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Los Angeles

Beyond Multiculturalism, Toward Interculturalism:
Educating Citizens in Changing South Korea

A thesis submitted in partial satisfaction
of the requirement for the degree Master of Arts
in Education

by

Jieun Song

2013

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ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS

Beyond Multiculturalism, Toward Interculturalism: Educating Citizens in Changing South Korea

by

Jieun Song

Master of Arts in Education

University of California, Los Angeles, 2013

Professor Carlos A. Torres, Chair

There has been a considerable amount of debates on whether the paradigm shift from multiculturalism to interculturalism is legitimate. While the two terms are sometimes interchangeably used, many scholars have articulated the differences between the two approaches. Arguably, interculturalism, as compared to multiculturalism, pursues further integration via constant mutual interactions between different groups even to the point where the boundaries of the groups become significantly blurred.

However, there is a serious blind spot in the ongoing debate. The debate between the two paradigms only revolves around North American and some European countries. This paper intends to highlight the following two points: First, the legitimacy of a paradigm cannot be

rightly judged when we only focus on a portion of the world; there is a need to examine underrepresented parts of the world as well. Second, the problem of multiculturalism versus interculturalism should be understood in the light of a specific social context of a nation. It is a problem of “better fit” rather than an absolute superiority of one paradigm over the other.

With this in mind, the current study brings in the case of South Korean multiculturalism, which has clearly been underrepresented in the discourse. South Korea, in which multiculturalism emerged in a relatively recent period owing to the accelerated globalization and increasing immigration, provides a new way of looking at the multiculturalism versus interculturalism debate. The author suggests that interculturalism is a more suiting approach to the South Korean context, while leaving the room for future studies to address an actual application of interculturalism in South Korea. Definitions of multiculturalism and interculturalism, multiculturalism in South Korea, and the potentiality of interculturalism as an alternative to multiculturalism in South Korea are discussed.

The thesis of Jieun Song is approved.

Val Rust

Douglas Kellner

Carlos A. Torres, Committee Chair

University of California, Los Angeles

2013

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Jieun Song

1. Introduction

Many societies that accept immigrant populations face the challenges of embracing minority groups and promoting social integration. This challenge is being more and more heightened as globalization accelerates. Multiculturalism first came into existence in 1960's North America for the purpose of remedying problems that the assimilationist tradition had brought about. From then on, multiculturalism has served as a dominant paradigm in dealing with immigration issues.¹ The recognition of and respect for differences based on "politics of recognition" (Taylor, 1992) has been regarded as the "best solution" to those societies in which diverse groups co-exist.

However, a retreat from multiculturalism has occurred recently. Not only that the conservative politicians such as David Cameron, the prime minister of UK, and Angela Merkel, the German prime minister, have announced the "failure of multiculturalism" (Wheeler, 2011); there emerged a set of critiques of multiculturalism at a conceptual and practical level. However, the critiques toward multiculturalism do not necessarily parallel with conservative political claims. Instead, they focus more on the embedded limitations of multiculturalism both at conceptual and practical levels, and look for the ways to complement or ameliorate the dominant concept.

Interculturalism started to be illuminated again in this context. Although the term first came into existence in the 1960s when multiculturalism also initially emerged, it was not paid enough attention under the shadow of multiculturalism. It has also been quite common that interculturalism is thought to be synonymous as to multiculturalism. Some people have used the

¹ The notion of multiculturalism that is used in the present thesis refers to a set of conceptual and political frameworks rather than a simple plurality of culture and ethnicity. It has particular ideology and specific conceptual inclinations embedded in it. That way, multiculturalism can be conceptually compared and contrasted with interculturalism, which also deals with plurality of culture and ethnicity but has somewhat different political/ideological beliefs and approaches.

term interchangeably with multiculturalism and this tendency has been clearer in Europe than other regions of the world although there are many European scholars who distinguish the two concepts (Sze and Powell, 2004; Portera, 2008; Emerson, 2011; Barn, 2012).

In fact, interculturalism and multiculturalism do have some commonalities. They both are concerned with cultural diversity and equal rights for every person regardless of his/her race, gender, age, sexual orientation, and so forth. However, interculturalism diverges from multiculturalism in that it aims at more active interaction and establishment of a cohesive civil society (Booth, 2003; Sze and Powell, 2004; Portera, 2008; Maxwell et al., 2012; Taylor, 2012; Titley, 2012). Whereas multiculturalism seems to be satisfied with the recognition of differences and peaceful coexistence of diverse groups in one society, interculturalism is more ambitious as it encourages people to constantly interact and intermingle to achieve a bigger social integration as a whole. Although many multiculturalists reject this distinction between multiculturalism and interculturalism, as we will see, it seems quite clear that interculturalism puts more emphasis on interaction and integration.

There has been a considerable amount of debate on whether the paradigm shift from multiculturalism to interculturalism is legitimate (Levey, 2012; Maxwell, et al., 2012; Meer and Modood, 2012; Taylor, 2012; Wieviorka, 2012). Scholars have analyzed both discourses and examined the concepts from various perspectives. In regard to this heated debate, I advance two main points. First, the debate over the vocabulary shift towards interculturalism itself is a meaningful process, since it allows the opportunity to reflectively assess the merits and demerits of the existing paradigm—multiculturalism—and to engage in a discourse deconstruction process. As Werbner (2012) mentioned, “multiculturalism [and interculturalism also] must be grasped as a discourse in which scholars participate along with cultural actors, politicians and the

media” (p. 198). Many prominent scholars have reached an agreement that the careful examination and deconstruction/reconstruction process of an existing discourse is important as well (Foucault, 1972, 1985, 1991; Escobar 1984, 2011; Said, 1995). By carefully examining and analyzing the dominant discourse, we can not only unveil the hidden assumptions and mechanisms of the given discourse, but also pave the way to a more desirable alternative if it is needed.

Second, the evaluation of multiculturalism and the paradigm shift to interculturalism should be considered differently in different social contexts. Moving away from dualistic debates on which is the more legitimate concept that could apply universally, I argue that the shift from multiculturalism to interculturalism could be more suitable for some societies, while it would be okay for other societies to continue with the idea of multiculturalism. This is owing to the “idiosyncrasy” of each society. Every society has its own historical/political/cultural context and particular social situation in which the discourse is embedded and applied. Therefore, there is no single absolute solution that could apply to every country. Different approaches and remedies need to be taken for different societies.

