so that it is difficult to define it unanimously. It indicates, however, usually an ideology system that acknowledges and respects different cultures rather than assimilating them into the dominant group's culture, and the government policy to actualize multicultural values and ideology. Troper(1999) defines its main component as ① a demographic diversity in terms of race, ethnicity,

and culture, ② a social ideology to acknowledge and respect socio-cultural diversity, ③ the governmental policy and programs to provide equal opportunity for all members of society and abolish discrimination based on race, ethnicity, and nationality. Thus, in order to achieve a truly multicultural society, members of the dominant group need to have cultural tolerance to minority groups, respecting cultural diversity and protecting disadvantaged members of minority groups.

#### 1) Attitudes toward cultural diversity

The 2003 KGSS data and the 2007 Koreans' Conflict Consciousness Survey data were used to examine Korean's attitudes toward cultural diversity. Results of the 2003 KGSS showed that South Koreans are not as exclusive to foreigners as we used to think. To the statement "It is impossible for people who don't share South Korean traditions and customs fully to become South Korean", 55% of the respondents agreed while 23% of the respondents disagreed and 21% of the respondents neither agreed nor disagreed. This result confirms again that South Koreans believe in the importance of Korean customs and traditions as a qualification for being truly South Korean. To the statement "Ethnic minorities should be given government assistance to preserve their customs and traditions", 62% of the respondents supported the government while 13% opposed it and 25% neither agreed nor disagreed. It shows that Koreans have considerably positive attitudes about foreigners' traditional culture. To the statement "It is better for a country if different racial and ethnic groups maintain their distinct customs and traditions", 43% of the respondents answered that it is better to keep their culture while 48% thought it is better for groups adapt and blend into the larger society. Thus, on this matter, the respondents are polarized into two opposing groups.

The 2007 Conflict Consciousness survey data showed that South Koreans' attitudes toward cultural diversity are more generous than what appeared in the 2003 data. For example, to the statement "It is impossible for people who don't share South Korean traditions and customs fully to become South Korean", 55% of the respondents agreed while 23% disagreed in 2003, but in 2007 30.8% of the respondents agreed while 32.9% disagreed. To the statement "It is better for a country if different racial and ethnic groups maintain their distinct customs and traditions", 43% agreed in 2003 and 46.9% agreed in 2007. These two results show that Koreans have generous attitudes

about ethnic minority group's cultural diversity, and the trend seems to move in the direction of greater tolerance.

<Table 6> Attitudes toward Cultural Diversity (%)

Statement	Positive response		Negative response		Gap between positive and negative	
	2003	2007	2003	2007	2003	2007
It is impossible for people who don't share South Korean traditions and customs fully to become South Korean.	55.0	30.8	23.0	32.9	32.0	-2.1
Ethnic minorities should be given government assistance to preserve their customs and traditions.	61.6	51.6	12.5	10.7	49.1	40.9
It is better for a country if different racial and ethnic groups maintain their distinct customs and traditions.	43.1	46.9	47.6	9.3	-4.5	37.6
It is better for Korea that ethnic minority group is adapted to Korean customs.	-	39.3	-	11.7	-	27.6

Data: The 2003 KGSS and the 2007 Korean Conflict Consciousness Survey

Note: Positive response includes answers that said either 'very important' or 'fairly important', and negative response includes answers that said either 'not very important' or 'not important at all'.

## 2) Attitudes toward foreigners

We used the 2006 Korean Consciousness and Value Survey to examine Korean's attitudes toward foreigners. Results are similar to what we found in attitudes toward cultural diversity: South Koreans are not as exclusive to foreigners as we often think. But their attitudes show some variations depending upon situations and nationality of foreigners. Eighty-three percent of the respondents answered Koreans are kind to foreigners from advanced countries, while 30% said Koreans are kind to foreigners from developing

countries or semi-developed countries. Also, 72% of the respondents said they have different feelings toward foreigners of different races. To the statement, “Foreign workers should have the same right as Korean workers”, 72.8% agreed. On the other hand, to the statement, “South Korea protects human rights of foreigners well,” only 24.2% agreed, indicating that Koreans think human rights of foreigners, especially foreign migrant workers, are still problematic.

Also, to the statement, “I object to the idea that my children marry foreigners,” 56.5% agreed while 43.3% disagreed. To the statement “I object that my children marry Koreans abroad”, however, 44.2% agreed while 55.7% disagreed. These two results mean that Koreans prefer overseas Koreans over foreigners as marriage partners. To the statement, “Koreans are exclusive to foreigners,” 54.9% agreed while 44.9% disagreed.

