Between the Ideals and Realities of 'Multicultural Korea'

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The Effects of International Migration on the
Discursive Position of the South Korean State
towards Multiculturalism

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The topic of migration has fascinated me almost my entire life. It probably began when my grandparents told me stories about their time when they were living in Australia: the long journey it took to only get there, and all of the strange animals they found in their garden. Their stories were important factors in shaping my interest in other cultures, which eventually led me to study Cultural Anthropology and Development Studies at the University of Amsterdam. A minor in Asian Studies and subsequent MA Asian Studies at Leiden University kindled my interest in East Asia and its diverse societal, political, and economical structures. My Master's programme Human Geography at Radboud University Nijmegen further shaped my ideas on migration and globalisation, and made me realise how intricate these phenomena are. In the end, the combination of these experiences and my own personal interests, provided the inspiration for the topic of this thesis.

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List of Acronyms

EPS	Employment Permit System
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
ICERD	International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination
IOM	International Organisation for Migration
KIIP	Korean Immigration and Integration Programme
KIS	Korea Immigration Service
KOSIS	Korean Statistical Information Service
MOFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade
MOGEF	Ministry of Gender Equality and Family
MoJ	Ministry of Justice
MOLEG	Ministry of Government Legislation
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OKA	Overseas Korean Act
PCNB	Presidential Council on Nation Branding
ROK	Republic of Korea
SMFA	Support for Multicultural Families Act
TOPIK	Test of Proficiency in Korean
UN	United Nations
WHO	World Health Organisation
WVS	Working Visit System

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1. Introduction

International migration has become a major phenomenon in today's increasingly interconnected world. The United Nations (UN) states that there more than 244 million international migrants in 2015, which is an increase of more than three times of the 75 million in 1960.[1] Immigration is oftentimes believed as one of the main reasons for the erosion of the sovereignty of nation-states. As the world is getting increasingly globalised, an increasing number of individuals are able to cross national borders more freely than ever. Affected by the treaties imposed by international regimes, the nation-state's (i.e. the government) authority to control the entry of immigrants is significantly weakened. However, these processes do not mean that states are now completely helpless in designing their immigration policies. In fact, many nation-states (mostly from developed countries) have implemented stricter strategies in order to control and regulate immigration, especially for those migrants coming from poorer countries.

The study on the relationship between immigration and the sovereignty of the nation-state can be differentiated into two theoretical perspectives. First, nation-states that reflect the domestic and international influences in creating their immigration programs. These influences encompass a variety of different factors: from the country's historical, economical, and social background, to international human right regimes and domestic interest groups. Second are the nation-states that actively design their immigration reality though their policy-making. The latter is a more state-centred realist approach in which the role of the state is emphasised in regard to manipulating the immigration policy as a tool to serve the national interests. However, these two seemingly contradicting perspectives are not necessarily mutually exclusive. On the contrary, immigration policy-making is a complex phenomenon where states, on the one hand, aim to serve their national interests, but at the same time, are also affected by a myriad of internal and external factors.

This thesis attempts to integrate these two perspectives and show how they simultaneously influence the immigration reality. It argues that to understand these apparent contradictory features, the pivotal concept is legitimacy. The legitimacy of a state is determined by its capacity to meets certain responsibilities. It is the combination of how a state manages the consequences of immigration and appropriates to particular norms and values. In regard to immigration, these responsibilities relate to the state's ability to attain security, stimulate economic prosperity, and comply with liberal norms. In order to achieve all of this, the state will face a difficult dilemma: somehow, they have to find a compromise between embracing and controlling immigrants. Embracing on the one hand, since the influx of immigrants contributes to greater economic prosperity and a better reputation with regard to human

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[1] Data are available on http://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/migration/publications/migrationreport/docs/MigrationReport2015_Highlights.pdf

rights. And controlling on the other, since immigration has the capacity to pose a threat to a state's national security and identity. Hence, the key question that follows is: how do states address this dilemma?

Drawing from the case of South Korea, this thesis pursues to answer this question. Over the last few decades, the Republic of Korea (ROK) – better known as South Korea – has been one the fastest globalizing countries in economic terms. It has become one of the world's global economic powers and is a leading nation in terms of industrialisation (Ginsburg, 2004). However, South Korea's recent developments also created new challenges on the labour market (Lim, 2002). One of these is a shortage of people working in the manual labour industry (Amnesty, 2009). The South Korean people have grown accustomed to this 'new' prosperity and, as a result, want to have more beneficial labour conditions, such as reduced working hours. Moreover, the highly-educated Korean youth are no longer interested in performing certain kinds of labour, better known as the '3D professions'. These jobs are seen as undesirable as they are known to be 'Dirty, Dangerous and Demanding'. Consequently, the industries affected by this shortage are addressing this issue by looking across their national border for the required labourers (Amnesty, 2006). Although local immigration authorities never officially granted permission to these kinds of activities, many unskilled workers have nonetheless migrated towards South Korea to fill this increasing demand. As of this day, more than a million foreigners reportedly reside in South Korea, with unskilled migrant workers making up the majority of them (Ministry of Justice, 2013).

In addition to the migrant workers, marriage migrants make up the second largest group of immigrants in South Korea. In the 1990s, an increasing number of South Korean women left the countryside to the cities in search of employment, making it more difficult for young male farmers to find a spouse. Accordingly, local South Korean government institutions set up campaigns to address these shortages. Females, mostly from Southeast Asia and China, began to move to South Korea through international marriage brokers – a trend that continues to this day. Nowadays, immigrants who are married to South Koreans account for more than an eight of South Korea's total immigrant population. These international marriages are characterised by its high divorce rate, oftentimes due to cultural and language problems.

As such, South Korea no longer is an absolute migrant-exporting country, but has transformed itself towards a migrant-importing country. The country's reliance on migrant workers and marriage migrants is likely to continue, and the South Korean government has become increasingly involved with this trend. Simultaneously, as South Korea started to become a more important player in international trade, Seoul[2] also became more aware of its role in the global community. In the early 1990s, the country launched a national and international campaign of 'internationalization'. The main objective of this campaign was to counteract the image of South Korea as a xenophobic and isolationist country, and to stimulate an impression that better reflected their new role as a global economic power.

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[2] 'Seoul' is here used to refer to the South Korean government.

From an era of cultural nationalism in the 1980s, South Korea became a nation whose government actively tries and valorises the idea of 'multiculturalism' (*tamunhwa* 다문화) (Seol, 2010). However, the country[3] still has a very exclusive idea of who is, and who is not considered truly 'Korean', and discrimination and xenophobia against foreigners is still a widespread phenomenon (Lee, 2003). This thesis will position itself right in the middle of these developments and explore how the South Korean state manoeuvres itself between presenting itself as a nation that tries to embrace multiculturalism on the one hand, and desires to maintain security and its national identity on the other.

Scientific relevance

This study will demonstrate how the current patterns associated with migration in South Korea correspond to the five general trends in international migration identified by Castles & Miller (2003). These are: 1) the globalisation of migration – "more countries are affected by migration and migrants come from more diverse areas"; 2) the acceleration of migration – "international migration of people is growing across the globe"; 3) the differentiation of migration – "most countries have a range of types of immigration, including labour migration, refugees and permanent settlement"; 4) the feminization of migration – "women are playing a greater role in most types of migration, in both labour and marriage migration"; and 5) the growing politicization of migration – "international migration is having a greater impact on domestic politics and national security policies of states as well as bilateral relationships among them". Although all of these trends are applicable to the topic of my thesis, I will predominantly focus on the fifth trend as described by Castles & Miller (2003). These trends will help me explain how South Korea has turned from an emigration to an immigration country. It will serve as a way to analyse migration to the country in a more systematic manner.

Although plenty of research has already been done on the topics of migration, foreign migrant workers, and multiculturalism in South Korea (see for instance the work of Dong-Hoon Seo, Timothy Lim, Iain Watson, Geon-Soo Han, and Hye-Kyung Lee), only a few have looked at how these phenomena are interconnected. By connecting these concepts, this thesis aims to fill a gap within the existing field of knowledge related to this topic. Moreover, the majority of the academic work on these topics is carried out in Korean, and the literature in the English language remains scarce, especially on the topic of international migration and multiculturalism in this region. Besides these more practical limitations of the current scholarly work on migration and nationalism in Korea, this thesis also aims to contribute to various academic debates in the social sciences and human geography. Not only does migration relocate members from countries all over the world, it also alters the nature

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[3] When referring to the 'country' of South Korea, this can be read as both the geographical area of South Korea, the government and/or its citizens. In this case, the 'country' refers the South Korean nation-state, encompassing both the government and the South Korean society.

of sovereignty and membership structure in receiving societies (and sending societies as well). As globalization proceeds, and more people are crossing national borders, the sovereignty of nation-states has the potential to slowly erode. Although it might seem that the authority of nation-states is getting weaker, states are not necessarily without power. The role of the nation-state in influencing international mobility and elevating policy outcome is still too often overlooked: "a principle challenge is to model the behaviour of nation-states and political actors, filling a void in the general theory of international migration" (Massey, 1999). In reality, states are actively designing their immigration policies to serve their national interests, which includes nation-building. This thesis aims to contribute to this perspective by using the case of South Korea as an example to demonstrate how the state is on the one hand still an important actor in designing the immigration reality, but simultaneously is affected my multiple internal and external factors. The fact that South Korea is experiencing these competing pressures itself, makes it a very interesting case to examine how nation-states manage this phenomenon.

Societal relevance

Since the early 1990s, the Republic of Korea saw a rapid increase in the immigration of foreigners. At the same time, the number of Koreans going abroad is substantially lower compared to previous years. Previously a country characterized for its emigration, South Korea has now become a net migrant receiving country. As of 2014, almost 1,1 million registered foreigners reside in South Korea (KOSIS, 2015). This represents a more than twenty-fold increase from the 1990 figure of 50,000 persons. For the South Korean government, this development did not go unnoticed, as they reacted promptly by amending and adopting laws and regulations related to immigration. Additionally, they introduced several new policies to facilitate the integration process of newcomers into South Korean society. In other words, the South Korean migration landscape has seen some major changes over the past 25 years, and the implementation of the new immigration policies have had a significant impact on its society. In the light of these developments, it is both significant and appropriate to scrutinise the recent trends in South Korean migration and its related policies. By giving a comprehensive overview of immigration towards South Korea, this thesis aims to make a contribution to this field of study.

The increasing number of foreign migrant workers has led to a lively debate in South Korean society, with most of them concerning their legal status. These discussions, however, do not only affect a small foreign-born portion of the nation's society. Moreover, they are about South Korean society in general, and whether or not it will be able to accept different people, customs, and cultures. By examining this issue from this particular perspective, this thesis will provide an alternative view on South Korean society, its ambiguities and contradictions. Secondly, my research will also help to address how the South Korean government deals with multiculturalism. Where other countries' governments already have claimed that

the multicultural society has "failed" and called it a "grand delusion" (see, for instance, Germany and the Netherlands) and are currently moving towards a renewed emphasis on national values and loyalty, it is only recently (2005) that the South Korean government official recognised and actively promoted the concept of 'multiculturalism'. Finally, the relationship between incoming foreign migrant workers and the effects on nationalism has become an important issue in many other countries as well. Multiple nations are facing similar kind of dilemmas as processes such as globalisation enables their inhabitants to come in contact with people from all over the world (see, e.g., Japan[4]). In order for South Korea – and other countries as well – to achieve true internationalization, it will have to learn to incorporate further diversity into its society. In an age where the effects of globalisation and migration have become even more visible, the challenges related to these developments may not only be a test case for South Korea, but also for other countries as well.

Research objective & research questions

Given the fact that South Korea highly values ethnic homogeneity, linking national identity to ethnicity, and many Koreans still believe in the idea of a shared bloodline and a common ancestry, the influx of immigrants poses many questions. Is the South Korean state able to condone individuals who are members but not citizens of their society? Should these people enjoy similar political and civil rights as their South Korean counterparts? How does the South Korean government respond to these issues? And, finally, how can the country on the one hand maintain its cultural integrity and image of an ethnic homogeneous nation whilst on the other pursue economic globalisation? In other words, this thesis will study whether the growing international flows contribute to the decline of ethnic nationalism in South Korea, a country which historically defined itself by their strong sense of nationalism and ethnic homogeneity. To answer these questions, this thesis will explore the relationship between the world economy and the state, and examine how this relationship influences the kind of nationalism that emerges in South Korean society. It will examine these processes from the perspective of the South Korean state and analyse their immigration policy, its development, and how these policies have shaped the immigrant.

Accordingly, the main objective of this thesis is to examine the effects of international migration in South Korea from the perspective of the state. By providing analyses based upon a secondary data study and discourse analysis, it aims to explore South Korea's immigration policies and how the government is balancing the global demand of liberalising migration whilst at the same time addressing to the domestic fear of loss of national identity. Hence, I have formulated my main research questions as follows:

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[4] Scholars as Amy Gurowitz, Tessa Morris-Suzuki, Katherine Tegtmeyer Pak, and Takeyuki Tsuda have written extensively on how immigration has affected Japanese society.

How does the South Korean government construct its discursive position on multiculturalism in a time when international immigration to the country rises rapidly?

In order to answer this main research question, multiple sub-question will need to be answered as well. These questions include: 1) What are the effects of international labour migration on nation-states and what kind of government strategies have they designed to regulate these flows? 2) Who are the agents of multiculturalism? And, more specifically, what role does the South Korean state plays in promoting multiculturalism? To what extent has the South Korean state embraced this new multicultural vision? 3) How has the South Korean government's discourse on migration and multiculturalism developed over the last few decades? And, 4) How has the discourse on immigration affected the position of migrants in South Korea?

Structure of the thesis

This short section will serve as a guide for the reader of this thesis to have a better understanding of its contents and the essence of the argument this thesis seeks to convey. The next chapter will provide the theoretical framework of this thesis, which will engage in the debates around immigration policies. By examining existing theories on immigration policy, it aims to provide an understanding of the seemingly contradictory immigration phenomenon of South Korea. It shows how the state is purposefully negotiating competing demands and thereby tries to maximize its legitimacy. The theoretical framework is followed by the research methodology. This chapter explains and justifies the research methodology that this thesis has employed. Furthermore, the research methodology describes how I have arrived at my findings and how it accommodated me in answering the research question. Chapter four and five set the stage for the central discussions of this thesis. Chapter four – 'Contextualising South Korea's Current Immigration Landscape – provides an examination of the current migration landscape in South Korea by analysing relevant statistical data, thereby establishing the background for the remainder of this thesis. It assesses the demographic, socio-economic, cultural and historical contexts which play important roles in explaining the reasons behind the South Korean government's migration discourse and implementation. As such, its aim is to gain a better understanding of why South Korea has seen such a large influx of migrants. The next chapter, entitled 'Current Migration Patterns of South Korea', describes the contemporary immigration landscape of the country. Who are the people that migrate to South Korea? How many of them are there? And, where do they come from? Chapter six looks at the South Korean state's discourse surrounding multiculturalism, and discusses how this has become so prevalent in South Korean state politics. Additionally, it examines how South Korea's turn towards multiculturalism has affected its society and the immigrants themselves. Chapter seven takes a look at the South Korean government's policies on (unskilled) migrant workers and marriage migrants. It will study how the state applies different type of immigration policies towards these two groups, and

demonstrate the discriminatory and gendered nature of this programme. Additionally, this chapter delves deeper into the apparent 'gap' between the rhetoric and practice of the South Korean government. Accordingly, it argues that the state's policy regarding migrants is purposefully designed for the benefit of its own national interests. The final chapter of this thesis, the conclusion, summarises the main findings, and briefly touch upon some policy recommendations for the South Korean government.