Although there has been much discussion on the two paradigms—multiculturalism versus interculturalism—the discussion only has revolved around North America and European countries. Influenced by standpoint theory (Harding, 1993), I find this seriously problematic. In order to evaluate the legitimacy and possibility of the two competing concepts, it is necessary to expand the scope of discussion to the other parts of the world other than Western countries. Only when we also take into consideration the non-European countries, can we legitimately discuss the characteristics of the paradigms with adequate objectivity. Therefore, I bring to the table the case of South Korea.

For the first time in the nation's history, South Korea, which has been considered to be one of the most homogeneous countries, is now undergoing a considerable demographic change. As a result of globalization and the nation's economic growth, more and more foreigners are entering and staying in South Korea for a long period of time. According to Statistics Korea (2012), there are approximately 1.4 million foreigners staying in Korea today, constituting 2.8 percent of the South Korean population. In addition, one of ten marriages in South Korea now involves a foreign spouse (Choe, 2012) and 4.7 percent of all new-born babies in 2011 South Korea are born from internationally married couples (Statistics Korea, 2012). This percentage of foreigners and mixed-blood children is still small compared to countries like the United States, but it is an unprecedented demographic change in South Korea, and thus, is becoming a new and tricky problem to deal with for South Koreans.

With the relative lack of experience in immigration and a multicultural environment, it is clear that South Korea is struggling with developing the effective strategies to address the issue of changing demographics. Since 2006, when the South Korean government suddenly announced a transition into a multicultural, multiethnic society (Kim, H.M., 2007), many policies and educational support for "multicultural families" have been introduced by a number of ministries and NGOs. Despite the good intentions, however, these newly implemented policies and additional support are being criticized more and more these days (S.M. Kim, 2011; C. Suh, 2009; K. Park, 2009; Chung, 2011; Ok and Yuk, 2012; S. Oh, 2006; Bae, 2006; M. Park, 2012; Suh, 2009). Among many, the main criticism is that those policies and support are separating the minority groups, rather than embracing them as members of South Korean society. Objectification and labeling of these minority groups are also problematized widely.

Given this complex situation, in this conceptual study, I examine the possibility of interculturalism as an effective alternative to multiculturalism in the context of South Korea. This is a first step to expand the multiculturalism versus interculturalism debate to an underrepresented part of the world, emphasizing the importance of specific cultural contexts in determining the more suitable approach. Specific contextual attributes of South Korea are analyzed in order to address which paradigm, between multiculturalism and interculturalism, would better fit South Korean society and address the impending problems more effectively. It seems that interculturalism is the more suitable paradigm for South Korea as compared to multiculturalism which seems to foster further segregation and stereotyping, at least in the South Korean context, considering the particular cultural contexts of South Korea.

In the following I first define multiculturalism and interculturalism, and I also include some critiques of interculturalism for the purpose of a balanced discussion. I then address the reason why examining other parts of the world beyond Western nations is important. In the second section, I introduce and elaborate on the current situation of a changing South Korea; Here I write about demographic shifts occurring in South Korea, efforts to deal with this transformation, and the problems found in these efforts. Finally, I argue why interculturalism would be a better fit for the current situation in South Korea. I provide the specific context of South Korean culture that has to be taken into consideration and discuss the possibility of interculturalism in detail. But before proceeding to the discussion in earnest, let me briefly introduce the methodology that I use in the present study.

2. Methodology

This paper uses secondary sources including academic papers, institutions' publications, and newspaper articles. It provides a comprehensive literature review concerning the conceptual debates over multiculturalism and interculturalism, and their applications to South Korean society. Academic papers and publications are used to understand the theoretical conception of multiculturalism and interculturalism. I use some publications issued by international agencies such as Council of Europe and UNESCO to show a more practical adaptation of the notion of interculturalism. To describe the demographic changes and the following impacts occurring in South Korean society, I also use policy statements and newspaper articles, in addition to scholarly publications. To support my view that interculturalism would be more suitable to South Korean society, I utilize academic papers concerned with the particularities of Korea such as collectivism.

3. Multiculturalism and Interculturalism

In this section, I note what multiculturalism and interculturalism respectively mean. As it might be expected, defining these two notions is not a clear-cut process. Since most people are probably more familiar with multiculturalism than interculturalism, I devote more pages for explaining interculturalism. However, in order to grasp the clearer notion of interculturalism, it is crucial to first know precisely what multiculturalism means. Therefore, I first elaborate on multiculturalism, and then move to explain interculturalism. There is a range of similarities between the two concepts but there also seems to be enough differences to say that interculturalism is a distinct concept that is clearly different from multiculturalism and thus,

could be another possibility to respect diversity and promote integration. The existing critiques on interculturalism will follow for the sake of a balanced discussion.

3.1. Multiculturalism

The term “multiculturalism” first emerged in the 1970s in countries like Canada and Australia, and to a lesser degree in Britain and the United States (Meer and Modood, 2012). It has fundamentally started from the rejection of the assimilation tradition which had unfairly expected new-comers to be perfectly merged into the existing society without “disturbing” the established social order. The concept has been loved for decades and has been further developed and enriched by many scholars (Goldberg, 1994; Taylor, 1992, 2001, 2012; Kymlicka, 1995, 2001, 2012; Honneth, 1996; Kincheloe and Steinberg, 1997; Fraser, 1998; Torres, 1998; Parekh, 2000, 2002; Fraser and Honneth, 2003; Kymlicka and Banting, 2006; Modood, 2007; Banks, 2007, 2008; Banks, Cherry and Banks, 2009; Werbner, 2012).

It is sometimes said that there are two major strands of multiculturalism: politics of recognition and politics of redistribution. The most representative scholars for the politics of recognition are Charles Taylor, a Canadian political philosopher, and Axel Honneth, a German contemporary philosopher; and the ones for the politics of redistribution are Will Kymlicka, another Canadian political philosopher, and Nancy Fraser, an American critical theorist (Kim, Heo and Hwang, 2011). The politics of recognition is primarily concerned with the status inequality and the problem of identity, while a politics of redistribution is more concerned with economic inequality and the role of the welfare state. Further discussion about the diversity within multiculturalism may be beneficial, but as it is beyond the goals and available space of

this study, I would rather focus on the common ground of the multiculturalism as a discourse here.