<Table 7> Attitudes toward Foreigners (%)

Statement	Positive response	Negative response	Gap between positive and negative
Koreans are kind to foreigners from advanced countries	83.0	17.0	66.0
Koreans are kind to foreigners from semi-developed or developing countries	30.0	70.0	-40.0
Foreign workers should have the same right as Korean workers	72.8	26.9	45.9
South Korea protects human rights of foreigners well	24.2	75.2	-51.0
I have different feelings toward foreigners of different races	71.8	28.1	43.7
I object to the idea that my children marry foreigners	56.5	43.3	13.2
I object to the idea that my children marry Koreans abroad	44.2	55.7	-11.5
Koreans are exclusive to foreigners	54.9	44.9	10.0

Data: the 2006 Koreans’ Consciousness and Value Survey

Note 1) Positive response includes answers of ‘very’ or ‘mostly’, and negative

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response includes answers of ‘not at all’ or ‘particularly’

2) Acceptance limitation toward foreign workers, immigrants and ethnic groups

In the 2003 KGSS, several questions were asked to respondents to measure their attitudes toward immigrants who came to Korea for living. To the statement “Immigrants increase crime rate,” 37% of the respondents disagreed while 32% agreed. To the statement “Immigrants are generally good for the South Korean economy,” 53% of the respondents agreed while 16% disagreed. Similarly, to the statement “Immigrants take jobs away from people who were born in South Korea,” 47% disagreed while 23% agreed. Also, to the statement “Immigrants improve South Korean society by bringing in new ideas and cultures,” 28% of the respondents agreed while 26% disagreed. Finally, to the statement “The government spends too much money assisting immigrants”, 48% disagreed while only 13% agreed. These results tend to show consistently that South Koreans are more likely to think immigrants are beneficial to the South Korean economy and society than they are dangerous or burdensome.

Such tolerant and positive attitudes toward immigrants may be taken by surprise for many people because South Koreans are known to be too nationalistic. One explanation we offer for such an unexpected result is that South Koreans do not feel threatened by immigrants, who are still too small and powerless to pose any serious threat to Korean society and economy. Moreover, the public’s perception that migrant workers are disadvantaged and exploited people seems to help South Koreans have sympathy toward these people. It is possible, however, that South Koreans become less tolerant toward immigrants if they become more numerous and powerful to challenge South Korean ways of life. A sign for that likelihood is found in the people’s response to the question “Do you think the number of immigrants to South Korea nowadays should be increased or reduced?”; 32% of the respondents said their number should be reduced while 35% said their number remain the same as it is and 23% said their number should be increased. This result indicates that the majority of South Koreans do not favor the increase of immigrants in South Korea.

In the 2001 and 2006 Life and Value Changes Survey, several questions were asked to determine Koreans’ willingness to accept foreign migrant workers/immigrants and members of other ethnic groups as their neighbors.

For the purpose of comparison, the survey included some socially undesirable groups. Results show that Koreans avoid overwhelmingly as their neighbors such socially undesirable groups as drug addicts, persons with HIV/AIDS, ex-convicts, homosexuals, and heavy drinkers. By contrast, the percentages of people who refuse to accept foreign migrant workers/immigrants and other ethnic groups as their neighbors were much lower at 38.7% and 36.5%, respectively.

<Table 8> Persons Not Wanted to be as Neighbors (%)

Classification	2001(a)	2006(b)	Gap (b-a)
Drug addicts	75.6	98.6	23.0
Persons with HIV/AIDS	89.4	93.5	4.1
Ex-convicts	81.4	88.4	7.0
Homosexuals	82.4	87.3	4.9
Heavy drinkers	75.6	76.4	0.8
Foreign workers/immigrants	46.8	38.7	-8.1
Other ethnic groups	34.7	36.5	1.8

Data: The Life and Value Changes Survey in 2001 and 2006.

#### 4) Attitudes toward the right to become South Korean citizens

As in attitudes toward immigrants, South Koreans are generally open and embracing in regard to the right to become South Korean citizens. To the statement “Children born in South Korea of parents who are not citizens should have the right to become South Korean citizens”, 69% of the respondents agreed while 16% disagreed and 14% neither agreed nor disagreed. Also, to the statement “Children born abroad should have the right to become South Korean citizens if at least one of their parents is a South Korean citizen”, 80% of the respondents agreed while 8% disagreed and 12% neither agreed nor disagreed. These results seem to indicate that South Koreans accept both the personal principle and the territorial principle as the legitimate condition of becoming South Korean citizens. To the statement “Legal immigrants to South Korea who are not citizens should have the same rights as South Korean citizens”, 68% of the respondents agreed while 14% disagreed and 17% neither agreed nor disagreed, indicating that the majority of South Koreans have a positive opinion of bestowing denizenship or the right of

permanent residence to legal immigrants. On the contrary, to the statement “The South Korean government should take stronger measures to exclude illegal immigrants”, 61% of the respondents agreed while 16% disagreed and 22% neither agreed nor disagreed, indicating that the majority of South Koreans are against illegal immigrants.