2. Theoretical Framework

Most of the current academic literature on immigration policy sees nation-states as either 'reacting' or 'constructing' the immigration reality. However, in reality nation-states frame their migration policies in a much more nuanced light, and these two competing concepts of 'reacting' or 'constructing' do not fully grasp its complex nature. Usually, states calculate their policies based on national interests such as nation-building, but these do not appear in a vacuum: internal and external factors and actors simultaneously affect their design. This thesis will suggest an alternative theory by which nation-states deal with immigration based upon the goal to maximize their legitimacy. This chapter examines theories that serve as useful backdrop for understanding the seemingly contradictory immigration phenomenon of South Korea. By examining existing theories on immigration policy, it aims to provide an understanding of the seemingly discrepant issue. Furthermore, this chapter illustrates how the state is purposefully negotiating competing demands and thereby tries to maximize its legitimacy

Multiculturalism, assimilation, and integration

Before I will delve more deeply into these topics, I will discuss some concepts that form the foundation of this thesis: multiculturalism, assimilation, and integration. Edward Teryakian (2003, p. 27) writes: "different countries will react differently to new multicultural and multiracial realities". In addition to this, countries will react differently in different contexts over time, and towards different type of immigrants. Some states may restrain or prevent multicultural realities from emerging by sending (or attempting to send) newcomers back to their home country. Along the same line, they may also deal with immigrants as if they were temporary residents, thus denying them to become full citizens. In South Korea, this was and still is the predominant policy of the state toward immigrants. Countries may also – and this often happens simultaneously – respond by completely rejecting cultural differences; subordinating migrants by, for instance, institutionalized and state-sanctioned discrimination (Teryakian, 2003). This can also be observed in South Korea to the way in which the state treats people of 'mixed' or 'foreign blood'. This this thesis will delve deeper into this subject in chapter six: 'The Political Discourse of Multiculturalism'.

Still, there can also be a situation, in which states do accept immigrants to settle in their country, but refuse to respect the cultural differences that these newcomers might have. Instead, governments require 'others' to assimilate, as in expecting (and if necessary, by compulsion) them to adopt to the norms, values, and practices of the host country's predominant culture. Authorities can use their power to illegalize certain expressions of beliefs or values. On the other hand, assimilationists policies often are implemented in a passive

form: it is expected from immigrants to adapt to the dominant culture on their own (that is, without active support or encouragement from the state). One of the possible drawbacks of this passive form of assimilation, as a study by Ghaffar-Kucher (2006) explains, is the formation of self-contained isolated 'ghettos'. State and society often view these neighbourhoods as potentially problematic or harmful. Therefore, after ghettos are formed, states typically respond in a more proactive manner, which may take the form of policies that bear more resemblance to integration or even multiculturalism.

Integration is seen as the act or process of incorporation into a society in which there is a recognition and tolerance for the cultural differences of immigrants[5]. In other words, integration allows newcomers "to preserve their religious, cultural, and linguistic identities while fully participating in their new home country's political sphere" (Ghaffar-Kucher, 2006, p. 4). It should be noted, however, that the way in which recognition or tolerance is being played out, differs from state, situation, and context. Some integrationist policies appear to be weaker than others, insofar as they may disregard broader social and economic problems (Foster & Stockley, 1984). Additionally, integrationist policies are strongly dictated by the broader goals of the state. Hence, the way in which immigrant groups should integrate into mainstream society and to what extent their cultural differences will be tolerated, could only get more progressive as long as they do not come into conflict with the interests of the state.

The third basic concept I would like to introduce in this section is the view of multiculturalism. Unlike assimilation or integration, multiculturalism can be described as the acceptance of minority communities and their culture within a single jurisdiction of the state and its national culture (Teryakian, 2003). In the long run, this could entail an overhaul of the national culture's structure towards a more complex, diverse culture. Other scholars have argued that multiculturalism – when adopted as an official ideology – can essentially be seen as a state program that manages racial and ethnic diversity (Kong & Yeoh, 2003)[6]. In other words, multiculturalism – just as assimilation or integration – is still a diffused concept (Radtke, 2001). There is not a simple definition of the concept, but rather only specific context-dependent multicultural realities (Joppke & Lukes, 1996).

Immigration policy as a reaction

Postnational citizenship theory
Some globalist academics (see, e.g., Soysal, 1994; Bauböck, 1994; Jacobson, 1996; Sassen, 1998) argue that processes of globalisation have an adverse effect on the authority of nation-

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[5] There is, however, generally a limit to the extent in which immigrants can express their own norms, values, and beliefs.

[6] Kong & Yeoh (2003) explore the strategies that the Singaporean state purposefully employed in their attempt to build a nation through landscapes.

states in responding to immigration. Sociologist Saskia Sassen, who is renowned for her study of globalisation, writes (1996, p. 62): "while a national state may have the power to write the text of an immigration policy, it is likely to be dealing with a complex, deeply embedded, and transnational process that it can only partly address or regulate through immigration policy as conventionally understood" As such, Sassen echoes the globalist view which asserts that in today's globalised world, the exclusive power of nation-states over its citizens is being eroded.

Similar to the globalist perspective, neo-institutionalist scholars perceive an undermining of the state's authority to negotiate and define the limits of the concept of citizenship. According to them, this is the consequence of international human rights regimes represented by supra- and transnational institutions (see Jinks & Goodman, 2003). Influenced by a multitude of international treaties and conventions, the conceptualisation of citizenship has changed into terms of universal rights of personhood. As such, people are becoming eligible for citizenship regardless of their birth nationality. Yasemin Soysal (1994), for instance, claims that with the development of what she calls "postnational citizenship", the concept of national citizenship becomes increasingly less important, which in turn bolsters the rights of immigrants. This view opposes the fundamental assumption of nation-states that underlines the congruency of the political and national unit (Gellner, 1983).

The rise of postnational citizenship forms a good base for claims of exclusive adherence to an identity. Entrusting the human rights discourse, both migrants and ethnic minorities increasingly emphasize the need to recognise and accommodate their cultural differences. They call for states to design policies allowing them to integrate into their respective societies whilst respecting their cultural communities (Kymlicka, 2001). Consequently, the ideology of assimilation into the host society is increasingly being replaced by believes of multiculturalism that favours cultural relativism. No longer are the national identities of migrants legitimately expressed by national boundaries, but rather they go beyond them.

Client politics
Besides the inclusionary tendency of immigration policies proposed by postnational citizenship theory, another prominent theory is the neoclassical political economy theory. Gary Freeman, who is one of leading scholars on migrants and politics, depicts the rationale behind immigration policies as "client politics" (1995). By using this model, Freeman refers to the idea that the politics of migration essentially revolves around the meaning and power of organised interests in a given society. Or in his words (p. 881), immigration policy in liberal democracies is "broadly expansionist and exclusive" due to the fact that policymaking is heavily affected by lobbying organisations that benefit from an acceptance policy towards immigrants. Examples of these are employers, civil rights advocates and ethnic groups.

Neo-institutionalist scholars have criticised Freeman and his idea of client politics because he reduces his interpretation of social phenomena, such as immigration policy, to individual agency. However, from Freeman's perspective neo-institutionalism, in turn, undermines the agency of domestic actors. In other words, one theory's strength is the other's

weakness. Whereas Freeman's theory emphasised bottom-up factors, Neo-institutionalists focus on top-down influences in explaining the politics of migration. Yet, both theories share one common shortcoming: they are unable in clarifying the differences between nations in their ways of granting citizenship rights to foreigners (Joppke, 1998). Although Freeman's hypothesis is useful in explaining immigration policies in societies where immigration occurred simultaneously with nation-building (such as the United States), this is however not the case for nation-states where immigration occurred after the nation-building process (such as South Korea). As such, Joppke suggests that the state's history of nation-building strongly affects the immigration policy of a given society.

Nationhood citizenship theory

In his influential book *Citizenship and Nationhood in France and Germany* (1992), Brubaker analyses why two countries maintain different approaches in attributing citizenship rights to immigrants despite France's and Germany's seemingly similar flows of immigration. He claims that the main factor for their distinctive immigration policies lies in their historical understanding of nationhood. By comparing the politics of migration in two neighbouring countries, France and Germany, Brubaker illustrates how they developed "distinctive, even antagonistic models of nationhood and self-understanding" (p. 1). In his attempt to explain these differences, Brubaker concentrates on the two countries divergent national self-definitions of citizenship, which are deeply embedded in their national history. Whereas Germany has held an ethnic interpretation of nationhood, which sustained the principle *jus sanguinis*, France conceptualised a state-framed and territorial understanding of nationhood, sustaining the basis of *jus soli*. The central thesis of Brubaker's work has affected many future scholars who analysed conceptions of citizenship (see, e.g., Castles, 1995; Koopmans & Stratham, 1999; Favell 1998).

Empirical implications for South Korea

Although there have not been many scholars who have used the abovementioned theories to analyse South Korean immigration policy, this section will explore the relatively few who in fact have applied them to the South Korean case. Seol & Skrentny (2004), for instance, refer to Freeman's model of client politics in explaining the immigration policy reform in South Korea. According to the authors, lobbying organisation such as small and medium-sized manufacturing companies have been pivotal in influencing the South Korean government as they struggled filling low-wage factory jobs. Additionally, Lee (2008a) uses both neo-institutionalist and political economy theory to examine the development of the immigration policies of the South Korean state. He applies client politics to illustrate how the influx of migrant workers to South Korea began and uses neo-institutionalist theory to explain how the government's immigration policy developed into a more liberal model.

Nevertheless, most scholars who study this phenomenon within the South Korean context acknowledge that the belief of ethnocentrism is still one of the dominant factors in the process of integration. Seol & Skrentny (2009), for instance, argue that the South Korean

state carries out a nationhood in close conjunction with an ethnic model, which is sometimes referred to as a *Kulturnation* (Brubaker *et al.*, 2006). The authors claim that South Korea's ethnocentric model constructs a hierarchy among foreigners, in which ethnic Koreans are placed higher up the 'hierarchical ladder' than non-ethnic Koreans: "rights, benefits and opportunities are distributed based on position the hierarchy" (Seol & Skrentny 2009, p. 162). Lim (2003) has a similar view in that *Chosŏnjok* (Chinese of Korean ancestry) enjoy favourable policies because this group would be less threatening to South Korea's homogeneous society. Others (see, e.g, Kim, 2006) have argued that the country's ethnocentrism led the South Korean government to enforce gender-selective immigration policies in which female marriage migrants are encouraged because they can reproduce the Korean nation.

Additionally, another group of academics focus on how various migrant sub-groups in South Korea are regarded and treated differently (Won, 2008; Han & Park, 2011). Opposed to categorising migrants under one comprehensive term such as 'foreigners', South Korean society diversifies migrants into multiple sub-groups with different interests and positions attached to them. According to Won (2008), specific migrant groups such as marriage immigrants, migrant workers and North Korean refugees, are selectively treated by the South Korean government. An important factor in determining these different policy-making processes is related to bloodlines. As such, Han & Park (2011) examine that marriage immigrants are more prone to get access to citizenship rights (and effectively voting rights) than other migrant sub-groups, which in turn makes them a noteworthy target group in elections.

Immigration policy as a calculation

Roles of states in nation-building

One of the shortcomings of the existing scholarly literature is that they often fail to recognise the role of states to actively reach their targets. Hence, today's immigration phenomenon is only partially explained as these studies fall short to explain its complex reality. Immigration policies are analysed as oversimplified reactions to either globalisation (Soysal, 1994), domestic interest groups (Freeman, 1995) or a historical understanding of nationhood (Brubaker, 1992). However, there have been some scholars who have emphasised the role of states in designing or manipulating their immigration policies as a means of nation-building. These will be explored in this section. Zolberg (2006) for instance, disputes that immigration policy always has been a main factor to development. Rather he sees the American state as being 'designed'. A national community is purposefully created by selecting the traits and characteristics of the new immigrants. Similarly, Ngai (2005) argues that the politics of migration has "remapped the nation" by construction the reality of immigrants (p. 3). In other words, both Zolberg and Ngai stress the importance of the role of states to understanding immigration policies.

Theories that focus on the active role of the state in nation-building also help understanding the different policy approaches towards various migrant sub-groups. A common feature of these immigration policies is states' engagement in pursuing their national interests. In this framework, even policies that are apparently inconsistent can indeed be consistent. This intended contradiction is conceptualised by Krasner (1999) as "organised hypocrisy." This concept refers to the condition when even though there exists a durable norm, it is frequently violated. His main argument centres on the idea that states are not as sovereign as many assume they are. Especially in this globalised world in which the principle of sovereignty seems to diminish, Krasner argues that historically rulers have disregarded this principle whenever they thought it was needed. There have been many cases of rulers who, for example, signed international human rights conventions even though they had no real intentions of implementing their precepts.

Empirical implications for South Korea

In order to get an impression of Seoul's contradictory procedure towards marriage migrants and migrant workers, it is important to consider the abovementioned theories that emphasise the active role of the state. In fact, the South Korean government made a deliberate decision to adopt labour migration to its country as a response to intensified demands from the industry sector. To withhold South Korea's mono-ethnic society, the government provided new immigrants only short-terms visas and alternating the workforce on a regular basis. Additionally, due to South Korea's low fertility rate and rapidly ageing population, it is in desperate need of marriage immigrants. Considering these conditions, the government has instituted multiple policies to entice female immigrants to marry South Korean men, and make them into South Korean citizens.

Multiple scholars have applied a more state-centred perspective in understanding the South Korean government's recent turn to multiculturalism (see, e.g., Moon, 2006; Kim, 2008; Kim, 2009). Kim (2008) uses the term "state-driven multiculturalism" to refer to South Korea's current immigration policy. He argues that the government has actively pursuit multiculturalism in its policy in such a way that it contributes to the process of nation-building. Similarly, whilst Kim (2009) recognises the factor of various social actors in influencing the government's immigration discourse, the state, he claims, remains the most influential actor in dealing with migrants. According to the author, South Korea's multiculturalists rhetoric are centred on a cost-benefit calculation. Moon (2006) shares a similar perspective in that he claims that the South Korean state only embraces the principle of multiculturalism due to the expected social and economic benefits this would bring.

Although a focus on the perspective of the state is helpful in understanding the current contradictions of its immigration policy, it has oftentimes been criticized for its assumption that states and their rulers always act in a rational and autonomous manner. It has the presumption that policy-making is carried out in intended and calculated ways. The main weakness of this rational explanation is that it lacks a comprehensive understanding of policy changes. Whilst governments can make their decisions based upon cost-benefits calculations,

and looking what is best for their national interests, this is being implemented with limited options. Hence, even though states' choices are rational, they are 'bounded' at the same time (see Simon, 1957). Additionally, this state-centred account assumes that government's decision-making process is exempt from the influence of external factors. In other words, this theory regards the state as a single univocal actor which is distinct from its environment. This perspective thus maintains an unrealistic depiction of states and its sovereignty. This is especially true considering today's globalised world in which states are constantly being affected by external factors.

Immigration as a function of legitimacy

Before this thesis tackles why immigration could be seen as a means for states to strengthen their legitimacy, it will demonstrate how economic demands due to labour shortages and demographic demands due the ageing of the general population also affects governments to adopt immigration. Both demands are interconnected as populations become older and decline, there will be a larger demand for productive labour. It is important to note, however, that if economic and political demands were the sole reasons, immigration policy would be an easy task: every country would open its borders and motivate people to reduce these shortages. This would also entail that every country would have the same mode of integrating migrants, something that is clearly not the case as some societies have much more open policies to immigration than others. Moreover, governments regularly implement different strategies of immigration for different types of migrants.

This thesis argues that the discrepancy between countries' immigration policies is the result of the political legitimacy of the nation-state involved. In addition to the potential benefits that migrant bring (e.g. satisfying economic and demographic demands), they are also potential causes of friction. If governments are unsuccessful in sufficiently controlling the adverse effects of immigration, there exists the possibility that its legitimacy will be called into question. Legitimacy, and what is considered legitimate, differentiates between societies as they have distinct economies, politics, and cultures. These factors affect state legitimacy in various ways, leading to different immigration regimes.

Economic demand: labour shortages

Employers play an important role in bringing in migrants. Michael Priore (1979) emphasised this as he demonstrated that the migrants' reason to migrate is not solely based upon their own decision, but they are oftentimes recruited by industrial companies in richer countries. He asserts that, rather than the immigrants themselves, employers determine the timing, source and seize of migration. In other words, they selectively recruit employees to maximize their benefits. Hollifield (2004) shares Priore's perspective. According to him, push factors have remained consistent for many years, whilst the pull factors in developed

countries have varied: "The sufficient conditions [for migration to occur] are legal and political. States must be willing to accept immigration and to grant rights to outsiders" (Piore 1979, p. 885).

The theoretical perspective posed by scholars such as Piore and Hollifield challenges the more conventional interpretation of migration which is related to neoclassical economics. According to this theory, individuals' decision to migrate is a response to wage differentials, causing them to move from low-wage and/or labour-surplus countries to high-wage and/or labour-scarce countries (see, e.g., Todaro, 1969; Borjas, 1989). Piore, on the other hand, argues that even though the economic development of sending countries decreases income inequality, it would not stop the influx of migrants since employers would recruit workers from elsewhere. In other words, if governments intend to adequately control immigration, it would be better if they focus less on regulating the supply-side of foreign labour and more on the companies that are responsible for the demand.