The term, multiculturalism, is commonly used to describe the advocacy and the promotion of cultural diversity and equity of all people. However, it is not easy to define clearly what it means. The meaning could subtly change when faced with different contexts and different conceptual orientations. As multiculturalism is a popular topic across numerous academic disciplines and has been examined on a continuous basis, almost countless scholars over the world have defined multiculturalism. It is unsurprising that the existing definitions of multiculturalism are not perfectly agreed upon and unified. Given this fact, rather than listing definitions of multiculturalism that must be partial in comparison to the whole magnitude of existing literature, I first examine how the definition of multiculturalism could be affected and changed by different contexts. After that, I propose some very simple definitions of multiculturalism that could be effectively compared to a competing concept, interculturalism.

The work of Meer and Modood (2012) and Torres (1998) guide us to see how the definitions of multiculturalism could differ depending on varying regions and interest. Both works suggest that the definition of multiculturalism is changeable to some extent. But while Meer and Mood put emphasis on regional variations of the meaning of multiculturalism, Torres highlights the importance of main interest of a group in viewing multicultural discourse.

As Nasar Meer and Tariq Modood (2012) rightly point out, multiculturalism means different things in different places. To support this argument, they give the contrasting examples of North American multiculturalism and European multiculturalism. To explain North American multiculturalism, they point out that it is mainly about discrete groups with territorial claims, such as the American Indians and the Quebec peoples. One thing to note is that even though

these people hope to be treated as “nations within a multicultural state” (p. 179), they are oftentimes regarded as ethno-cultural groups in a bigger, mono-national state. On the other hand, in Europe, groups with such territorial claims, like the Catalans and the Scots, are thought of as nations. Therefore, multiculturalism comes to have a more restricted meaning, only referring to a “post-immigration urban mélange” (p. 179) and the sociopolitical changes it gives rise to. To summarize the viewpoint of Meer and Modood, while language-based ethnicity is the major challenge in North America, the major challenge in Europe is cultural plurality resulted from immigration, especially from Muslim backgrounds.

Carlos Torres (1998) also posits that multiculturalism means different things to different people, but in a little different way. He especially emphasizes the different interest that different groups have. Although he provides a concrete definition of multiculturalism first as below:

Multiculturalism in any form, shape, or color relates to the politics of difference and the emerging social struggles over racialized, gendered, and classist societies (p. 175).

He also ensures that multiculturalism is not represented by a single conceptual paradigm, educational approach, or pedagogy. Instead, the concept is seen and applied differently to diverse groups of people who pursue different objectives which appeals to them the most. Accordingly, “some people see multiculturalism as an antiracist philosophy, others as a methodology for educational reform, others as a set of specific content areas within instructional programs” (p. 180). So, the truth is the notion of multiculturalism encompasses many thoughts and movement, thus is capable of serving varying interests existing in society. This interpretation of multiculturalism sounds reasonable given various approaches having been taken in diverse social

arenas such as national politics, a people's movement, and multicultural curricula development within schools.

It appears that multiculturalism has to be defined with the consideration of the differing regions and interest of people. However, in spite of these variations we can still define multiculturalism in a general sense. In his article, "Is multiculturalism the solution?" (1998), Michel Wieviorka provides three general definitions of multiculturalism, borrowing from different reliable sources.² He first quotes the definition written in *The Harper Collins Dictionary of Sociology*: "The acknowledgement and promotion of cultural pluralism as a feature of many societies Multiculturalism celebrates and seeks to protect cultural variety, for example, minority languages" (p. 881). Next, he borrows another definition from the Washington Library of Congress classification. In this classification, multiculturalism is described as "the condition in which ethnic, religious or cultural groups coexist within one society" (p. 882). Finally, he quotes a part of French dictionary, *Le Petit Robert* 1985. The dictionary defines multiculturalism as the "coexistence de plusieurs cultures dans un m ême pays (the coexistence of several cultures in one country)" (p. 882).

One important point to note here is that we can find the regional differences which Meer and Modood (2012) proposed in these short definitions. While the French dictionary focuses on the coexistence of different cultures, supposedly the mainstream culture and immigrants' culture, in a society, the American dictionary does illuminate the aspect of language and ethnicity. Nonetheless, we can see the grounding commonalities of the three definitions. All three definitions share the notion of pluralism and coexistence. They hope different cultures will be respected or perhaps even celebrated, and to peacefully coexist with other cultures.

2 The source of the three dictionaries are: (Jarry and Jarry, 1991; Ilk, 2008; Robert, Rey, and Rey-Debove, 1990.

Multiculturalism looks sound and well-structured. Then why and when did interculturalism start to gain power as an alternative paradigm that threatens the position of multiculturalism? What was missing in multiculturalism and how can interculturalism fill this existing gap? Let me now turn to the concept of interculturalism.

3.2. Interculturalism

The origin of the concept interculturalism dates back to the 1970s, when multiculturalism was inaugurated as the official policy in Canada (Maxwell et al., 2012). The very first origin of the concept may sound somewhat political. The policy of multiculturalism which Canada chose to implement seemed to undermine the status of Quebec, at least to the Quebec people's eyes. This was because since the multicultural policies treated Quebec, a clearly distinctive region of the nation for its characteristic demographic composition and different language usage—French, as only “one of many” minority groups existing in Canada. Quebec chose to pursue a different policy framework which is interculturalism so that they could keep the French-speaking core while reconciling the ethno-cultural diversity (Bouchard and Taylor, 2008). However, the concept should not be said as a “resistance” of Quebec. Even though it started in a somewhat political way, the concept has been more and more sophisticated with the passage of time. And as people begin to realize that multiculturalism is not perfect but has many shortcomings, interculturalism is being revisited and is gaining more and more power.