#### 5) Attitudes toward international relations

Contrary to their open and tolerant attitudes toward immigrants living in South Korea, South Koreans seem to keep protectionist attitudes in the matter of international relations. To the statement “South Korea should limit the import of foreign products in order to protect its national economy,” 52% of the respondents agreed while 24% disagreed and 22% neither agreed nor disagreed. To the statement “Large international companies are doing more and more damage to local businesses in South Korea,” 44% agreed while 22% disagreed and 31% neither agreed nor disagreed. Also, to the statement “Foreigners should not be allowed to buy land in South Korea,” 57% agreed while 18% disagreed and 23% neither agreed nor disagreed. South Koreans’ protectionist stance is found not only in the economic area but in the cultural one as well. To the statement “South Korean television should give preference to South Korean films and programs,” 57% agreed while 17% disagreed and 25% neither agreed nor disagreed. Also, to the statement “Increased exposure to foreign films, music, and books is damaging our national and local cultures,” 46% agreed while 30% disagreed and 22% neither agreed nor disagreed. These results indicate that South Koreans are cautious of the penetration of foreign capital and culture and the possible weakening of the Korean economy and cultural industry.

<Table 6> Attitudes toward foreign capital and culture

Statement	(1) % Positive response	(2) % Negative response	(3) (1) – (2)
South Korea should limit the import of foreign products in order to protect its national economy	51.8	24.3	27.5
Large international companies are doing more and more damage to local businesses in South Korea	43.6	21.7	21.9
Foreigners should not be allowed to buy land in South Korea	57.4	17.8	39.6
South Korean television should give preference to South Korean films and programs	56.6	17.2	39.4

Increased exposure to foreign films, music, and books is damaging our national and local cultures	46.2	29.7	16.5
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South Koreans' protectionist stance toward foreign capital and culture seem to make them nationalistic in their relations with foreign countries and international organizations. To the statement "South Korea should follow its own interests, even if this leads to conflicts with other nations," 56% agreed while 18% disagreed and 25% neither agreed nor disagreed. Also, they have a relatively low level of trust of international organizations. To the statement "In general, South Korea should follow the decision of international organizations to which it belongs, even if the government does not agree with them," 33% disagreed while 31% agreed and 33% neither agreed nor disagreed. Likewise, to the statement "International organizations are taking away too much power from the South Korean government," 58% agreed while 9% disagreed and 29% neither agreed nor disagreed.

<Table 7> Attitudes toward foreign countries and international organizations

Statement	(1) % Positive response	(2) % Negative response	(3) (1) – (2)
South Korea should follow its own interests, even if this leads to conflicts with other nations	55.6	18.1	37.5
In general, South Korea should follow the decision of international organizations to which it belongs, even if the government does not agree with them	31.0	32.6	-1.6
International organizations are taking away too much power from the South Korean government	57.5	8.6	48.9

In sum, South Koreans are more open and tolerant toward foreigners and immigrants living in South Korea than we previously thought. They are, however, still defensive and protectionist toward foreign capital and culture that compete with South Korea. They are willing to conflict with foreign countries to protect South Korea's interests. I attribute these different attitudes to South Koreans' different level of perceived threat that immigrants and foreign countries may pose to South Korea. South Koreans tend to think immigrants living in South Korea are not a serious threat to South Korean economy and culture because they are a small and powerless minority group. Also, the public perception that they are a



disadvantaged and mistreated group help South Koreans have sympathy toward them. On the contrary, they think competition from foreign countries at the economic and cultural level is real and serious enough to weaken the local economy and culture.

### **III. Conclusion**

As a result of globalization of South Korea, increasing numbers of Koreans go abroad for travel and emigration while foreigners come to visit and work in South Korea. Racial and cultural diversity of South Korea increases due to international migration and the growth of foreigners residing in South Korea. Moreover, foreign migrant workers play important roles in the Korean economy and international marriage women makes important changes in the family structure and relations. These demographic and socioeconomic changes require changes in the conception of national identity among South Koreans who have proudly kept cultural homogeneity.

The task given to South Koreans is to acquire consciousness and values appropriate in a multicultural society. For this reason, we examined the current state of Koreans' attitudes toward foreigners, minorities, and multiculturalism.

South Koreans' attitudes toward foreigners were often thought to be ethnocentric and exclusive. Contrary to common perceptions, research findings show that South Koreans are more open and tolerant toward foreigners and immigrants living in South Korea than we previously thought. They are, however, still defensive and protectionist toward foreign capital and culture that compete with South Korea. They are willing to conflict with foreign countries to protect South Korea's interests. I attribute these different attitudes to South Koreans' different level of perceived threat that immigrants and foreign countries may pose to South Korea. South Koreans tend to think immigrants living in South Korea are not a serious threat to South Korean economy and culture because they are a small and powerless minority group. Also, the public perception that they are a disadvantaged and mistreated group help South Koreans have sympathy toward them. On the contrary, they think competition from foreign countries at the economic and cultural level is real and serious enough to weaken the local economy and culture. In short, South

Koreans are moving toward 'open nationalism' at an individual level but remain at defensive nationalism at the international level.

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