Demographic demand: population ageing
In almost all of the industrialised and developed countries is population ageing a serious issue. The United Nations (UN) estimates (2002) that the share of the world's population above the age of 60 is forecasted to rise from 10 per cent in 2000 to 21 per cent in 2050. The same report mentioned fertility decline as one of the primary determinants of this trend. The world's average fertility rate decreased from 5.0 to 2.7 children per woman over the last 50 years, and in developed countries this number is even lower with a fertility rate of 1.5 children per woman. The total fertility rate is currently below the replacement level of 2.0 in almost all of the industrialised countries. Additionally, the World Health Organization (WHO) reported in 2013 that the average life expectancy at birth of the global population was 71 years.[7] Compared to the 1950s, this means an increase of almost 25 years. The combination of a decreasing fertility rate and increasing longevity will eventually lead to a relatively smaller labour pool. To address this issue, either the fertility rate should go up, which means women would give birth to more children, or life expectancy should be reduced, which seems implausible. Likewise, the fertility rate is not projected to reach or go above the replacement level in most developed countries. Hence, 'replacement migration' is frequently seen as a solution to satisfy the demographic demand and offset population ageing. Multiple scholars have studied whether replacement migration could solve issues as population ageing and a decreasing size of the workforce (see, e.g., Pollard, 1973; Cerone, 1987; Coleman, 2001). The general consensus among these studies is that immigration by itself is not the ultimate solution to address these demographic challenges. Nevertheless, it is still seen as something that could contribute in solving the issue of population ageing.

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[7] Retrieved from http://www.who.int/gho/mortality_burden_disease/life_tables/en/

Political demand: legitimacy

Even though state legitimacy does not initiate people to migrate, the demand for legitimacy is one of the key factors for states in deciding their mode of immigrant incorporation. What constitutes a legitimate state is difficult to define; Max Weber wrote that the legitimacy of a state means that the participants perceive the set of rules as both appropriate and binding (as cited in Waters & Waters, 2015). It can be based upon representation, transparency, accountability, citizens' participation, policy outcomes, etc. In other words, state legitimacy is determined by its capacity to meets certain responsibilities. In regard to immigration, these responsibilities relate to the state's ability to attain security, stimulate economic prosperity, and comply with liberal norms. The following section will briefly discuss each of these three functions and look at how they contribute to state legitimacy.

One of the most classical functions of the nation-state is to ensure a feeling of security for its subjects. As the number of incoming migrants increases, concerns over national security will be put to the test (Huysmans, 1998). Oftentimes, newcomers in the form of migrants are seen as threat to society, which could lead to social or political backlash. States want to avoid that their legitimacy will be undermined and therefore will respond to these concerns by trying to make sure that immigration is well in control. By framing immigration as a security threat, states can increase their control over the migration flows. Especially politicians who are in fear of losing their legitimacy, tend to construct immigrants as scapegoats as a means to gain more popularity (Huysmans, 2000). Or, as Didier Bigo (2002, p. 65) writes: "The securitization of migration is, thus, a traversal political technology, […] to play with the unease, or to encourage it if it does not yet exist, so as to affirm their role as providers of protection and security and to mask some of their failures."

Secondly, the state's capacity to stimulate economic growth is another important function for its legitimacy. Although the state is not the main economic provider in most capitalist societies, they do provide the right conditions for economic growth. Additionally, they are capable of intervening in the economy to correct market failures. In regard to migration, the state could frame migrants as important economic resources for the host society (Buonfino, 2004). From this perspective, migrants are seen as an investment or assets. Whereas the abovementioned security approach justifies restrictive immigration policies, the economic rationality has more of a tendency towards expansionary immigration policies. States are likely to lean towards one of these two approaches. However, despite their clear distinction, they are not mutually exclusive, and they could co-exist. States may make use of both rationalities in constructing their specific discourse on immigrant incorporation.

Thirdly, state's legitimacy is dependent upon its ability to conform towards certain liberal norms, which are considered a vital part of every democracy. These norms could include the rule of law, respect for civil liberties, and compliance with the constitution. In the process of globalisation, adhering to these principles has become increasingly important for a state's legitimacy. They have become institutionalised in the domestic system through international agreements and human rights organisations. The meaning of state sovereignty is being reconfigured as states also have to conform to a set of nation-transcending rules and

ideals, imposed for instance by the human rights regime (Levy & Sznaider, 2006). In other words: "sovereignty has simply evolved into a new concept, one that places less emphasis on the ability of a ruler to 'exclude' the world and more emphasis on international legal recognition and participation" (Petersen, 2011, p. 180). This evolution also affects state's immigration policy. Civil society organisations and the human rights regime may confront governments with their migration strategy if they are in violation of the liberal norms. To secure their legitimacy, states are more inclined to support and follow this approach.

Activating legitimacy concerns

In an attempt to explain the fluctuating responses by different actors to immigration issues, Westen (2009) introduces the concept of 'networks of association'. These networks are "sets of thoughts, feelings, images, memories, metaphors, values, and emotions that have become connected through time and experience, so that activating one part of the network unconsciously activates the rest" (p. 1). Associations like these influence the emotional attachments people have towards immigrants and whether they have friendly or hostile feelings towards them. For each country, some components of this network are activated more easily than others due to the society's economic, political, and cultural contexts. For instance, for a country like South Korea, which historically has been characterised for its ethnic nationalism, it is probably safe to assume that migrants are more prone to be perceived as a threat to social cohesion. Hence, in order to maintain or strengthen its legitimacy, the state would be more likely to opt for a rhetoric strategy that establish them as a security provider. It should be noted, however, that the factors which influence the migration regime are not static. Rather, immigration policy should be seen as an evolving process in which the environments of both the migrants and receiving society constantly change. Governments define their immigration policies according to an interplay of economic, political, and cultural circumstances both domestically and globally. The following section of this chapter will identify three of the most significant factors that may influence the perception towards immigrants, and examine how the combination of these factors affect the government's immigrant incorporation discourse.

Historical factors

As emphasised by Brubaker (1992), the nation-state's historical understanding of ethnic or civic nationhood is of particular significance to the extent to which minorities are being included in, or excluded from the host society. Brubaker's theory partly explains the rationale for South Korea's structural discrimination towards non-ethnic Koreans. Especially after the Japanese occupation of Korea between 1910 and 1945, the country's exclusionary believes towards foreigners were deeply rooted. Although the colonial past might not have influenced the South Korea's current immigration policies directly, they did strengthen the historical understanding of nationhood. In turn, this affected the way in which immigrants and foreigners in general are perceived and treated today. Accordingly, the state developed

restrictive immigration policies in which immigrants were not seen as economic assets, but rather as threats to South Korea's homogeneous society. Whilst historical factors could encourage states to adopt certain immigration policies, they do not explain how these policies can change over time. Therefore, they serve purely as an interesting point of departure in the analysis. Only in correlation to other factors can they move beyond of being an interesting point of departure.

Domestic actors

In addition to historical factors, the mode of immigrant incorporation is also affected by domestic actors. As already have been stated in the previous sections, employers' organisations oftentimes push the government for a more open policy towards immigrants since companies benefit from the falling wages associated with an open labour market (Freeman, 1995). Labour unions, on the other hand, traditionally have an opposing view toward incoming migrants since they would jeopardise the job security of domestic labourers (Goldin, 1994). Interestingly, this position has recently changed: labour unions have increasingly begun to embrace immigrants, seeing their influx as inevitable and a potential source of their future strength (Calativa, 2004).

Not only companies and labour unions show interest in the way in which a government frames its immigration policies. Moreover, civil society organisations are increasingly building formal and informal relationships with states. Engaging with civil society poses both challenges and opportunities for a state. On the one hand, governments can benefit from the bottom-up knowledge of civil society groups in their decision-making. Their intermediary role between states and the electorate can provide governments with useful information to enhance their own credibility. On the other hand, civil society and states could also have conflicting interests. Oftentimes, civil society organisations side with the migrants, fighting for their rights and more inclusive immigration policies. In other words, the immigration framework is affected by the relationship between the state and civil society. States with a relative weak civil society would have a more top-down directive, whilst a strong civil society may see some of its appeals reflected in the mode of immigrant incorporation. In new immigration countries, such as South Korea, civil society groups are expected to play a minor role in the processes of policy development (Cornelius, Tsuda, Martin & Hollifield, 2004). However, as Yamanaka (2010) shows, civil society groups in South Korea have successfully managed to entice the national government to make structural reforms in their immigration policies. Chapter six of this thesis will look at this development in greater depth.

International actors

Finally, international actors also have a significant impact on a country's immigration incorporation strategy. International actors can include both intergovernmental organisations (e.g. the United Nations) and international non-governmental organisations (e.g. Amnesty International). These NGOs are actively involved in defending the human rights of migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers. Moreover, the international human rights regime has the

power to significantly affect a state's definition of citizenship (Bauböck, 1994). Coming back to South Korea, one can observe the effects that international actors have on policy-making. After the United Nations pressed the South Korean government in 2007 to "recognize the multi-ethnic character of contemporary Korean society and overcome the image of Korea as an ethnically homogeneous country", its society tactfully responded (United Nations, 2007, p. 3) Following this report, the South Korean media started to denounce their society's ethno-centric believes and prevalent forms of racial discrimination. Aware of the criticism, the government acted by establishing various institutions to increase South Korea's national brand value. An example of such an institution is the Presidential Council on Nation Branding (PCNB), whose establishment in 2009 also ushered the launch of the county's 'Multicultural Korea' strategy.

Gap hypothesis

South Korea's sudden acceptance of multiculturalism makes it seem that the country has given up the prevalent idea of ethnocentric nationalism. However, as this thesis will argue, the reality is quite different: even though the South Korean state has embraced multiculturalism in its discourse, in practice, this is still driven by principles closely related to ethnocentrism. For migrant workers coming to South Korea, it is virtually impossible to acquire citizenship and marriage migrants only have access on the condition that they assimilate into the host society. This concept will be further explored in chapter seven of this thesis. These discrepancies are in line with Cornelius, *et al.*'s, work on the 'gap hypothesis' (2004). In their study, they notice how states oftentimes inject a strict rhetoric on migration issues, addressing for instance the importance of controlling immigration. The reality, however, is that states largely fail to deliver on these promises and end up with a relatively more liberal migration policy. It turns there is a gap between rhetoric and practice, which derives from the contradictory demands of guaranteeing national security on the one hand, and the necessity of cheap foreign labour on the other (Cornelius, *et al.*, 2004). On the assumption that states manage to preserve this gap, they can simultaneously address security concerns and maintain economic growth.

Coming back to the case of South Korea, one might notice that the gap theory is being reversed. Rather than 'tough talk', the South Korean government is embracing the ideas of multiculturalism and cultural diversity in its rhetoric. Additionally, the state still maintains the unfair migration policies. This thesis will examine this apparent paradox. Under the pressures of globalisation, states feel an increasing obligation to construct a rather soft (multicultural) rhetoric on migration issues. Consequently, immigration-receiving countries such as South Korea are balancing the global demand of liberalising migration whilst at the same time addressing to the domestic fear of loss of national identity. This thesis will position itself by examining how nation-states balance their immigration policy to cater to both of these needs.

Korean literature review

It is only recently that immigration emerged as one the most widely discussed topics in South Korean media and national politics. Now, South Korean scholars have joint the debate as they are trying to fill a gap within the existing field of knowledge and analyse the mechanisms that shape the influx of migrants in South Korean society. Some studies have applied the aforementioned theories to the South Korean case whilst others made a comparison with other countries. Generally speaking, the current academic work on the South Korean immigration phenomenon can be categorised into three fields: studies focussing on the immigration regime's subjects (i.e. marriage migrants, migrant workers), studies focussing on the actors (i.e. the government, migrant support groups), and studies on multiculturalism (*tamunhwa*). Note that this a broad categorisation and these categories often overlap and intersect. Nevertheless, these three streams yield pivotal information for understanding the various aspects of the immigration phenomenon in South Korea.

The first category of scholarly work on South Korean immigration is subject-oriented and examines the circumstances and challenge migrants face in South Korea. Topics range from social adaptation, representation in the media, their legal status, and crime (see, e.g, Kim, 2008; Kim & Kim 2008; Lee, *et al.*, 2009). The majority of these studies are descriptive as they make an attempt to identify the current situation of the migration in South Korea and the problems that are associated with it. The second category of South Korean scholarly literature is devoted to the actors and their roles within the immigration landscape. In particular, there has been given a lot of attention to the influence of migrant advocacy groups (see, e.g. Kim, 2003; Lim, 2003; Lee & Park, 2005; Chung, 2010). These studies show how NGO activists have become more influential in reforming South Korea's immigration policy and supporting migrant workers' rights in a relatively short period of time. The third and final category of studies which I identified, focuses on the idea of multiculturalism in South Korea. In comparison to the first two categories, this type of literature is relatively vast. Topics range from the discourse on multiculturalism (see, e.g. Lee & Kim, 2009; Kim 2012), how society perceives multiculturalism (see, e.g. Lim & Oh, 2010; Ahn, 2011; Yoon & Song, 2011), multicultural policy (see, e.g. Park, 2010; Lim & Park, 2012), to multicultural families (see, e.g. Yeo, 2010; Choi, 2011; Kim, 2011). Although these studies have in common that they all focus upon multiculturalism, the definition of this concept is actually rather diffuse in South Korean society. It can cover any issues related to immigration or foreigners, and even in the South Korean academic context is the definition or meaning of multiculturalism hardly discussed.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework shown below, illustrate how the main ideas and concepts of this thesis are structured. The model can be interpreted as a symbiosis between theoretical and empirical constructs, showing how these concepts are related to each other. As the conceptual framework reveals, South Korea's immigration landscape is built up from multiple empirical spheres: the nation's economy, demography, culture, and history. Together, these are at the foundation of the state's immigrant incorporation policy, which functions as a means to increase its legitimacy and maintain South Korea's national identity. To achieve this, the government differentiates between migrant workers and marriage migrants.
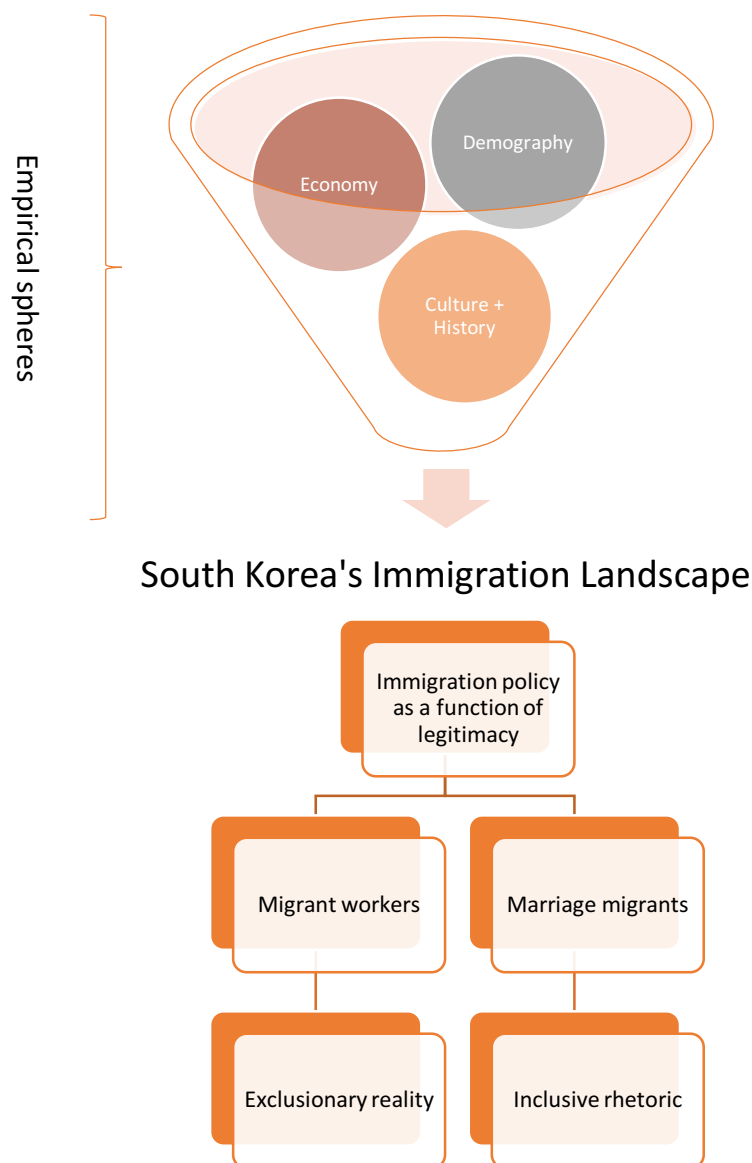
3. Research Methodology

The major objective of this thesis is to look at how the South Korean government constructs its discursive position on multiculturalism in a time when international migration to the country rises rapidly. On the one hand, the South Korean state actively embraces the idea of multiculturalism, whilst on the other, its policy implementation is much more restrictive. This apparent contradiction between the government's rhetoric and actual practice is at the core of this thesis. To study this discrepancy, this thesis has chosen to review and analyse secondary data and official statistics that cover, or are related to, the migration discourse in South Korea. The following chapter will further explain and justify the research methodology that this thesis has employed. Additionally, it will describe how I have arrived to my findings and how it accommodated me in answering the research question.