In this section I define what interculturalism is, primarily borrowing from the interculturalists' viewpoint. In order to do this I first examine the analysis of the three academic publications—Maxwell et.al (2012), Portera (2008) and Taylor (2012). There are many interculturalists but I particularly introduce these three scholars for different reasons. First, the

work of Maxwell et al. shows quite a balanced view although they are still advocating interculturalism to an extent. It articulates the similarities between the multiculturalism and interculturalism first, and then reveals what distinguishes the two concepts. Second, Portera is probably the strongest advocate of interculturalism even among these three selected scholars. He clarifies many points that help readers understand where interculturalism diverges from multiculturalism. Finally, Taylor is included for a special reason. Many people still seem to think Taylor is a multiculturalist mostly because his essay “The politics of recognition” (1992) is almost regarded as a canon in the multicultural discourse. I want to note that he is not “purely” multiculturalist any more, given his more recent works which I address in the following.

One more thing to note is that while the three seem to define interculturalism in a similar way, Taylor differs from the other two, especially from Portera, in the sense that he brings into view the importance of social context in choosing the right approach between multiculturalism and interculturalism. After addressing these three works, I proceed to point out how this interculturalism has been adapted to more practical statements issued by influential international agencies such as the Council of Europe and UNESCO. Then I conclude the subsection by synthesizing and summarizing the main features of interculturalism shown in the various works covered.

Maxwell et al. (2012), before they proceed to introduce the distinctive characteristics of interculturalism, acknowledge that there are many commonalities between multiculturalism and interculturalism. According to their analysis, both paradigms aim to facilitate social integration as opposed to a unidirectional assimilative approach. Both help immigrants to enjoy equal treatment and full participation in society despite their differences from the mainstream culture. Also, both paradigms share a number of similar strategies in the process of embracing minorities.

Both expect government interventions in the process of reducing discrimination and increasing intercultural awareness. Finally, both approaches take into consideration the existing cultural differences when developing public policies and programs.

However, they posit that there lays a fundamental distinction between multiculturalism and interculturalism:

In multiculturalism, the pursuit of integration and diversity management capitalizes on the promotion and valorization of cultural diversity as a political end in itself. By contrast, interculturalism regards the integration of new citizens as part of a dynamic, open-ended process of transforming a common societal culture through dialogue, mutual understanding, and intercultural contact (p. 432).

We see that the two approaches have different nuances in them. Multiculturalism also tries to embrace the new-comers by offering them equal rights and protection, but it does not change the existing social order. The established society is static as always. By contrast, interculturalism appears to be ready to change the existing society itself if necessary. It invites the immigrants to the table of discussion and re-creates a “common societal culture” all together. It is not the mainstream versus minority but the equal participants of “co-construction” of a new social order.

Portera (2008) explains in detail the transformation from multiculturalism to interculturalism in Europe in his work, “Intercultural Education in Europe: Epistemological and Semantic Aspects”. According to his findings, during the 1950s in Europe, where many countries were experiencing high immigration flows, numerous “multicultural” projects were created. The

main objective of these projects was to gain knowledge about the commonalities and differences of religion, culture, and language of foreigners. However, over time, this became criticized more and more as it seemed to objectify rather than unify the foreign people and their culture. In the 1980s, the conceptual and practical considerations of intercultural pedagogy emerged.

Portera finds the term “intercultural education” a more appropriate response, compared to “multicultural education”, to the new era of globalization and the increasing convergence of diverse groups. He even mentions that the change in the paradigm can be regarded as “revolutionary” in that it finally ceased to see migration and growing up in a multicultural society as risk factors:

For the first time, within the member states of the European Union, the education of children of foreign origin could be undertaken with some consideration of the ‘dynamic’ character of individual cultures and their respective identities. For the first time in the history of pedagogy, children of immigrants were no longer regarded as a ‘problem’ or ‘risk’, but as ‘resources’ (p. 484).

Two essential attributes of interculturalism can be found in this short quote: a) the dynamic nature of culture and identity, and b) the positive view of differences. First, it is essential to note the notion of dynamic culture and identity. Portera sees culture and identity under interculturalism as more dynamic and flexible than those under the existing multiculturalism. In multiculturalism, “ethno-cultural-religious minorities are, or are thought of, as rather distinct communities” (Emerson, 2011, p. 2), and thus the culture and cultural/ethnic identities are seen as static objects. However, culture and identity are no longer static and rigid in

interculturalist approach. They are subject to change depending on different social contexts and situational influences. Sometimes a new form of culture and identity can be created based on what kind of characters and values the members of a given society bring in. This view parallels with the Maxwell et al.'s perspective since they both believe that common societal culture could change depending on who becomes the participants of the construction of culture.

When culture and identity are seen as static and rigid, there is a greater danger of stratification as it is possible to grade and line up different cultural groups. A similar understanding of culture and identity underpins the thesis of Malik (2010) and Sze and Powell (2004). Interestingly, an Indian-born English writer Kenan Malik (2010) believes that multiculturalism undermines diversity. He writes in his *guardian* column that:

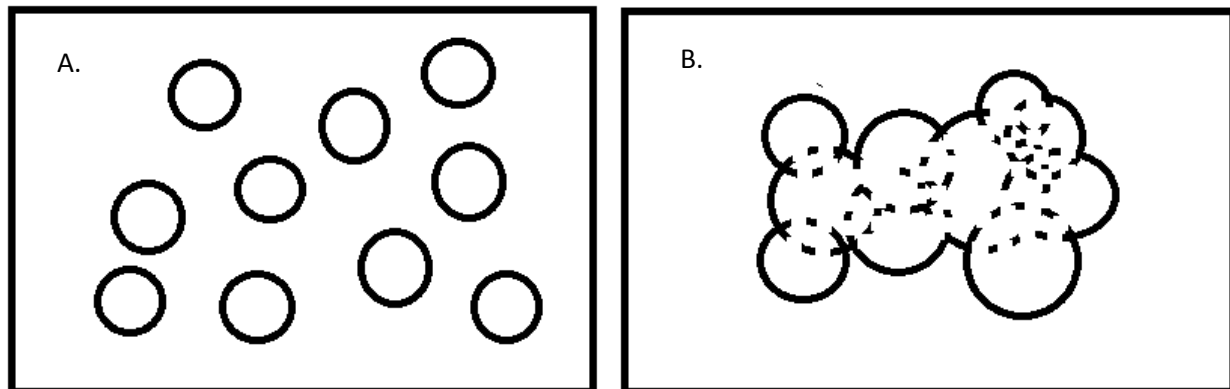
When we talk about diversity, what we mean is that the world is a messy place, full of clashes and conflicts. That's all for the good, for such clashes and conflicts are the stuff of political and cultural engagement. But the very thing that's valuable about diversity—the clashes and conflicts that it brings about—is the very thing that worries many multiculturalists. They seek to minimize such conflicts by parceling people up into neat ethnic boxes, and policing the boundaries of those boxes in the name of tolerance and respect. Far from minimizing conflict what this does is generate a new set of more destructive, less resolvable conflicts.