First of all, I am fully aware of the limitations of secondary data analysis as a research methodology. The data I collect could be outdated or even inaccurate. Acknowledging this, I would argue that, if undertaken with care and diligence, this methodology provides me with a cost-effective and time-efficient way to conduct this research project. Furthermore, since my research specifically focusses upon the discursive position of the state towards immigration, it is in my opinion that a discourse analysis combined with secondary data should suffice in studying this topic. Rather than a limitation, the comprehensive literature and data that has been published on this topic only substantiated my argument, and allowed me to conduct a more in-depth examination of my topic. It improved me to understand the problem I was studying and helped me to discover the gaps within the existing literature. To help me stay focussed and avoid getting lost in the large quantity of data that I collected over the course of my research, I always tried to keep the main purpose of my research at the back of my mind. This allowed me to get a clear understanding of what kind of data I wanted to collect and how I should analyse it. Notwithstanding the advantages of secondary data analysis, I would still recommend this topic to be researched further with the use of primary data in the future, for instance through the use of qualitative research methods.

This thesis relied on the easily-accessible data on immigration and control by the Ministry of Justice in Korea (MoJ) and the Korean Statistical Information Service (KOSIS). The KOSIS statistical database has extensive datasets on demographics, migration, employment, and the economy. These types of official statistics have the advantage that they cover long periods of time and are easily categorized by gender, nationality, and other classifications. The fact that these institutions provide continuous (monthly, yearly, per decade) reports of themes closely related to my research topic, provided me with many tools for my analysis. For example, this allowed me to analyse the evolution of the number of migrants that arrived in South Korea from 1960 until today. However, during the process of reviewing these statistics, I did become aware of how these reports represented only 'raw' data,

which were static, imperfect reflections of the reality. Nevertheless, by thoroughly reviewing, interpreting and cross-analysing these statistics, it helped me in gaining a better understanding of the migration landscape of South Korea. In the end, these data helped me to contextualise the South Korean immigration picture: not only it showed me the numbers of immigrants that have entered South Korea, but also gave me a notion of who they are and where they come from. Additionally, it provided me with the demographic and economic backgrounds that are at the origin of South Korea's current migration landscape. The following two chapters are the results of analysing these data. For the purpose of comprehensibility, I have visualised a number of the statistics into tables and figures.

The abovementioned data was a valuable tool in setting the context of my research goal. However, in order to understand how the South Korean government constructs its discursive position on multiculturalism, this thesis had to be supplemented by employing a discourse analysis. Because the topic of my thesis requires me to analyse the political meanings of texts and what they inform, I believe the methodology of discourse analysis is the most effective option. Discourse analysis studies the way a discourse either reproduces accepted 'truths' or resists these truths. A discourse by itself is the way in which social reality is constructed and encompasses all forms of communication. It is a form of social action that shapes society and culture because "if men define situations as real they become real in their consequences" (Thomas & Thomas, 1928). The methodology of discourse analysis asks questions such as: who are the agents of this discourse, what does this discourse construct, and where does this discourse take effect? Speech and text have the ability to construct reality. Hence, discourse analysis can be important because it studies how these forms of communication indirectly influence people's actions through persuasion and manipulation. The entities that control the most influential discourse also are able to control the minds and actions of others (Gramsci, 1971; Foucault, 1989).

Although there are some limitations to discourse analysis, for me the benefits outweigh the costs. For instance, discourse analysis can reveal undocumented 'hidden' aspects of a text, something that often stays unknown when using different kind of methodologies. It examines not only the basic level of what is said, but also considers the political, social and economic context. This enables my research to have relevance and practical application. By being reflexive and aware that you as a researcher cannot be truly objective, the methodology allows me to present a critical perspective on traditional theory, policy and practice. Reflexivity also counters some of the main critiques of discourse analysis, which are oftentimes related to the fact that meaning is never fixed and always open to interpretation (Morgan, 2010; Van Leeuwen, 2008). Besides the epistemological problems related to the various traditions in discourse analysis, the major disadvantage of the methodology is that does not provide absolute answers to specific problems. Again, the key thing to counter these critiques, is by being reflexive.

For my thesis, this meant that I performed a discourse analysis on governmental documents that describe South Korea's immigration policy, supplemented by scholarly re-
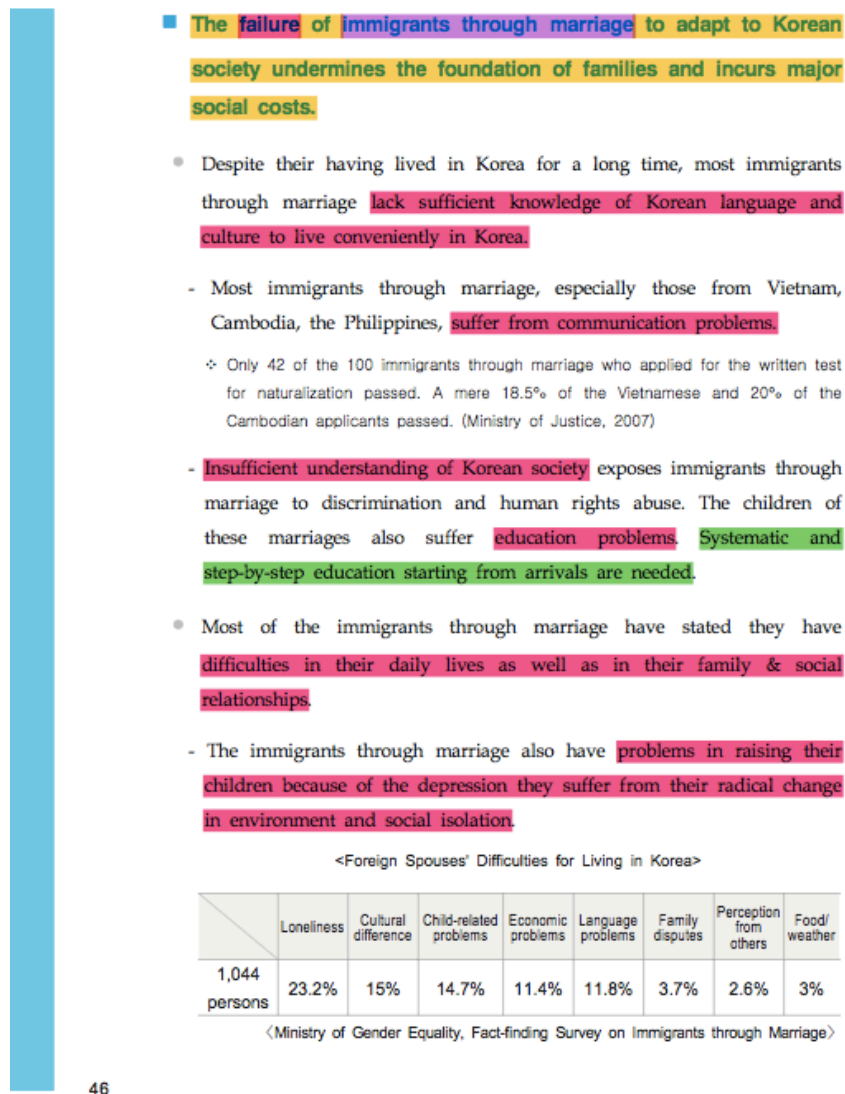
ports that have scrutinized these. These documents included, amongst others, the Nationality Act, Immigration Control Act, Multicultural Families Support Act, Framework Act on the Treatment of Foreigners, and the Work Permit System. In analysing these sources, I paid special attention to their authors, when they were implemented, what they constructed, and how these policies have taken effect. The websites of the Ministry of Government Legislation (MOLEG) and the National Law Information Center[8] have English translations of a wide arrange of Korean acts and policies (there are a total number 10,011 South Korean laws available in English[9]). The analysis of these documents formed a key part of my research as they provided me with an understanding of the development of the state's policy towards immigrants. Additionally, it illustrated how the South Korean government has now recognised the concept of 'multiculturalism' by establishing various multicultural institutes, policies, and practices.

Figure 1 (on the following page) gives an indication of how I conducted the discourse analysis. It shows a page from South Korea's 'First Basic Plan for Immigration Policy', which is published by the Korean Immigration Service and the Ministry of Justice. This specific excerpt illustrates how the South Korean government views marriage migrants as they fail to integrate into the host society. The main topic of is this specific excerpt is highlighted in a yellow colour. The purple colour shows the main subject of this section: "immigrants through marriage". Phrases highlighted by the colour pink indicate a problem that is associated with marriage migrants. The colour green signifies a policy measure proposed by the South Korean government to deal with this issue. By colour coding the textual content, I was able to analyse South Korea's immigration discourse in a systematic manner.

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[8] http://law.go.kr/engLsSc.do?menuId=0&subMenu=5&query=
[9] As of February 2017.

Figure 1: Excerpt of South Korea's 'First Basic Plan for Immigration Policy'
[highlights are added by the author]

- The failure of immigrants through marriage to adapt to Korean society undermines the foundation of families and incurs major social costs.

  - Despite their having lived in Korea for a long time, most immigrants through marriage lack sufficient knowledge of Korean language and culture to live conveniently in Korea.

    - Most immigrants through marriage, especially those from Vietnam, Cambodia, the Philippines, suffer from communication problems.

      ❖ Only 42 of the 100 immigrants through marriage who applied for the written test for naturalization passed. A mere 18.5% of the Vietnamese and 20% of the Cambodian applicants passed. (Ministry of Justice, 2007)

    - Insufficient understanding of Korean society exposes immigrants through marriage to discrimination and human rights abuse. The children of these marriages also suffer education problems. Systematic and step-by-step education starting from arrivals are needed.

  - Most of the immigrants through marriage have stated they have difficulties in their daily lives as well as in their family & social relationships.

    - The immigrants through marriage also have problems in raising their children because of the depression they suffer from their radical change in environment and social isolation.

<Foreign Spouses' Difficulties for Living in Korea>

	Loneliness	Cultural difference	Child-related problems	Economic problems	Language problems	Family disputes	Perception from others	Food/ weather
1,044 persons	23.2%	15%	14.7%	11.4%	11.8%	3.7%	2.6%	3%

〈Ministry of Gender Equality, Fact-finding Survey on Immigrants through Marriage〉

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In addition to official statistics and documents, this thesis also used academic literature and scholarly journals as important sources of reference. Relevant literature was searched online through the help of the electronic databases of digital libraries such as JSTOR and Project MUSE. These resources enabled me to search for specific keywords in a systematic and time-efficient manner. Consequently, these keywords served as some of the main units of analysis. The secondary literature which I obtained can be divided into two categories: theoretical literature concerning immigration policy, multiculturalism, and nation-building, and specific case studies about immigration in South Korea. To help me organise the literature on the South Korean immigration phenomenon, I made a broad categorisation of the current academic work on into three groups: 1) studies focussing on the immigration regime's subjects (i.e. marriage migrants, migrant workers), 2) studies focussing on the actors (i.e. the government, migrant support groups), and 3) studies on multiculturalism (*tamunhwa*). Accordingly, I collected information on similar issues from different

sources and various authors, thereby aiming to enhance the credibility of my research. After I obtained a sufficient amount of literature, it was time to critically review it and connect it with the theory.

To summarise, the research methodology of this thesis broadly consists of three parts, each using to some extent different methodologies. First, it applies (statistical) data on immigration, demographics, and the economy as a means to outline the contextual background of immigration towards South Korea. Without paying attention to these facts, it is impossible to understand the rationale of a state in choosing their immigration policy. Second, by applying a discourse analysis of the South Korean government's rhetoric, I will try to explain how the state is actively embracing the concept of multiculturalism and tries to create a favourable image vis-à-vis the outside world. Third, it proceeds by analysing this rhetoric and comparing it with the actual implementation of the immigration policies. In doing this, it will draw upon a comprehensive list of additional secondary literary related to the subject. Thus, by triangulating multiple methods, data, and theories, I tried to overcome most of the limitations and biases associated with my study, and justify the research method chosen for this thesis.

4. Contextualising South Korea's Current Immigration Landscape

Since the early 1990s, the Republic of Korea saw a rapid increase in the immigration of foreigners. At the same time, the number of Koreans going abroad is substantially lower compared to previous years. Previously a country characterized for its emigration, South Korea has now become a net migrant receiving country. As of 2014, almost 1,1 million registered foreigners reside in South Korea (KOSIS, 2015). This represents a more than twenty-fold increase from the 1990 figure of 50,000 persons. For the South Korean government, this development did not go unnoticed, as they reacted promptly by amending and adopting laws and regulations related to immigration. Additionally, they introduced several new policies to facilitate the integration process of newcomers into South Korean society. In other words, the South Korean migration landscape has seen some major changes over the past 25 years, and the implementation of the new immigration policies have had a significant impact on its society. In the light of these developments, it is both significant and appropriate to scrutinise the recent trends in South Korea migration and its related policies. The following chapter will provide an examination of the current migration landscape in South Korea by analysing relevant statistical data, thereby establishing the background for the remainder of this thesis. Its aim is to gain a better understanding why South Korea has seen such a large influx of migrants. Second, this thesis will assess the demographic, socio-economic, cultural and historical contexts which play important roles in explaining the reasons behind the South Korean government's migration discourse and implementation.

Demographic context

According to the latest population census of 2010, the population of the ROK is approximately 48,6 million (KOSIS, 2010). In 2015, it became known that South Korea's current population had surpassed 50 million (Yoon, 2016). The Korean Statistical Information Service (KOSIS) indicates a population growth rate of approximately 0.5 percent over the last ten years. Related data shows that South Korea's fertility rate stood at 1.21 children per woman in 2014, one of the lowest rates of all the OECD member countries.[10] Life expectancy at birth for the total population of South Korea in 2014 is 81.5 years; 78.0 years for males and 84.8 years for females.

From the 1960s until the 1990s, the population of South Korea showed robust growth: 25 million in 1960, 32 million in 1970, 38 million in 1980, and 42 million in 1990.

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[10] https://data.oecd.org/pop/fertility-rates.htm

South Korea's current positive population growth rate is forecasted to shift towards a negative growth rate by the year 2030. KOSIS estimates that there will be 52.2 million people living in South Korea in 2030, 51.1 million in 2040, 48.1 million in 2050, and 44.0 million in 2060. Some sources are even more dramatic in their projections of South Korea's population decline; mostly due to the society's low fertility rate and rapid ageing population (Moon, 2015). The country's demographic transformation has led the elderly population (65 years old and older) to increase rapidly. Whereas the elderly population only accounted for 3.8 percent of South Korea's total population in the year 1980, in 2015, this number had already increased to 13.1 percent, and its projected to increase to 37.4 percent by the year 2050 (KOSIS, 2014). This development will entail an increase in social costs for supporting the elderly population. Moreover, the increase of the post-working age population will likely cause a labour shortage in the future. Other consequences related to South Korea's demographic transformation include reduced domestic consumption and a limited intake of tax revenue. In other words, decreasing labour productivity and increasing social benefit costs are on the horizon.

Figure 2 demonstrates the extent of the demographic changes in South Korea from the year 2010 to 2060. The age sections for the working age population (15-64 years old) illustrates a decrease of future population. The population pyramid will change from a beehive shape, indicating slow growth rate, in 2010, to a diamond shape, indicating population decline, in 2060. These figures support the contention that South Korea is heading to a sustained period of labour shortage. Figure 3 and table 1 show how the average age of the country's total population is gradually increasing. The increase of average age of the South Korean population signifies a decrease in labour productivity, not only in the manual labour industry, but across all industries in the future.

South Korea's demographic shift will likely entail the following implications. First, a growing influx of foreign workers will be encouraged. Even though the government's primary means to compensate for the labour shortage will be by expanding the opportunities for elderly and women workers, this will not suffice given the pace of the transformation in the country's population structure. In order to address this issue, there seems to be no other option than to increase the number of foreign workers. Second, South Korea will diversify the type of immigrants. The demographic transformation illustrates that South Korea's current labour shortage in the manual labour industry will spread to other sectors as well. As such, this development will create a paradigm shift away from the government's current policies which mainly focus upon low-skilled labour migration. Third, the demographic shift could entail an increase of the number of long-stay visitors and permanent residents to South Korea. The current immigration policy allows migrants just a short-term stay, with the exception of immigrations who are married to South Koreans. However, as the society gets more economically dependent on the immigrants, long-stay or permanent stay residents will likely become more dominant in South Korea.

Figure 2: Population pyramids by sex and age (2010-2060)
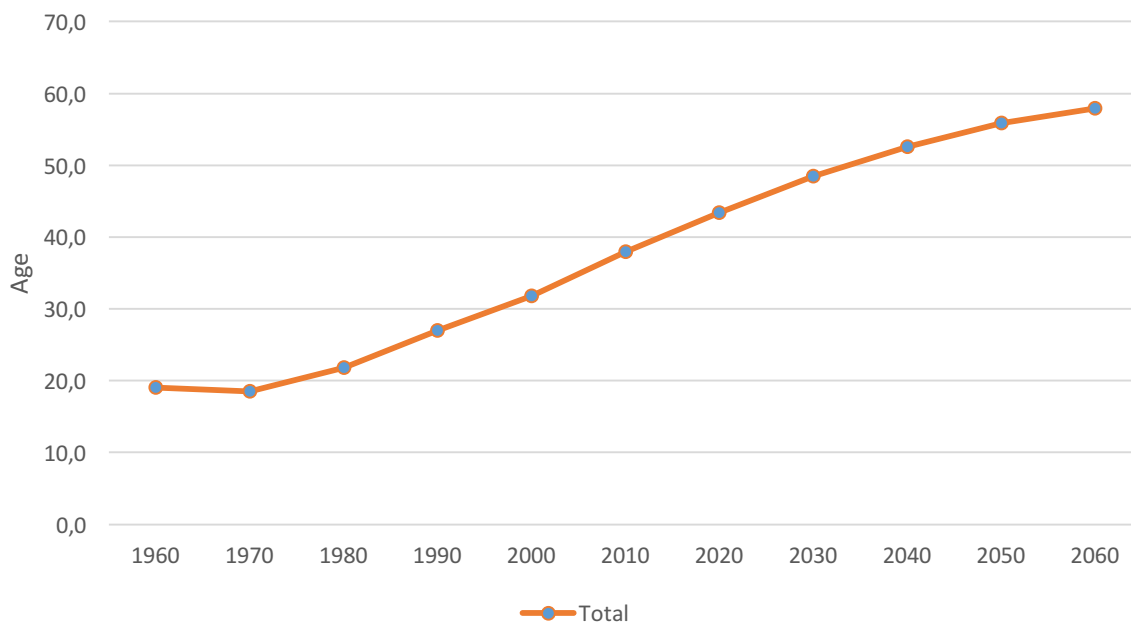

Source: Statistics Korea, 2011

Table 1: Average age by sex (2010-2060)

		1960	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010	2020	2030	2040	2050	2060
Median age (year)	**Total**	19.0	18.5	21.8	27.0	31.8	37.9	43.4	48.5	52.6	55.9	57.9
	Males	18.2	17.9	21.2	26.3	30.8	36.8	41.9	46.8	50.7	54.4	56.2
	Fe-males	19.8	19.2	22.4	27.7	32.7	39.0	45.0	50.1	54.7	57.6	59.6

Source: Statistics Korea, 2011
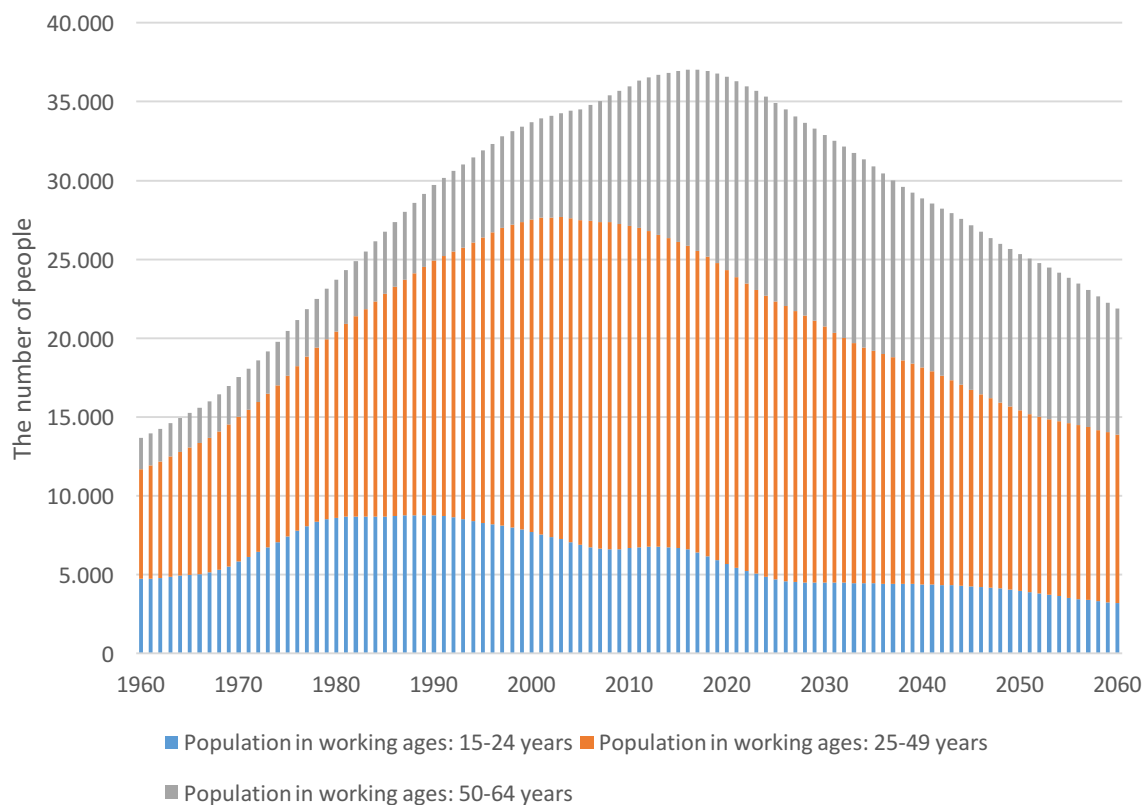
Figure 3: Median age (2010-2060)

(Unit: years)

Source: Statistics Korea, 2011

Figure 4: Economically active population

(Unit: thousands)

Source: Statistics Korea, 2012

Economic context

As table 2 shows, South Korea has transformed itself from one the poorest countries in the world in the 1960s to the world's 11th largest economy. Over the last 55 years, South Korea's gross domestic product (GDP) expanded from 3,89 billion US dollars in 1960 to 1,337.87 US dollars in 2015. In just over five decades, the country managed to increase its GDP over 350 times. Per capita GDP managed to increase from 155.6 USD in 1960 to 27,221.5 USD in 2015. Moreover, the country's GDP has shown stable annual growth rates over the last 10 years and economists forecast that the South Korean economy is likely to continue this trend. As such, one can assume that South Korea will be an increasingly attractive destination for incoming migrants who are looking to improve their lives.
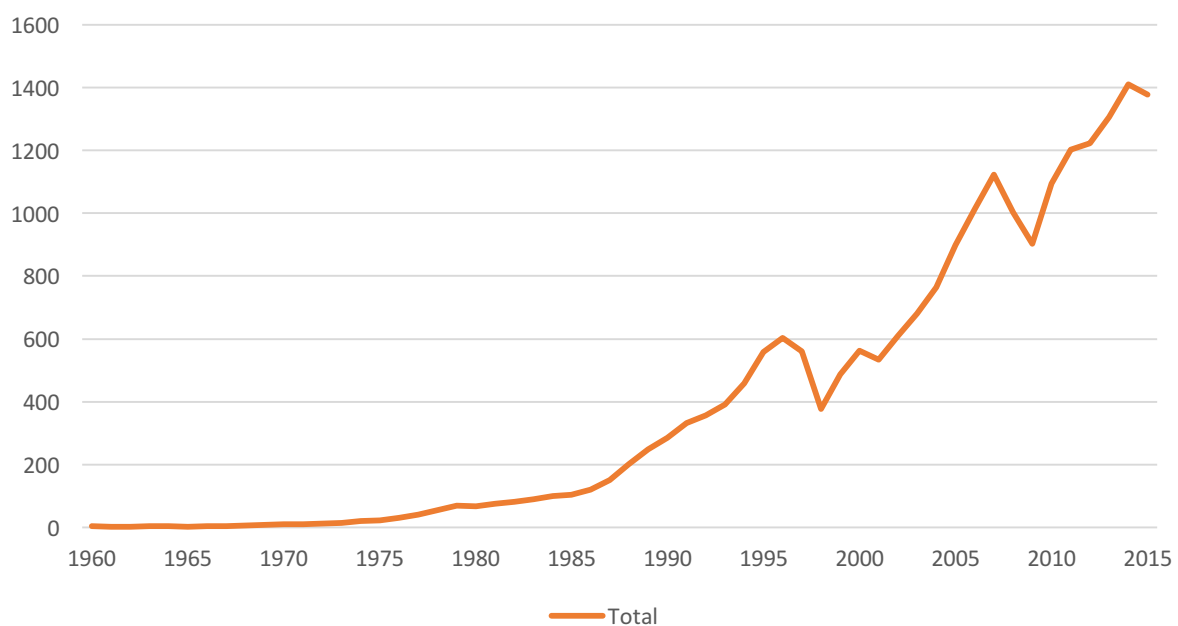
Table 2: Key South Korean economic indicators

Year	GDP (USD) billion	Per capita GDP (USD)
1960	3.89	155.6
1970	9.41	291.9
1980	67.80	1,778.5
1990	284.76	6,642.5
2000	561.63	11,947.6
2010	1,094.50	22,151.2
2015	1,377.87	27,221.5

Source: World Bank, 2015

Figure 5: Evolution of South Korea's GDP

(Unit: billion USD)

Source: World Bank, 2015

As of 2015, South Korea has a population of 43,0 million over the age of 15. Amongst these people are 62.6 percent, corresponding to 26.9 million persons, who are economically active. The total employment rate is 60.3 percent. South Korea has a male-dominated economic activity structure: the male labour force participation rate is 73.8 percent in 2015, whilst this is only 51.8 percent for females. In the same year, the South Korean unemployment rate stands at 3.6 percent, which is compared to other OECD member countries relatively low. The youth unemployment rate, however, is quite serious: 10.5 percent of the 20-24 age group is unemployed, and for the 25-29 age group this is 8.1 percent. Table 3 gives an overview of the labour market conditions for South Korea in 2015. The economically active population has increased gradually over the past few decades, however, studies expect that due to the country's low birth rate (1.21 as of 2014), this will soon start to decrease (Lee & Kim, 2011).

Table 3: Economically active population of 2015

(Unit: thousand, %)

Age	Population	Economically active population			Economically non-active population	Participation rate	Unemployment rate	Employment rate
		Sub total	Employed persons	Unemployed persons				
Total	43,017	26,913	25,936	976	16,105	62.6	3.6	60.3
15-19	3,112	274	245	29	2,839	8.8	10.6	7.9
20-24	3,081	1,589	1,422	167	1,492	51.6	10.5	46.1
25-29	3,293	2,473	2,272	201	821	75.1	8.1	69.0
30-34	3,804	2,960	2,863	97	844	77.8	3.3	75.3
35-39	3,841	2,897	2,813	84	944	75.4	2.9	73.2
40-44	4,215	3,365	3,283	82	850	79.8	2.4	77.9
45-49	4,216	3,461	3,385	76	755	82.1	2.2	80.3
50-54	4,231	3,361	3,293	67	870	79.4	2.0	77.8
55-59	3,826	2,778	2,700	78	1,048	72.6	2.8	70.6
60-64	2,731	1,669	1,623	46	1,062	61.1	2.8	59.4
65 and older	6,669	2,087	2,038	49	4,582	31.3	2.4	30.6

Source: Statistics Korea, 2016

Cultural context

South Korea is oftentimes described as a homogenous society with 99.9 percent of its inhabitants being ethnic Koreans (Seol & Seo, 2014). According to popular belief, many Koreans accepted the idea that they are the descendants of a common ancestor, also known as Dangun. This allowed them to maintain an ethnically homogeneous nation-state ever since 2333 BC, the year when Dangun founded Gojoseon, the first ever Korean kingdom. In recent years, however, discussions concerning whether the country is heading to become a multicultural or multi-ethnic society have been rekindled. An increasing influx of long-term migrants, such as marriage migrants, foreign workers and students, have sparked this debate. Some scholars have expressed doubts as to whether all Koreans are the descendants of a common ancestor, implying pure-bloodedness (Han, 2007). They asserted that there is evidence that historically Korea had frequent contact with surrounding countries and other ethnicities, be it by invasions, trade or commerce. Moreover, many surnames in Korea have Chinese, Japanese, Mongol or Jurchen ancestry.

There is a general consensus that Korean ethnic nationalism, which emphasise ethnic homogeneity based upon the myth of Dangun, only established itself in the late 19th and early 20th century (Han, 2007). Since then, the construct of a mono-ethnic identity of Koreans has been widely accepted in Korean society. There were various reasons underlying the mobilisation of ethnic nationalism: from combatting Japanese colonialism in the early 20th century, to curing the psychological traumas after the Korean War (1950-1953) and the subsequent partition of the nation. Korean ethnic nationalism gradually developed into modern nationalism as the country experienced rapid economic growth from the early 1960s and with the nationwide democratisation movement in the 1970s and 1980s. Hence, ethnic nationalism in (South) Korea is considered to be a modern invention, which only recently emerged to serve political interests. The idea of ethnic homogeneity was projected systematically and it currently still has a strong influence upon Korean consciousness and their perceptions of other ethnic groups.

Limited exposure to foreign cultures

Since South Korea became an official political entity in 1948, its people had little to none exposure to foreign culture. It was only with the organisation of the Asian Games in 1986 and the Olympic Games in 1988 that this slowly began to change. Even during the first construction boom in the Middle East during 1970s and 1980s, which prompted many South Koreans to migrate towards this region, people had little contact with foreign culture. This was mainly due to the fact that they had to live in highly restrictive environments. Moreover, until the late 1980s, travelling or studying abroad was tightly regulated by the South Korean government. It was only in 1989 when this policy was loosened and citizens where allowed to travel to foreign countries without any restrictions.

The first relatively close contact with foreign cultures came with the introduction of the industrial trainee system for foreign workers from China and other Southeast Asian countries in the early 1990s. Initially, South Koreans had ambiguous feelings towards these

immigrants, of whom the majority came from lesser-developed countries. Both hospitable, by reminiscing about the South Koreans who went to Germany and the Middle East to work, and less favourable, by ignoring or discriminating them, attitudes towards those temporary foreign workers were expressed. A study from 1988 demonstrated that South Koreans, at that time, had contrasting views towards foreigners, with differentiated attitudes towards people from different ethnicities.

Aside from the influx of foreign workers, South Korea also saw a noticeable increase in the number of foreign brides. Since the early 2000s, this development has had a significant impact in South Korean society and their mono-ethnic conceptualisation of national identity. With the number and diversity of foreign brides increasing rapidly, the South Korean government officially started with the implementation of multicultural immigrant incorporation policies in the mid 2000s. Although the majority of the foreign brides initially originated from China, now more women come from other countries such as the Philippines, Thailand, and Vietnam. Today, the South Korean population has gradually starting to accept the fact that their country is transforming itself into a multi-ethnic or even multicultural society, as international marriages and children of international marriages are becoming more widespread. The governments responded promptly by implementing various new policies in order to enhance the multicultural sensitivity amongst the South Korean public. As a result, according to a recent social survey, a substantial improvement regarding the attitude towards different ethnicities was found amongst the South Koreans (Seol, 2005). Although more South Koreans are now showing accepting attitudes towards immigrants, other studies have argued that they still draw hierarchical distinctions between different ethnic groups (Seol, 2005).