The notion of “ethnic boxes” effectively captures the rigid distinctiveness that exists between different cultures under the multicultural paradigm. We can see that multiculturalism

tends to maintain the rigid world view where static group identity and cultural heritage are presumed.

In a similar vein, Sze and Powell (2004) write that "multiculturalism tends to preserve a cultural heritage, while interculturalism acknowledges and enables cultures to have currency, to be exchanged, to circulate, to be modified and evolve" (p. 1). We can sense that, in contrast to the notion of rigid identity in multiculturalism, the changeable identity and culture constitute the central argument in intercultural discourse. The different understanding of culture and identity given by multiculturalism and interculturalism is visualized in the figure 1.

Figure 1. Different Understanding of Culture and Identity in Multiculturalism and Interculturalism



Source: Author

The Box A represents the conceptualization of culture and identity in multiculturalism and the Box B illustrates those in interculturalism. While culture and identity are distinctly separated and are confined in clear boundaries in the Box A: multiculturalism model; different groups are interconnected and the boundaries are less distinct in the Box B: interculturalism model.

By understanding culture and identity as fundamentally changeable features, cultural hierarchy between different groups of people no longer makes sense. As there is going to be less hierarchy between different cultural/ethnic groups, more humble reflection of one's own cultural background and worldview becomes possible. This also allows the establishment of a new cognitive/behavioral standard that takes into account diverse groups' cognitive framework. This can eventually help to form the unity of a nation as a whole.

The second essential attribute that could be found in Portera's quote is to view different people and cultures positively. Another advocate of interculturalism, Gavan Titley, proposes a similar argument to Portera. Titley, in his article "After 'Failed Experiment': intercultural Learning in a multicultural Crisis" (2012), views interculturalism as an upgraded version of multiculturalism. He writes that "[interculturalism] transcends a passive emphasis on tolerance of difference [at which multiculturalism stops] with an active commitment to valuing difference as a societal resource" (p. 164). According to him, interculturalism promotes interaction and collaboration, in addition to equal rights of diverse groups of people. Remembering the fact that the notion of multiculturalism mentioned in the previous section focuses primarily on coexistence itself, but relatively less on the further effort to more actively integrate and intermingle with other cultural groups, this seems to make sense. Titley also explains that interculturalism more actively recognizes differences as something fundamentally positive, rather than something that people need to worry about. This positive recognition of differences can serve as an asset for a more dynamic interaction amongst different groups existing together in a society.

Similarly, Portera meaningfully contrasts the final purposes of multiculturalism and interculturalism. While multiculturalism mainly focuses on peacefully "living together," he

explains that interculturalism goes a step further. The mere acknowledgement of equal dignity of diverse people and respect for those differences is not enough from the interculturalists' view. Instead of being satisfied with staying at the level of "peaceful coexistence," it wants people actually to intermingle and construct a social order together. Portera's argument that interactions contribute to the development of co-operation and solidarity is directly opposed to conflict and exclusion.

There is another scholar who deserves to be highlighted in discussing interculturalism: Charles Taylor. Well-known for his essay "The politics of recognition" (1992), which is considered to be a founding statement in the field of multiculturalism, he had been recognized as a leading scholar of multiculturalism. However, it seems unreasonable to call him multiculturalists now.

Taylor published a report *Building the Future: A Time for Reconciliation* with Gerard Bouchard (Bouchard and Taylor, 2008). This report, which is oftentimes called "Bouchard and Taylor report," explains why multiculturalism does not suit Quebec and how interculturalism can play a better role in Quebec instead of multiculturalism. Apparently, Taylor admits the legitimacy of interculturalism. Additionally, in his recently published article, "Interculturalism or Multiculturalism?" (2012), he again acknowledges the possibility and necessity of interculturalism. This should be a very encouraging move of him for the advocates of interculturalism, and as mentioned earlier, this is why I include his work as one of the two most important works defining interculturalism.

While arguing that the differences between the two concepts concern "the story that we tell about where we are coming from and where we are going" (p. 413) more than concrete policies, Taylor (2012) suggests that interculturalism could be more fitting than multiculturalism

for some European countries. Here, the “story” means a context that provides the rationale or rhetoric of policies. He sees the difference between multiculturalism and interculturalism as, fundamentally, a matter of emphasis. From his viewpoint, whether to stress the recognition of differences, which he emphasized in his work “The politics of recognition” (1992), or to emphasize social integration is the central issue. Of course multiculturalism corresponds with the former case and interculturalism corresponds with the latter. So far it is not that different from Portera and other interculturalists. However, he additionally argues that in order to understand and apply this difference correctly, the difference needs to be interpreted in a specific societal context. He explains:

If multiculturalism in the generic sense includes policies which aim both at recognition of difference and integration, one might argue that the prefix ‘multi’ gives greater weight to the first goal—acknowledging diversity—while ‘inter’ invokes more the facet of integration. But why this difference is important will only emerge when we look at the two stories (p. 416).

To support this claim, Taylor uses an example of Canadian multiculturalism and Quebec interculturalism. In Quebec, where the population composition is largely different from the rest of Canada due to a unique francophone ancestry, a different strategy had to be and should be used. He suggests that interculturalism is better suited in Quebec than multiculturalism since it pays more attention to integration which is a central issue in this region.

Another important point that he makes about the difference between multiculturalism and interculturalism is how each concept views identity. As far as traditional identity is

concerned, multiculturalism attempts to decenter it and make all different identities equal. This sounds legitimate and desirable. However, Taylor finds an assumption hidden behind this logic: it supposes the unchanging, discrete ethnic/cultural identity. What matters more to multiculturalists is how to make different identity groups be treated more fairly, rather than questioning the strict line between groups. By contrast, interculturalism sees identity more as a transformable object. He says:

So the contrast is clear: the ‘multi’ story decenters the traditional ethno- historical identity and refuses to put any other in its place. All such identities coexist in the society, but none is officialized. The ‘inter’ story starts from the reigning historical identity but sees it evolving in a process in which all citizens, of whatever identity, have a voice, and no-one’s input has a privileged status (p. 418).

Again, this looks similar to Portera and other interculturalists’ explanations. But Taylor does not forget to specifically point out the fact that this can be “the Achilles heel” of interculturalism. Given that identity is susceptible to change, people might fear, thinking “they may change us.” This means a new group who enters the existing society could change the core value of “us” who have been living in the space for a longer period of time. When this fear is not resolved wisely, hostility between the natives and the immigrants could form and the “multicultural” aims—coexistence with actual segregation—may take place instead of integration and unity.

Taylor’s analysis on the different use of multiculturalism and interculturalism is very insightful in that he brings into a view the importance of different social context. This is what I

agree the most with in his argument. As I mentioned in the introduction, my main argument in this thesis is that some societies are better suited with the multicultural approach while other societies will function better with an intercultural approach. In that sense, Taylor and I have a similar view when it comes to weighing between the two contrasting concepts.

Let me now turn to the adaptation and the promotion of interculturalism in practical agencies. International agencies such as Council of Europe and UNESCO have joined the trend of interculturalism (Kymlicka, 2012). The “White paper on intercultural dialogue” issued by the Council of Europe in 2008 illuminates both the limitation of existing multiculturalism and the potential of interculturalism. It says:

While acknowledging the importance of pluralism, tolerance and broadmindedness, council of Europe say: pluralism, tolerance and broadmindedness [which are the mottos of multiculturalism] may not be sufficient: a pro-active, a structured and widely shared effort in managing cultural diversity is needed. Intercultural dialogue is a major tool to achieve this aim, without which it will be difficult to safeguard the freedom and well-being of everyone living on our continent (p. 13).

The “White paper on intercultural dialogue” apparently contrasts multiculturalism and interculturalism, and, unsurprisingly, is in favor of interculturalism. It sees interculturalism contributing more to the building of common ground for all in a civic society than multiculturalism. The establishment of the common grounds can be accomplished through intercultural dialogue and reciprocal recognition. Additionally, overlapping identities are no longer a problem or contradiction, but a source of strength and new possibilities. Therefore,

interculturalism transcends a segregated society, which is "marked at best by the coexistence of majorities and minorities with differentiated rights and responsibilities, loosely bound together by mutual ignorance and stereotypes" (p. 4). Consequently, an intercultural society is where all members of the given society can fully represent themselves and openly participate in the societal decision making process.

The *UNESCO World Report: Investing in Cultural Diversity and Intercultural Dialogue* (2009) also conveys the message that there is a need for a post-multiculturalist alternative (Kymlicka, 2012). Chapter 2.3 titled "The challenges of dialogue in a multicultural world" is particularly focused on this issue. Like other interculturalist perspectives, it argues that the exclusive and fixed identities must be abandoned. Acknowledgement of differences itself is not sufficient. Consequently, it places much emphasis on the changing nature of identity and cognition in general. When we accept this "cognitive flexibility," anxiety over losing one's traditional identity—which Taylor (2012) regarded as the Achilles heel of interculturalism—could be reduced. After all, we can say that the way to reduce the anxiety of confronting fundamental changes in one's identity was already hidden in the interculturalism discourse itself. A quote that the *UNESCO world report* (2009) borrowed from Eberhard (2008) should help in picturing the nature of interculturalism:

Interculturalism . . . is to experience another culture, to accept the truth of the other culture. It is therefore allowing the other culture and its truth to affect me directly, to penetrate me, to change me, to transform me, not only in my answers to a question, but in my very questions, my presuppositions, my myths The place of that meeting is the heart (not the head) of a person, within a personal synthesis which can be

intellectually more or less perfect. There is no co-existence possible without a co-insistence, i.e. without their penetrating into each other's heart (p. 45).³

Given that both Council of Europe and UNESCO have been regarded as "standard-bearers for multiculturalism" (Kymlicka, 2012), the fact that these two influential institutions declared the necessity of shifting from multiculturalism towards interculturalism is very suggestive. But strictly speaking, it should be safe enough to say that both agencies' approaches to interculturalism are closer to that of Portera than Taylor in that they promote interculturalism in a broader sense. They believe that Interculturalism should replace multiculturalism in general. The consideration of context is hard to find in the given two statements.

It is clear that some people strongly believe that interculturalism is a better alternative to multiculturalism. In summary, interculturalism comes from a perspective that sees the celebration of differences and peaceful coexistence as unsatisfactory. In addition, interculturalism places more importance on the reciprocal interaction and process of integration based on dynamic interactions of people and changeable identities and cultures. This active interaction and effort to find common ground for all enables fuller participation of every citizen in a truly democratic society. Characteristics of multiculturalism and interculturalism from interculturalists' viewpoint could be categorized as in the table on the next page.

3 Although *UNESCO World Report* only cited Eberhard, Eberhard, he did not write these sentences but borrowed these from Vachon Robert. (1998). IIM and its Journal: An intercultural Alternative and an Alternative interculturalism. *Interculture*, 135.

Table 1. Summary of Multiculturalism and Interculturalism from Interculturalists' Perspective

	Multiculturalism	Interculturalism
Identity	Strict, Unchangeable	Flexible, Changeable
Cultural Heritage	Preserve	Flows
Emphasis	Recognition of Difference	Interactions, Integration
Foreign Factors	Negative, Risks	Positive, Resources
Weaknesses	Lack of Integration, Unity	Anxiety of Losing Traditions
Ultimate Goal	Peaceful Coexistence	Integration, Unity

Source: Author

3.3. Critiques on Interculturalism

Although interculturalism is seen by many scholars as a remedy for imperfect multiculturalism, there has been a considerable amount of disagreements on this favorable view of interculturalism. Here, I summarize three major views that treat interculturalism with skepticism: (1) Indistinguishability between interculturalism with multiculturalism, (2) interculturalism as a convenient shelter for the “failure of multiculturalism,” and (3) potential misuse of the concept by anti-multiculturalist groups. Opinions of avid multicultural theorists—Meer and Modood, Wieviorka, Kymlicka, Levey—who believe there is no need to shift to interculturalism are addressed in the following.