This chapter shows how South Korea's demographic, economic, and cultural context are important factors in explaining the influx of migrants to the country. It still might be too early to foresee if the recent developments in South Koreas and an increasing number of foreigners coming into the country would make its society more multicultural. Nonetheless, the current progress is both noticeable and measurable. If the government and civil society decide to further continue their sustained efforts in order to enhance South Korea's multicultural sensitivity, this could ease the transition from a mono-ethnic ideology towards a more diverse orientation. The following chapter builds on this as it addresses the current migration picture of South Korea.

5. Current Migration Patterns of South Korea

The following chapter will describe the current immigration picture in South Korea and look at some of its recent trends. Who are the people that migrate to South Korea? How many of them are there? And, where do they come from? These, as well as other questions will be reviewed in this chapter. Accordingly, this will set up the contextual background for the subsequent chapters of this thesis which will examine the country's current immigration policy.

First, it is important to know who South Korea considers as an 'immigrant'. Immigrants are defined as foreigners who stay in South Korea for over 90 days. As of 2015, there were 1,143,087 immigrants in South Korea. This accounts for about 2.3 per cent of the total population. Over the last twenty years, the immigrant population of South Korea has rapidly increased: from only 123,881 registered foreigners in 1995, to 1,143,087 in 2015, over nine times higher than ten years before (see figure 6).

Figure 6: Changes in the number of foreign population residing in South Korea (2000-2014)

Population of registered foreigners
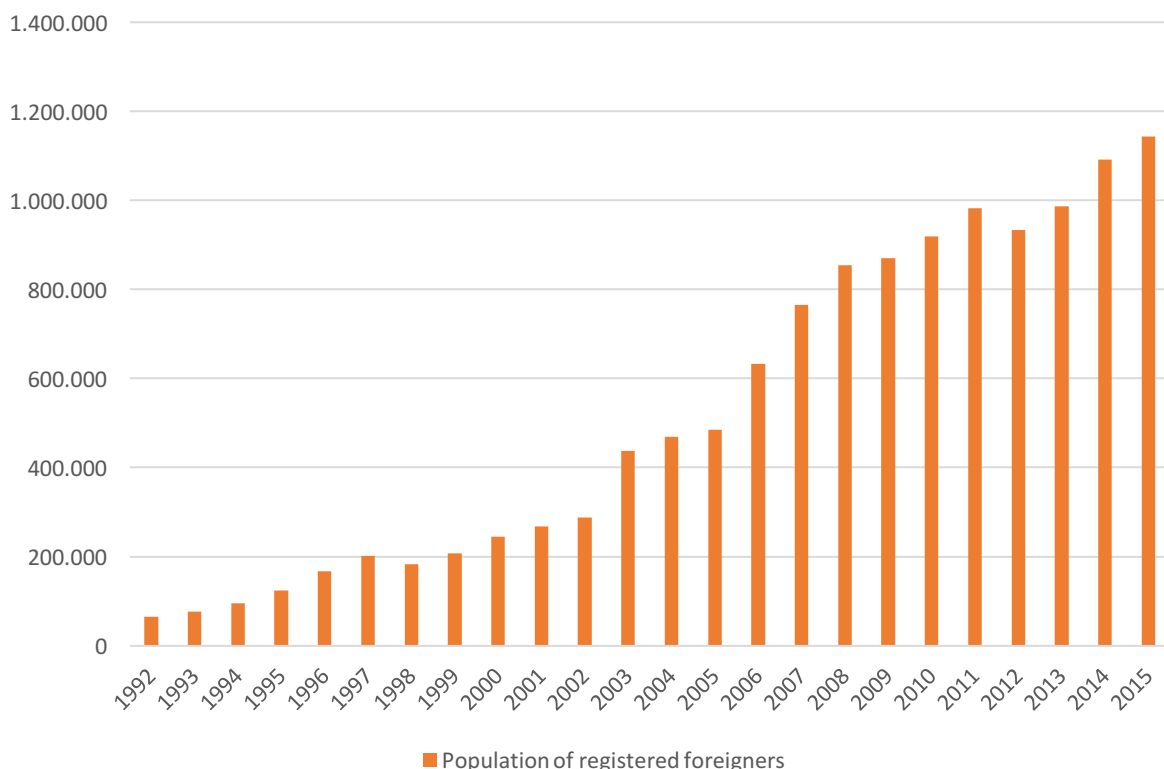
Source: Korean Statistical Information Service (KOSIS), 2015

The South Korean visa system classifies the immigrants into 31 different categories which administers their scope of activities and the length of their stay. Category B and C

type visas are only allowed to stay in South Korea for a maximum of 90 days. These include visas for tourist activities (B-2) or short-term visits (C-3). Visa holders belonging to A, D, E, F, G, and H categories are allowed to stay over 90 days in the country. The number of immigrants by their status of stay, categorised by their type of visa, is shown in table 4. As of 2015, there are over one million immigrants in South Korea, however, the actual number would probably be larger since there are many illegal immigrants who exceed the given period of their visa.

The largest group of incoming migrants in South Korea are the Work and Visit visa (H-2) holders, accounting for 24.8 per cent of the country's immigrant population. The Working Visit System (WVS), proposed in 2005 by the Ministry of Justice (MOJ) and implemented in 2007, allows for multiple-entry employment visa status to overseas Koreans. However, only people who are from China or the former Soviet Union and over 25 years old meet the qualification (Hi Korea, 2010). Like the General Employment Visa programme, workers under the Working Visit Visa may work up to three years from the date of entry. After this period, he or she may be rehired upon the request of the employer. As of 2015, the number of H-2 workers was 282,995, representing 24.8 per cent of the all the registered immigrants in South Korea (Statistics Korea, 2015).

The second largest category of immigrants are the Non-Professional (E-9) visa holders. These immigrants acquire their visa through the Employment Permit System (EPS). Within the EPS, one could enter the South Korean labour market through two windows: the General Employment Visa programme for foreign workers (E-9 visa) and the Working Visit Visa programme for overseas Koreans (H-2 visa). The General Employment Visa enables employers from certain industries[11] to recruit workers from 15 countries[12] that have concluded labour recruitments MoU's with South Korea. Competent job seekers from these countries have the opportunity to issue a visa (E-9) for a maximum stay of three years (with the possibility of a 22-month extension) in the country. As of 2015, the number of E-9 workers was over 271,310, representing 23.7 per cent of the all the registered immigrants in South Korea (Statistics Korea, 2015).

The WVS and EPS are some of the multiple immigration policies carried out by the South Korean government to attract foreigners in order fill the job vacancies that the local population does not want to do anymore. It is South Korea's primary initiative to organise the temporary foreign labour admission. Introduced in 2004, the implementation of the EPS can be seen as a response to the critique on the treatment of foreign workers in South Korea. Prior to the establishment of this new migration management system, foreign workers that arrived in the country were considered 'trainees'. Under the trainee system, which

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[11] Occupations permitted by the Foreign Workforce Policy Committee in the following sectors: manufacturing, construction, service, agriculture/livestock, fisheries.
[12] These countries include: Bangladesh, Cambodia, China, East Timor, Indonesia, Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Thailand, the Philippines, Uzbekistan and Vietnam.

was in place from 1992 until 2006, foreign workers were basically treated as interns[13]. Rather than regular wage, they received stipends for their work and, additionally, the migrant workers were not protected by South Korea's labour laws. The trainee system was heavily criticised by civil society organisations, trade unions, faith-based organisations and the migrant workers themselves due to its abusive and exploitative treatment (see, e.g., Amnesty International, 2014). After a decade of advocacy, the trainee system was ultimately abolished and replaced by the EPS.

Table 4: Number of immigrants by their status of stay (2015)

Total	1,143,087		
Diplomat (A-1)	1,293	Researcher (E-3)	3,131
Government Official (A-2)	915	Technical Instructor (E-4)	191
Korean Arts and Culture (D-1)	73	Professional (E-5)	605
Job Seeker (D-10)	5,251	Artist & Athlete (E-6)	4,469
Students (D-2)	66,155	Foreign National of Special Ability (E-7)	19,737
Industrial Trainee (D-3)	2,516	Non-Professional (E-9)	271,310
General Trainee (D-4)	29,977	Family Visitor (F-1)	84,047
Long-Term News Coverage (D-5)	90	Resident (F-2)	38,707
Religious Worker (D-6)	1,685	Dependant Family (F-3)	22,301
Intra-Company Transferee (D-7)	1,477	Permanent Resident (F-5)	123,033
Business Investor (D-8)	5,866	Marriage Migrant (F-6)	118,879
International Trader (D-9)	7,167	Miscellaneous (G-1)	13,103
Professor (E-1)	2,605	Working Holiday (H-1)	1,585
Maritime Crew (E-10)	14,310	Work and Visit (H-2)	282,995
Foreign Language Instructor (E-2)	15,988	Others	3,626

Source: Korean Statistical Information Service (KOSIS), 2015

Work and Visit (H-2) and Non-Professional (E-9) visa holders are part of the group that the South Korean government classifies as migrant workers. As of 2015, there were 608,116 migrant workers in South Korea. Most of these group come from neighbouring Asian countries, with the majority being ethnically Chinese of Korean ancestry, also known as *Chosŏnjok* (see table 4). The ethnic Korean from China account for 44.2 per cent of the total number of migrant workers in South Korea. Interestingly, the *Chosŏnjok* enjoyed a preferential treatment in the immigration process (Seol & Skrentny (2009). As the government believed they

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[13] EPS Policy Brief #2 'South Korea's Employment Permit System: A Successful Government-to-Government Model?' Open Working Group on Labour Migration & Recruitment.

less of a threat to the "blood purity" of Korean identity, and would therefore be easier to assimilate (Lee, 2008b). Other large migrant-sending countries include Vietnam (55,092), Indonesia (36,249), and Cambodia (30,680). Labour migration towards South Korea is a gender-asymmetric phenomenon as most of the migrant workers are men.

Table 5: Number and origin of migrant workers (2015)

Total	608,116	
Northeast Asia	**300,088**	**49.3%**
China	21,649	3.6%
China (Ethnic Koreans)	268,558	44.2%
Other Northeast Asian countries	9,881	1.6%
Southeast Asia	**188,385**	**31.0%**
Vietnam	55,092	9.1%
Philippines	27,627	4.5%
Thailand	23,158	3.8%
Indonesia	36,249	6.0%
Cambodia	30,680	5.0%
Myanmar	13,855	2.3%
Other Southeast Asian countries	1,724	0.3%
Southern Asia	**63,148**	**10.4%**
Sri Lanka	23,281	3.8%
Nepal	22,670	3.7%
Bangladesh	10,222	1.7%
Other Southern Asian countries	6,975	1.1%
Others	**56,495**	**9.3%**

Source: Korean Statistical Information Service (KOSIS), 2015

Another major group of immigrants in South Korea are the marriage immigrants. Immigrants who are married to South Koreans account for 12.9 per cent of South Korea's total immigrant population (see table 5). Their influx started to increase significantly in the late 1990s (International Organization for Migration, 2012). It was at this time that many of the young females in the rural areas of South Korea left for the urban cities, hoping to find a job. As a result, young male farmers had difficulties in finding their spouses. Accordingly, local South Korean governments set up a campaign to address these socio-structural issues. Females, mostly from Southeast Asia, began to move to South Korea through international marriage brokers – a trend that continues to this day (see table 5). These international marriages are characterised by its high divorce rate, oftentimes due to cultural and

language problems (Lee, 2008b). The government has responded to this issue by adjusting the visa requirements for marriage migrants. For instance, as of 2014, a F-6 visa may not be issued if the married couple has communication problems. Since then, the applicant has to prove that she (or he) is capable of having a basic conversation in Korean (MOFA, 2015).

Table 6: Number and status of marriage migrants

Year	Total	Marriage im-migrant	Marriage naturalised	Acquisition of nationality with other cause	Increase rate by last year
2010	222,548	**125,087**	56,584	39,877	11.1%
2011	252,764	**141,654**	69,804	41,306	14.1%
2012	267,727	**144,214**	76,473	47,040	5.9%
2013	281,295	**147,591**	83,929	49,775	5.1%
2014	295,842	**149,764**	90,764	55,639	5.2%
2015	305,446	**147,382**	92,316	65,748	3.2%

Figure 7: South Korea's immigrant population (2015)

- Migrant workers
- Marriage migrants
- Others
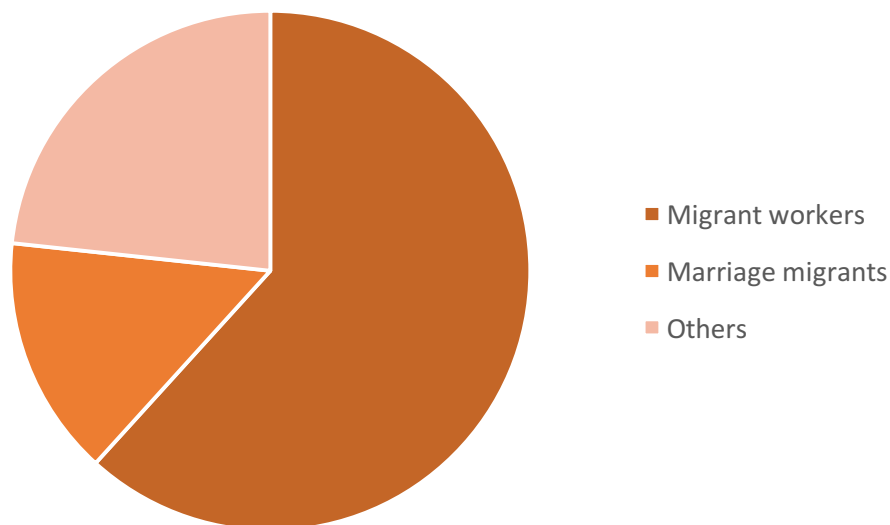
In conclusion, the preceding chapters have given an overview of the current migration picture of South Korea and how it has emerged as a new destination country for international migrants. The South Korean government facilitated the majority of the immigrant's entry as a response towards increasing economic and demographic demands. The current immigration picture of South Korea is summarised by its gender-asymmetry (as most of the migrant workers are male whilst most of the marriage migrants are female) and co-ethic preference (given the preferential treatment of *Chosŏnjok* migrants). As the migrant workers

and marriage workers encompass the largest group of immigrants in the country (see also figure 7), one could imagine that it is exactly these two groups that gain the most attention from the South Korean government in its immigration policy. The following chapters will elaborate upon these policies and scrutinise the implications of the South Korean immigration program.

6. The Political Discourse of Multiculturalism

As the two previous chapters have set the context in which South Korea has established itself from a net migrant-sending towards a net migrant-receiving country, the following part of this thesis will go beyond this development and ask itself how the government has respondent to this new reality. Questions that will be discussed are, amongst others: has the South Korean state fully embraced multiculturalism, and does it treat all migrant groups equal in its policy framework? This chapter will address two main issues which are both related but also, as this section will show, quite distinct. The first topic focuses on how the discourse surrounding multiculturalism has become so prevalent in South Korean state politics. The second issue will centre on how South Korea's turn towards multiculturalism has affected its society and the immigrants themselves. Related to the first issue, I argue that South Korea's apparent strong embrace of multiculturalism can be traced back to the country's social-economic and demographic changes. Social-economically, South Korea has developed into an export-dependent country, which has become more dependent on the import of cheap labour. South Korea's rapid economic growth accompanied by industrialization, has resulted in a continuously growing gap between the demand for low-skilled, low-paying labour and the supply of local workers who are actually willing to do this type of labour. Particularly the industry, agriculture, and construction sectors experienced an increasing shortage of domestic workers. Demographically, South Korea's fertility rate – one of the lowest rates of all the OECD member countries at 1.21 children per woman in 2014[14] - is one of the most noticeable factors. The country's low fertility rate is a key determinant in explaining the labour shortage and will in all likelihood lead – barring the unlikely scenario of sudden increase of South Korea's fertility rate – to a long-term, continuous demand for immigration. A second demographic factor is related to South Korea's persistent marriage gap: there is a surplus of marriage-ready Korean men (especially in the rural areas), whilst there is a lack of Korean women who are willing to marry them. Although socio-economic and demographic changes have significant impact and are important factors in explaining the context in which actors such as the South Korean state purposefully design their strategies and policies related to immigration, they do not tell us all we need to know. The fact that South Korea has experienced migration at a relative late stage, might have pushed the state towards a discourse of multiculturalism sooner than expected.