The most pressing critique proposed is that interculturalism does not really differ from multiculturalism. This is the strongest critique, since it negates the unique territory of interculturalism as opposed to multiculturalism. Meer and Modood (2012) argue that the positive qualities emphasized by advocates of political interculturalism—such as active interaction, dynamic identities, and promotion of unity—constitute an integral part of multiculturalism as

well. They categorize the four distinct features of interculturalism that have been provided by intercultural theorists—more active dialogue and communication, less groupist and more synthesis, stronger social cohesion, censoring capability of violation of basic human rights—and critique why each one of these is flawed. Among those four categories, the critiques of the first two categories fit this first critique about the indistinguishability of interculturalism from the existing multiculturalism. The critiques of two categories are elaborated below while the two other critiques will be covered subsequently in this section.

The first category that is defended by interculturalists but critiqued by Meer and Modood is that while interculturalism further fosters dialogue and communication, the end of multiculturalism lays in mere coexistence of different people. Meer and Modood insist that interaction and dialogue are also the foundational assumption of multiculturalism. To evidence this, Meer and Modood refer to Charles Taylor's (1997) explanation on the formation of a sense of self. Their argument is that, as Taylor highlights the role of relation to others and others' recognition in forming the sense of self, there already exists a notion of interaction in multiculturalism. However, they do not seem to have paid enough attention to Taylor's later work that is in favor of interculturalism (Bouchard and Taylor, 2008; Taylor, 2012). As noted earlier, Taylor should now be regarded as an interculturalist, at least partly, given his favorable view to interculturalism that he recently showed.

Meer and Modood also reveal skeptical opinion with respect to the second category of interculturalists' argument—less groupist and more synthesis and integration. Interculturalists posit that interculturalism facilitates more interactive and dynamic exchange than multiculturalism does. But Meer and Modood simply refute this by claiming that these features look more like just a different style of practice, than a genuine critique and alternative to the

existing concept. Modood, in his earlier publication, “Multiculturalism and Integration: Struggling with Confusions” (2011), claims that “‘multiculturalism’ is too often defined by its critiques, whose sole purpose is to create a straw man to knock down. But it also because both its critics and some of its defenders falsely oppose multiculturalism with integration” (p. 1). We can again see that Modood believes that achieving integration that is to be said as a strong point of interculturalism is also a major goal in multiculturalism, and thus could be reached through multicultural approach as well.

On a similar note, Wieviorka (2012) believes that the interactive attribute is not only present in interculturalism, but also deeply embedded in multiculturalism. He suggests that the static image of “differences” is inaccurate, and thus we need to redefine the differences as a more dynamic term in multiculturalism. He states that the differences existing in multiculturalism are not as static as interculturalists think. Differences move and are newly produced over time, especially when affected by interactions with other cultures. By putting the difference itself in a dynamic position, Wieviorka opposes the assumption that the dynamics and new changes are exclusive attributes of interculturalism.

There is a view where interculturalism even shares similar shortcomings with multiculturalism. For example, how to define culture is a challenging question to both interculturalism and multiculturalism (Wieviorka, 2012). Geoffrey Levey, in his article “Interculturalism vs. Multiculturalism: A Distinction without a Difference?” (2012), also agrees that interculturalism’s distinctiveness and superiority over multiculturalism is unconvincing. He writes that “the two terms are so discursively fluid and the respective self-identifying camps seem so multifarious as to frustrate any clear or stable demarcation between the two” (p. 217).

The second critique is concerned with the dubious origin and convenient use of interculturalism. Will Kymlicka (2012) sharply points out the reason why interculturalism had to emerge. He believes that multiculturalism has been “offered up as a sacrificial lamb, a handy scapegoat for popular discontent” (p. 214) towards the “failure of multiculturalism.” According to Kymlicka, to fill the gap where multiculturalism cannot function as well as desired, interculturalism was brought into existence in the hope that the new narrative will reduce xenophobic and anti-immigration sentiment. Also, Kymlicka believes that there is no serious conceptual/empirical consideration behind this new concept. Therefore, he believes that interculturalism is just a new narrative or “a new myth” (p. 213) which is not intended to offer any scientific account. The good interculturalism versus bad multiculturalism composition is essentially “rhetorical rather than analytical” (p. 211), he suggests. Direct mentions about the product based on interculturalism such as the Bouchard-Taylor report and UNESCO report are followed in his work. Kymlicka writes that these works may be nothing more than an “effective piece of political drama to defend diversity within Quebec” (p. 216). Accordingly, the new concept lacks concrete social science evident to support it.

Levey (2012) also makes a similar argument. He conceives that interculturalism is simply a “different label that can appeal and be publicly sold” (p. 223) in the crisis of multiculturalism. In other words, the notion of multiculturalism had to be replaced for it was so “mired” over time. So what is really important is not whether interculturalism is substantially different from multiculturalism, but rather what sort of practical function it has. At this point, he seems to admit the practical value of interculturalism. However, he reduces the emergence of interculturalism to a mere political drive in the need for post-multicultural discourse, rather than

acknowledging it as a distinctive philosophical/practical concept that can substitute existing multiculturalism.

Wieviorka (2012) agrees on the view that interculturalism is not supported by a sufficient amount of conceptual consideration. In his work “Multiculturalism: A Concept to be redefined and Certainly Not Replaced by the Extremely Vague Term of interculturalism,” he writes that the new concept is much less sophisticated compared to multiculturalism. An interesting point is that, as opposed to Levey, Wieviorka thinks that interculturalism is politically less useful given the unrefined features of the concept. According to Wieviorka, the biggest limit of interculturalism is based on the fact that it focuses on connecting different cultures, while multiculturalism, more practically, strives to set up a legal and institutional frameworks.