Related to the second issue, this section illustrates how the Korean government's commitment to the ideology of multiculturalism is to a large extent fabricated and fictitious. In other words, the manner in which the South Korean state has conceptualized multiculturalism is very narrow and is actually more akin to assimilationist policies. Moreover, the state's 'multiculturalist agenda' only applies to a very select category of foreigners in South

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[14] https://data.oecd.org/pop/fertility-rates.htm

Korea, namely the marriage migrants. Simultaneously, I argue that even though this embrace of multiculturalism is essentially fictitious, it does however have some tangible and significant implications, both in this day and age and for the future. This is especially the case when looking at how this development has altered – and is currently still affecting – the South Korean notion of national identity. As stated in the previous section of this thesis, prior to the large-scale immigration of foreigners to South Korea, the majority of its citizens assumed that their society was unconditionally homogenous. This idea was strengthened by the belief that only Koreans, who shared a common bond based upon ethnicity and blood, could belong to Korean society. South Korea's turn towards multiculturalism has not made these societal assumptions disappear, however, it does have the potential to be more than just words. For instance, one can witness the discursive shift in South Korea, in which the previous dominant parochial and monocultural discourse on identity is slowly being replaced by one that acknowledges the reality of a culturally diverse nation. Hence, South Korean society has been introduced to a new cultural logic that brings a number of social and political changes.

South Korea's path towards multiculturalism

Before the year 2000, the term 'multiculturalism' rarely appeared in South Korean media. A study by Kim (2009, p. 43) shows that the word was uttered a mere 235 times as a headline in the country's mainstream press from 1990 until 1999. Not more than ten years later, between 2005 and 2008, there were a staggering 92,222 articles published that featured the phrase 'multiculturalism' (2009, p. 43). Rather than just a topic of human interest stories in the national press, the concept also gained increasing attention within South Korean academia and politics. Seemingly overnight, multiculturalism became an official policy of the South Korean government. The state's rapid embrace of multiculturalism may come as a surprise: even though the number of foreign residents has increased greatly over the last three decades, the actual extent to which South Korea is a multi-ethnic or culturally diverse country remains relatively small. As shown in the previous chapter, the foreign resident population stood at 1,091,531 people in 2014, accounting for approximately 2% of the total population of South Korea. For the East Asian country, this number has real significance. Nonetheless, compared to other countries that have or are currently confronting similar issues, it remains relatively small.

One can observe a range of different reactions looking at how the South Korean state has responded towards increasing cultural diversity and its new 'multicultural' reality. It could even be argued that the government has implemented every approach that is mentioned in this thesis' theoretical framework. Assimilation, integration, and multiculturalism have all been at one point or another, and oftentimes synchronously, the direction of South Korea's immigrant incorporation strategy (Kim, 2009). Remarkably, this is not very uncommon. In fact, their response is actually in many respects similar to other countries that have

experienced increasing immigration.[15] What makes the case of South Korea distinct, however, is the rate in which some of these strategies were implemented and altered. Particularly after the country saw a rapid increase in the number of immigrants during the 1990s, South Korea embraced a multiculturalist discourse seemingly overnight. This is especially true given the relative scale and scope and the fact that the country has a strong monocultural society. The accelerated process in South Korea is, as Lim (2015) argues, mainly the consequence of what he calls "late migration". He describes late migration as "an overarching context in which the immigration context in certain countries is playing out" (Lim, 2015, p. 42). There are two distinguished features of the late migration context: 1) how other countries have dealt with large-scale immigration, and 2) international norms, most notably with regard to human rights. These two features are important factors in determining (directly and indirectly) the political context in which the state makes his decisions related to the incorporation of immigrants.

The first feature provides policymakers with a retrospective view and a way to compare different strategies of dealing with immigration. As the involved actors learn from the experiences of other states, it helps them to make up their own immigration policy. South Korea's 'First Basic Plan for Immigration Policy'[16], published in 2009 by the Korea Immigration Service (KIS), provides an interesting example of how these lessons were implemented in the state's policy. The First Basic Plan illustrates that the South Korean policymakers looked at the immigration strategies from other countries. Moreover, the document also reflects how some of these lessons from previous implemented strategies have been incorporated. For instance, by applying the lessons from the immigration policies of other countries such as Australia, Germany and France, the First Basic Plan acknowledged the importance of a viable social integration policy (Korea Immigration Service, 2009, p. 4-5). These examples provided South Korean policymakers with the knowledge that strict, exclusionary, assimilationist policies generally have not worked. The experiences and responses of other countries facing similar issues should, however, not be seen as conclusive evidence for the choice of a certain strategy. Nonetheless, they tend to narrow down the options.

Not only the state, but also non-state actors can learn from the experiences of other countries. In South Korea, a prominent example of this was how domestic opposition groups, civic organisations, and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) opposed the Employment Permit System (EPS). This plan, which allows domestic companies who have failed to find local labourers to legally employ foreign workers, draws parallels with Germany's guest worker programme. The EPS, which was celebrated by the South Korean government as an important step forward with regard to the human rights of foreign workers, was still heavily criticised by foreign worker groups such as the Migrant Trade Union. In particular, these groups strongly opposed the three-year labour contracts that the migrants were given,

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[15] See for example Australia or Germany.
[16] Hereafter shortened as 'the First Basic Plan'.

as this meant they were not able to acquire permanent residency in South Korea.[17] Despite being the main subjects of this elaborate programme, foreign workers are surprisingly underrepresented in South Korea's multiculturalist turn. As Kim (2009) describes, the government's way of practicing multiculturalism is sending a strong signal to this group that they do not belong in South Korea. Instead, marriage migrants are the focus of the state as the embodiment of a new multicultural Korea.

The second feature of late migration is related to the international norms, and how these have become of increasingly significance for domestic politics (Cortell & Davis, 2000). Some scholars (see, e.g., the work of Joppke, 1998) have argued that international norms, such as the human rights regime, are not powerful enough to "make states fear and tremble" (p. 269). "Devoid of hard legal powers, the international human rights regime consists of the soft moral power of discourse", Joppke states (1998, p. 269). Joppke's focused his analysis on Western states, however, it is fair to say that some countries such as South Korea, whose desire it is to become a global player, are more perceptive towards international norms than others. This brings me to the question: what makes international norms significant? Gurowitz (1999) tries to answer this question. She writes how shifts in norms are able to "make room for new voices by altering contexts and making new types of action possible" (418). Especially for weaker actors, international norms can become an influential source of power. Coming back to South Korea, it is fair to say that international norms (specifically those related to human rights) have had a significant impact on legitimizing the objectives of foreign worker groups and the immigrants themselves. All of this started in the early 1990s when migrant workers first began their demand for more equal labour rights (Lim, 2003). By instilling a human rights discourse into their demands, immigrants (together with civil society) tried to convince South Korean employers and the state to claim their basic labour rights. The movement was relatively successful as in that they effectively managed to cultivate the support within the mainstream media, which began paying attention to the link between human rights and the treatment of foreign workers. Over the next decade, the labour rights of foreign workers were gradually improved.

As Gurowitz (1999) suggests, the South Korean state became more preoccupied with human rights since they viewed it as an obligation for their existence in a globalized world. This is well reflected in the First Basic Plan of 2009, which is mentioned earlier in this chapter. The document underlines human rights as an overarching goal of South Korea's new immigration policy. Paragraph 1.2, for example, has the following title: "Developing into a more mature, multicultural society where human rights are respected" (Korea Immigration Service, 2009, p.12). In addition, the complete fourth chapter of the First Basic Plan is devoted to the protection of foreigners' human rights. This includes a section about the prevention of foreigners against discrimination (p. 90-93) and a section which specifically focuses on the protection of foreigners' human rights in detention (p. 94-98). Although these

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[17] South Korean immigration law stipulates that foreign residents are only qualified for permanent residency after five years of continuous residence in the country.

examples may seem as little more than lip service by now, the way in which the state is currently embracing multiculturalism (in rhetoric) is nonetheless significant.

Multiculturalism in contemporary South Korea

As has been previously mentioned, foreign workers are underrepresented in South Korea's multiculturalist turn. In fact, the state's definition of multiculturalism is fairly narrow: much of it is associated with social integration whose rhetoric is primarily directed at marriage-based migrants. South Korea's official multiculturalist turn started as of April 2006, when the state revealed a set of comprehensive measures for marriage migrants (Han, 2007). These measures were criticised, as Han points out, because the question of multiculturalism was composed in such a manner that it is the product of the immigrant's failure to adopt into South Korean society accordingly. Again, this critique is tellingly illustrated in the First Basic Plan for Immigration Policy (2009, p. 46): "The failure of immigrants through marriage to adapt to Korean society undermines the foundation of families and incurs major social costs". Below, I have listed some unedited passages from the First Basic Plan (2009, p. 46), that describe why marriage migrants are in need of assistance:

- "Despite their having lived in Korea for a long time, most immigrants through marriage lack sufficient knowledge of Korean language and culture to live conveniently in Korea."

- "Most immigrants through marriage, especially those from Vietnam, Cambodia, the Philippines, suffer from communication problems."

- "Insufficient understanding of Korean society exposes immigrants through marriage to discrimination and human rights abuse. The children of these marriages also suffer education problems. Systematic and step-by-step education starting from arrivals are needed."

- "Most of the immigrants through marriage have stated they have difficulties in their daily lives as well as in their family & social relationships."

- "The immigrants through marriage also have problems in raising their children because of the depression they suffer from their radical change in environment and social isolation."

As a way of solving these 'problems', the First Basic Plan presents a "social integration program", which provides marriage migrants with a standardized education programme, helpful websites in multiple languages and counselling services (2009, p. 49). Additionally, this migrant group is facilitated through improved employment and social services (for instance through child care and support during pregnancy), and self-help groups. One may notice from some of the fragments which are mentioned above, that it is clear that the South Korea's official discourse of multiculturalism has a strong assimilationist character, as least towards marriage migrants. The strong focus upon this particular group is no accident. Marriage migrants have a stronger tendency to become the target of the state's multiculturalist policies than other migrant groups (Han, 2007; Kim, 2009). In other words, this policy direction has the following implication: not only is the state's definition of multiculturalism narrow, as it has strong integrationists and assimilationist features, it is also limited to one specific group of immigrants in South Korea.

Whilst the South Korean state has set forth a particular and limited conceptualization of multiculturalism, this does not mean that this perception will remain unchanged, or unchallenged. Rather, the concept of multiculturalism should be seen as something that is constantly contested and inherently intersubjective. In fact, since the country introduced its version of multiculturalism in 2006, it has already seen some significant changes away from the assimilationist interpretation which the state propounded before. Examples of this development can be witnessed in how the government started infusing a 'multicultural awareness' in the national educational system. Hence, the key point is that multiculturalism should be regarded as a fluid concept. After it is incorporated into the political process and the broader discourse of immigration, it starts to influence both the state and society. As such, this chapter has demonstrated how the discourse surrounding multiculturalism has been developed and is currently being projected in South Korea. It has shown that even though the state actively tries to convey a multicultural, inclusive rhetoric, in reality the diffused. For governments to increase or maintain its legitimacy, different immigrant groups require different policies. The following chapter will look at this discrepancy between immigrant incorporation policies in more detail.

7. The South Korean Government's Policies on Immigrants

Although the term multiculturalism is quite common in contemporary South Korean politics and media, the understanding of it remains ambiguous. *Tamunhwa*, which could be translated as multiculturalism in Korean, is a loosely defined concept in Korean society which may cover issues related to foreigners or immigration. According to Kim (2009), *tamunhwa* can mean anything from multiculturalism, multicultural society, cultural diversity, international understanding, to foreigners or marriage migrants. Whilst the Presidential Committee on Northeast Asian Cooperation made an attempt to theorize Korean multiculturalism in 2007 (as cited in Kim, 2015), the report concluded that multiculturalism in the country did not reflected the reality, as the term exists only as a normative recommendation. Rather, the study proclaims that describing South Korea as a 'multicultural society' would be misleading. At best, South Korea closer resembles a country that is slowly evolving into a multiethnic society. This chapter will take look at the South Korean government's policies on (unskilled) migrant workers and marriage migrants. It will look at how the state applies different type of immigration policies towards these two groups, and show the discriminatory and gendered nature of this programme. To this end, the structure of this chapter is as follows: the first section will focus upon the government's policies on migrant workers, whilst the second on marriage migrants. As such, it will demonstrate the diversity in which the South Korean state manages these two groups.

Policies on (unskilled) migrant workers

The examination of the laws applied to foreigners seeking to acquire national citizenship in a certain society may be used as a useful parameter in analysing the legal rights of migrants.[18] Evaluating these processes can help us determine the openness towards migrants of a specific country. The Korean Nationality Law shows that there are generally three ways in which a foreigner can acquire South Korean nationality: by birth, restoration, or naturalization. First, since the country's nationality law is based upon the principle of *jus sanguinis*, those who were born to South Korean parents acquire a South Korean nationality automatically.[19] The second manner, restoration of one's nationality, only applies to South Korean who are born or living overseas. Finally, naturalization, is applicable to non-Koreans who want to qualify for South Korean nationality.

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[18] The author is aware of the fact that there are more measures to analyse the legal right of migrants.
[19] This also means that even those who are born in South Korea, but to foreign parents, are not qualified to acquire South Korean nationality.

In theory, though less often in practice, all migrants can acquire a South Korean citizenship. Especially for (unskilled) migrant workers this is virtually impossible. The South Korean Nationality Law stipulates that when a foreigner wants to become naturalized, he or she must have a domicile address in the country for at least five consecutive years. However, South Korea's guest worker programme, which is reflected in the Employment Permit System (EPS), authorizes migrant workers to be employed up to a maximum of five years. The employer is allowed to rehire the migrant worker through a second-term contract, however, he or she has to stay outside the country's borders for at least three months. Hence, it is almost impossible for migrant workers to acquire South Korean citizenship, except for when they marry a South Korean woman. The Ministry of Justice reported in a press statement in 2010 that the number of fraudulent marriages between South Korean women and migrant workers increased (as cited in Park, 2010). These marriages were termed fraudulent as the men only wanted to married South Korean women for the purpose of getting legal residential status. The report stated that some of the migrant workers were accused of marrying mentally challenged women, whilst others were reported to have committed bigamy.

Over the last couple of decades, the migrant workers in South Korea have been the victims of sustained forms of racial discrimination. Despite recognizing the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD), the convention has no enforcement power in domestic law-making since the South Korean Constitution is situated above international conventions in the hierarchy of the Law (Kim, 2010). Article 11 of the Constitution imposes: "All nationals are equal before the law. None should be discriminated against in any aspect of political, economic, social, and cultural life because of his/her sex, religion, or social status". However, if you are a foreigner and do not have a South Korean citizenship, this clause does not apply. Moreover, nowhere within the framework of the South Korean justice system is there a clause that states anything about racial discrimination (Kim, 2015). As a result, the country lacks a legal framework on which this can be penalised.

Since it is practically impossible for the migrant workers to acquire national citizenship and they are forced to leave the country after a fixed period of employment, both the government and the migrant workers themselves have little motivation for assimilation. Although the state does not require the migrant workers to let go of their cultures, this does not mean that their cultural rights are being guaranteed. Since there is no officially declared regulation that supports the cultural practices of ethnic minorities, the migrants are more prone to be discriminated by the majority society. Migrant workers who share a similar ethnic background, however, have a more favourable status. The South Korean government has implemented an institutional framework in which ethnic Koreans are facilitated with their return migration. First, these people only have to prove that they have an ethnic Korean genealogy in order to acquire national citizenship. Moreover, the Overseas Korean Act (OKA) bestows the right to (quasi-)dual citizenship towards overseas Koreans. Simultaneously, the South Korean government has a separate guest worker programme for co-ethnic Koreans that are unskilled migrants (most of which are ethnic Korean from China).

Compared to the non-Korean unskilled migrant workers, this group is provided with a better sojourner's status and are allowed longer stay. In other words, the South Korean state has co-ethnic preference in its migration policy. This illustrates how intolerant towards cultural diversity the state actually is. Migrants who share a similar ethnic background are perceived as less of a threat towards South Korean society, making them easier to mobilise as a workforce.

Policies on marriage migrants

The South Korean government started to become seriously interested in multicultural policymaking in 2006 when it revealed a set of comprehensive measures for marriage migrants. The Ministry of Gender Equality and Family (MOGEF) is in governing this state-initiated project and implements policies with the purpose to assist marriage migrants in their settlement-process. Its official policy objective, as listed on MOGEF's website (2016), is "To promote sound international marriage and to enhance Korean society's receptivity to multiple cultures."[20] The policy aims to increase intercultural understanding through various programmes such as education on Korean language and culture.

In contrast to the migrant workers, marriage migrants can benefit from a multitude of immigration policies in their process of acquiring national citizenship. In the first place, this group of migrants enjoy a "simplified naturalization" procedure that is provided by the South Korean government. This process makes it possible for marriage immigrants to acquire nationality with shorter residence time than, for instance, migrant workers. South Korean nationality law stipulates that foreigners who are married to a South Korean national can acquire citizenship if they maintain their marriage status and have lived in South Korea for two or more years (Ministry of Justice, 2014). Interestingly, since 2011 marriage migrants are also included on the list of eligible people who can hold dual citizenship, whilst migrant workers are excluded from this list (Lee, 2010).

Looking at the nationality acquisition process of marriage migrants, one could not overlook the existence of a gender preference. This gender privilege becomes evident when examining the manner in which the South Korean government treated international marriages between migrant men and Korean women. Especially during the 1990s, when the number of incoming migrant workers increased rapidly, most international marriages were between Korean women and migrant men from poorer developing countries. This development turned out to be a shift away from the marriages between Korean women and men from developed countries (such as the United States), since this group oftentimes wanted to stay in South Korea permanently. In theory, acquiring citizenship looks relatively easy for marriage migrants, however, the Nationality Law stipulates these people to take a formal test. With this test, the applicants have to demonstrate to what extent they are assimilated

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[20] http://www.mogef.go.kr/eng/pc/eng_pc_f006.do

into the society by answering questions about Korea. In 2009, the South Korean government introduced the 'Korean Immigration and Integration Programme' (KIIP), which is designed to assist migrants who are eligible for naturalization and to increase their understanding through a series of courses on Korean language and culture. Marriage migrants who want to qualify for a Foreign Spouse Visa (F-6) are now required to pass the Level 1 Test of Proficiency in Korean (TOPIK), which is administered by the National Institute for International Education (Kim, 2014).

In 2008, the South Korean government enacted the Support for Multicultural Families Act (SMFA). Designed to accommodate marriage migrants and their families, this act requires the state and municipal governments to actively support this group in order for them to have a better life (MOLEG, 2008). It illustrates the importance that the state attaches to the adaptation of marriage migrants and their families to adopt to South Korean society and culture. The act is not only indented for multicultural families, but also for the members of the host society. Article 5 of the SMFA stipulates that "[t]he State and local governments shall take measures, such as education and advocacy activities for understanding diverse cultures, as necessary for preventing social discrimination and prejudice against multi-cultural families and for encouraging members of society to acknowledge and respect the cultural diversity" (MOLEG, 2008). On paper, it looks like this act puts great emphasis on the respect for cultural diversity. However, considering how MOLEG defines a multi-cultural family, the abovementioned stipulation becomes rather ironic. According to Article 2, a 'multi-cultural family' is considered "[a] family comprised of a married immigrant […] and a person who acquired the nationality of the Republic of Korea by birth pursuant" (MOLEG, 2008). Thus, according to this definition, only those who have a South Korean spouse should be respected for their cultural diversity.

The SMFA's main purpose is to "contribute to the improvement of the quality of life of multi-cultural family members and the unity of society by helping multi-cultural family members enjoy stable family living" (MOLEG, 2008, Article 1). Most sections of this act are supportive measures which aim to help multi-cultural families adopting to South Korean society. Some of these clauses include educational support, family counselling, couple relationship education, parenting education, etc. (Article 6 and 7). Others articles deal with the protection and support for victims of domestic violence and the provision of necessary healthcare before and after childbirth (Article 8 and 9). It is striking how most of these clauses presume that marriage migrants are female, addressing their role as child-bearers: "The State and local governments may provide married immigrants and naturalized citizens, etc. with necessary services, […] so that they can manage pregnancy and childbirth under healthy and safe conditions" (MOLEG, 2008, Article 9). As is evident from this provision, the South Korean government seem to be concerned with the physical reproduction of the nation through the paternal line, as the benefits listed in Article 9 only apply for international marriages between South Korean men and foreign women.

In conclusion, the South Korean tries to promote the ideal of multiculturalism by migrant policies such as the Support for Multicultural Families Act. However, as the policies

on migrant workers and marriage migrants have demonstrated, access to South Korean citizenship remains limited if not impossible. In other words, multiculturalism seems to only exist in a rhetorical sense. In fact, the South Korean government's discourse on labour and marriage immigrants actually more closely resembles the processes and practices of segregation and assimilation, respectively. Migrant workers are neither compelled to integrate into South Korean society, nor are they forced to give of their cultures. On the other end of the spectrum, marriage migrants need to assimilate if they want to qualify for the acquisition of national citizenship.

The gap between rhetoric and practice

The manner in which the South Korean government deals with immigrants seems contradictory. This leads to the question of why this institution behaves in the way it does. It could be argued that the government simply still has to define its response to the economic, demographic and social challenges it will increasingly face. However, this thesis will suggest a different answer: the apparent 'gap' between the rhetoric and practice of the South Korean government regarding migrants is purposefully designed for the benefit of its own national interests. The following section will delve deeper into this gap and analyse the rationale behind the government's immigration policies.

State-driven multiculturalism

Although the South Korean government was an important actor in initiating and encouraging foreigners to migrate to South Korea, this does not mean that the state could foretell all the consequences this development entailed. Whereas the government's main rationale behind their immigration policies was to attract foreign workers and thereby provide more manpower, the migrants also brought different cultures into South Korean society. As a response to these changes, the government introduced multiculturalism into its immigration policy. Multiculturalism in South Korea can therefore be seen as a nationalist project, actively driven by the state to serve national interests (Kim, 2007; Kim, 2015). To a certain extent, this idea of state-driven multiculturalism shares some similarities with the South Korean 'globalization drive' of the 1990s (Kim, 2000). During the Kim Young Sam government from 1993 to 1998, the globalisation drive was used as a top-down, state-driven plan in the nation-building process of the country. It was "a strategic principle, a mobilizing slogan, a hegemonic ideology or a new national-identity badge for a state aspiring to advanced world-class status" (Kim, 2000, p. 243-244).

Interestingly, the way the South Korean government mobilises multiculturalism also has nationalist implications. The slogan of multiculturalism is performed to boost the country's national image within the international community. A good example that illustrates this idea is how the Presidential Council on Nation Branding (PCNB) – a government institute that is launched specifically to enhance South Korea's international status – is promoting the image of a 'Multicultural Korea'. The PCNB relies on soft power to increase the

awareness among South Koreans about cultural diversity and global citizenship (Lee, 2010). Whilst institutions such as the PCNB seemingly demonstrate that the South Korean government is actively appropriating multiculturalism to portray the country as a global player, both culturally and economically, it is also works as a tool to serve its national interests. Government officials argue that assimilation is necessary to prevent migrants from becoming a social burden for the host society (Kim, 2015). In other words, this top-down promotion of multicultural policies seems more for the benefit of the government, rather than the migrants themselves. It can be seen as little more than political window-dressing by the South Korean government which it can easily show off to the outside world. This is another example of how the state's rhetoric differs from its actual immigrant incorporation policy. By actively promoting South Korea as a multicultural nation, the government tries to increase its legitimacy towards the outside world. As migrant workers and marriage migrants present specific challenges and opportunities, the government has implemented different immigrant policy frameworks for each of these migrant categories; something which will be explored further in the next chapter.

8. Conclusion

In this thesis, I delved into the question of why South Korea's immigration policy seems so contradictory. To answer this question, I looked at the role of legitimacy for a state. In order for states to survive, they continue searching for ways to maximize their legitimacy. How governments construct their immigration policy is part of this quest. The legitimacy of a state is determined on the basis of how it is able to meet certain demands (e.g., economic, cultural or demographic). However, states oftentimes struggle to realise multiple demands simultaneously. Placing emphasis on one, could lead to the disregard of another. As the global and domestic political, economic and cultural conditions constantly change, the modern state faces new and increasingly complex problems in meeting all these different demands. For countries such as South Korea, who made the turn from a labour-sending to a labour-receiving country, immigration poses one of these challenges. States design their policies by considering which claims are most effective in gaining legitimacy. During this process, the discourse between the rhetoric and practice of their policies oftentimes becomes disconnected from each other. The 'gap hypothesis' suggests there exists a divergence between the goals and actual outcomes of migration policies. Generally, this means the government uses an exclusive discourse which centres around controlling the migration flows. Yet, its behaviour moves more towards inclusiveness. However, South Korean immigration policies seem to follow a reverse trend: whereas the immigration discourse is benevolent with a strong emphasis on multiculturalism, the actual implementation is rather restrictive. This allows the state to defend itself against the challenges of immigration.

This thesis contributes to the current literature by examining the role of the state at a time when the forces of globalisation and nationalism seem to increasingly oppose each other. Some studies show how globalisation has a weakening effect on national identity, whilst other scholars argue that this process leads to resistance which induces a strengthening of this. Even though these two perspectives are conflicting, they do share one premise: globalisation and nationalism are often two competing forces. However, as this thesis has shown, the South Korean government manages to simultaneously pursue globalisation with keeping a strong national identity. By looking at the effects of international labour and marriage migration on the discursive position towards multiculturalism of the South Korean state, it showed the gap between the government's rhetoric and practice on its immigration policy. South Korea, a country highly globalised in terms of its economy, but in a less cultural way, is an example of a state that selected specific components of globalisation to serve its own national interests. In this context, the country is creating a new synthesis in which it simultaneously secures its own national identity and adapts to an age of increasing globalisation.

Rather than being a monolithic entity, migrants can be differentiated into a number of subgroups based upon their gender, nationality, purpose of migration, and so on. From the perspective of the host society, each of these subgroups has to be treated accordingly if they seek to maximize their legitimacy. Immigration policies are not static, neither is a country exclusively multiculturalist, assimilationist, or exclusionist in dealing with immigrants. Instead, immigration policies are constantly changing and the distinction between exclusive or inclusive strategies is becomes increasingly blurred as states opt for one approach in rhetoric, whilst doing something different in practice. This flexibility is being reflected in the case of South Korean policy-making. As shown, the South Korean state has developed separate immigration programmes for migrant workers and marriage migrants over time. As these two categories present specific challenges and opportunities, the government framed its immigrant policy for each group differently. The policies concerning migrant workers emphasised the need for control and tended to be exclusionary, whereas the policies for marriage migrants were much focussed upon assimilation.

With the rise of the human rights regime, exclusionary immigration policies are called into question. By embracing a discourse of multiculturalism, the South Korean government not only improves its reputation abroad, but simultaneously raises security questions at home. On the on the hand, the image of a 'Multicultural Korea' will likely attract more tourists and international students. Whilst, on the other, immigrants are oftentimes associated with crime. As this thesis has demonstrated, states will adjust their immigration policies to maximise their legitimacy. They manoeuvre between guaranteeing economic prosperity, dealing with security concerns, and human rights. As such, governments try to address these conflicting issues by selectively 'cherry picking' certain immigration policies. Indeed, the South Korean embrace of multiculturalism could therefore be seen as a kind of rhetorical window-dressing as a means to satisfy the norms of the global community. Hence, to characterise South Korea's immigration policy as multicultural would be premature. Looking at just the government's policy towards marriage migrants, it could be argued that the state has implemented some multicultural aspects in its vision and framework. However, when these programmes are put into practice, the approach is closer towards practices of assimilation, rather than multiculturalism. The policy regarding marriage migrants focuses upon cultural understanding and accommodating these people into South Korean society. Moreover, the small number of programmes that are available for multicultural families largely exist in name only (see the work of Kim, Kim & Han, 2006). As described above, the government's policy position towards immigrants might be multicultural in rhetoric, but something else in practice. Whereas one governmental body (e.g., the MoJ) is examining the most effective ways to control immigrants, others (e.g., the PCNB) want to promote a "Multicultural Korea'. Different governmental institutions have diverse positions and theories on the subject, leading them to work along seemingly separate tracks in the discourses on multiculturalism. Thus, and as the title of this thesis conveys, multiculturalism in South Korea is currently more of an ideal than a reality.

Suggestions for further research and final thoughts

This thesis examined the immigration issue from the perspective of the South Korean state. It would also be relevant to look at this from the viewpoint of the migrant. How do they look towards the immigration policies of South Korea? An alternative angle would be to look at how the state deals with other migrant groups. This study mainly focussed upon migrant workers and marriage migrants, since they constitute the largest groups within the total immigrant population. However, there are other groups of immigrants whose number and significance has grown considerably since the last decade. For instance, one could look at the role of international student. How do they influence the socio-economic environment of South Korea? Another angle is to research immigration to South Korea from the perspective of domestic and international human-interest groups. What is the impact they made to the migration regime of this country? Further research is needed to explain the complexities between the immigrant incorporation policies states design and the manner in which the involved actors respond to them.

Recent immigration of migrant workers and marriage migrants towards South Korea both reshaped the country's notion of national identity and multiculturalism. As this thesis predominantly discussed South Korea's current discourses on multiculturalism, it is relevant to look at the idea of a multicultural society as a future prospect. In the case of South Korea, I suggest to look beyond the idea of the government as the predominant force in constructing a discourse on multiculturalism. Instead, the migrants themselves should be emphasised as the leading actors in multicultural Korea. Rather than perceiving them as internally homogeneous, the South Korean government should acknowledge this group for their diversity. To conclude, immigration will undoubtedly provoke a multitude of nationalistic reactions. Opposed to what this thesis might have conveyed, immigrant incorporation should not be seen as unidirectional process solely directed by the state. Instead, we should acknowledge it as a relational process, in which multiple actors have agency and are constantly shaping tomorrow's immigration landscape.

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Executive Summary

Seemingly overnight, multiculturalism became an official policy of the South Korean government. The state's rapid embrace of multiculturalism may come as a surprise: even though the number of foreign residents has increased greatly over the last three decades, the actual extent to which South Korea is a multi-ethnic or culturally diverse country remains relatively small: the foreign resident population stood at 1,091,531 people in 2014, accounting for approximately 2% of the total population of South Korea. For the East Asian country, this number has real significance.

This thesis argues that South Korea's apparent strong embrace of multiculturalism can be traced back to the country's social-economic and demographic changes. Social-economically, South Korea has developed into an export-dependent country, which has become more dependent on the import of cheap labour. South Korea's rapid economic growth accompanied by industrialization, has resulted in a continuously growing gap between the demand for low-skilled, low-paying labour and the supply of local workers who are actually willing to do this type of labour. Demographically, South Korea's low fertility rate is one of the most noticeable factors. A second demographic factor is related to South Korea's persistent marriage gap: there is a surplus of marriage-ready Korean men (especially in the rural areas), whilst there is a lack of Korean women who are willing to marry them. The South Korean state has developed separate immigration programmes for migrant workers and marriage migrants over time. As these two categories present specific challenges and opportunities, the government framed its immigrant policy for each group differently. The policies concerning migrant workers emphasised the need for control and tended to be exclusionary, whereas the policies for marriage migrants were much focussed upon assimilation.

As such, this thesis delves into the question of why South Korea's immigration policy seems so contradictory. To answer this question, it looks at the role of legitimacy for a state. In order for states to survive, they continue searching for ways to maximize their legitimacy. How governments construct their immigration policy is part of this quest. States design their policies by considering which claims are most effective in gaining legitimacy. During this process, the discourse between the rhetoric and practice of their policies oftentimes becomes disconnected from each other. The 'gap hypothesis' suggests there exists a divergence between the goals and actual outcomes of migration policies. Generally, this means the government uses an exclusive discourse which centres around controlling the migration flows. Yet, its behaviour moves more towards inclusiveness. However, and as this thesis shows, South Korean immigration incorporation policies seem to follow a reverse trend: whereas the immigration discourse is benevolent with a strong emphasis on multiculturalism, the

actual implementation is rather restrictive. This allows the state to defend itself against the challenges of immigration.

By looking at the effects of international labour and marriage migration on the discursive position towards multiculturalism of the South Korean state, it showed the gap between the government's rhetoric and practice on its immigration policy. South Korea, a country highly globalised in terms of its economy, but in a less cultural way, is an example of a state that selected specific components of globalisation to serve its own national interests. In this context, the country is creating a new synthesis in which it simultaneously secures its own national identity whilst adapting to an age of increasing globalisation. Therefore, immigration policy should be seen as an evolving process in which the environments of both the migrants and receiving society constantly change. Governments define their immigration policies according to an interplay of economic, political, and cultural circumstances both domestically and globally.