The last limitation noted by some scholars is the danger of potential misuse of the concept. Meer and Modood (2012) warn interculturalist advocates that their two core values which are believed to be superior to that of multiculturalism can be used for a wrong purpose. They first explain the interculturalists’ belief that interculturalism is committed to “a stronger sense of whole; national identity and social cohesion” (p. 187). Apparently, this interculturalists’ view accuses multiculturalism that it oftentimes fail to unify diverse groups. Meer and Modood directly critique this interculturalists’ view. They suggest that there is a hidden pitfall that is the “majoritarian bias that places the burden of adaptation upon the minority” (p. 188). They additionally write that this “majoritarian bias” itself contradicts the core value of interculturalism which is mutual integration.

The last interculturalists’ argument that Meer and Modood critique about is that while multiculturalism lends itself to moral relativism, interculturalism is capable of censoring undesirable culture in the process of intercultural dialogue, thus better serving human rights.

Meer and Modood find an inherent risk in this capability. They suggest that there are empirical problems in screening for tolerable practices. For Meer and Modood, the concept can be misused to condemn a particular religion or culture in the name of individual rights.

Kymlicka (2012) suggests another problem that interculturalism might provoke. He worries about the possibility that interculturalist rhetoric is used by those who reject the value of diversity and multiculturalism—or even interculturalism. Although interculturalists may have the good intention to pursue integration and still defend diversity, their “crude anti-multiculturalist rhetoric may simply play into the hands of xenophobes” (p. 214). According to Kymlicka, multiculturalism, which encompasses diverse groups and does not privilege any one kind, is more favorable than interculturalism, which may validate a single culture and practically exclude all the other minority groups. This certainly becomes a valid concern when people think of interculturalism simply as a response to the “failure” or “disappointment” over multiculturalism, not as alternative paradigm that could complement the existing multicultural paradigm.

3.4. A Need for a Non-European Consideration in the Debate

We have examined the definitions of multiculturalism and interculturalism. As interculturalism started from the point where people were dissatisfied with multiculturalism, the new concept, interculturalism, inevitably critiques many parts of the old concept, multiculturalism, claiming that it can function better than the old and mired one. In return, multiculturalists criticize harshly both the theoretical and political value of interculturalism. Naturally, a debate over the two concepts is being formed. But there is one thing that keeps me uncomfortable: a Eurocentric discussion of the concepts.

Seemingly almost all discussions revolve around either Europe or North America. As to this interesting debate, I was not able to find a single article that draws attention to Asia, Africa, or South America. Even Charles Taylor, who makes a point that whether or not interculturalism work better depends on different social contexts, so naturally ignores non-European countries. He says that interculturalism suits Quebec and, it should also suit better “the situation of many European countries” (Taylor, 2012, p. 420). He does not give any explanations about why he has omitted other parts of the globe, in discussing the suitability of the important concepts—multiculturalism and interculturalism. Many countries in other parts of the world—including countries in Asia such as South Korea, Taiwan, and Japan—are also struggling with immigration issues. These nations also meet the criteria that Taylor suggests are needed to be more compatible with interculturalism—long-standing historic identity, a unique language, and fear for loss of their culture. Thus, Taylor should not have omitted other parts of the world without any excuse.

In order to conduct a comprehensive and genuinely objective analysis in comparing multiculturalism and interculturalism, it is necessary to take into consideration non-European standpoints as well (Harding, 1993).⁴ Without inviting non-European viewpoints in this debate, the discussion cannot avoid a biased interpretation. Arguing over and determining the relative utility of the two concepts without considering other parts of the world can neither be generalized nor be justified. This is the reason why I am analyzing the relative usefulness of multiculturalism and interculturalism in the South Korean context, which has been underrepresented in the given discussion.

4 Sandra Harding talks about “strong objectivity” in both natural and social sciences. She critiques the existing mainstream science that reflects only a European male perspective. According to Harding, only when we substitute partial science with “standpoint methodology” that begins with the underrepresented groups, can we then produce fresh and critical questions and answers to the question that how society actually works.

4. Multiculturalism in South Korea

In this section, I address the current situation of South Korea as it faces the prospect of a multiethnic society. I show how demographic transformation has started and what implications this change contains. Then I proceed to examine various efforts made by different sectors in South Korean society, with special interest given to government, academia, civil society, and the media. Finally, I highlight the contradictions inherent within these efforts despite the good intentions of each actor involved in the process.

4.1. Emergence of Multicultural South Korea and Its Implications

South Korea, which has been considered to be one of the most homogeneous countries in the world, is now facing a new era of demographic shift. The ethnic composition of the population is changing rapidly, and this is a huge issue in South Korea as it threatens the common belief that Koreans are of a homogeneous ethnicity and culture. As a result of globalization and the nation's economic growth, an increasing number of foreigners are entering and staying in South Korea for a long period of time. There are approximately 1.4 million of foreigners in South Korea today, constituting 2.8 percent of the total population (Statistics Korea, 2012). But of course, not all foreigners who stay in South Korea are attributed to multiculturalization of present-day South Korea. According to Hyuk Suh (2007), multicultural family and children in South Korea can be broken down into three categories: internationally married couples and their children, foreign workers' families and their children who settled in South Korea, and the North Korean refugees' families and their children.

There are somewhat different—but still related—views on what initiated the active multicultural discourse within South Korea. The first view is that the multicultural discourse

became salient in South Korean society as the number of foreigners staying in South Korea exceeded one million as of 2007 (Y. Yang, 2008; Jeong, 2008; S.M. Kim, 2011; Mo and Im, 2011). This view largely relies on globalization, which allows active exchange of labor force and interethnic marriages. The second understanding is that multicultural discussion was ignited since the visit of the famous American football player Hines Ward to South Korea in 2006 (H.M. Kim, 2007; Y.S. Kim, 2009; Hur, Chang, and Park, 2010). The 2006 Super Bowl MVP Hines Ward was born into a “multicultural family” where his mother is South Korean and his father is African-American. His visit to South Korea attracted people’s attention to multicultural families, and in 2006, the “Korean government suddenly announced ‘a change into a multicultural, multiethnic society’, hence introducing a multicultural discourse” (H.M. Kim, 2007). The third, and probably the most persuasive perspective is that the inception of the multicultural discourse is closely related to the marriage-based migrants—many of them from South and Southeast Asia—and their children (H.M. Kim, 2006, H.S. Kim, 2008; Oh and Lee, 2011; Kim, Heo and Hwang, 2011). The scholars who support this perspective believe that what actually enabled the popularization of the multicultural discourse was the increasing number of foreign brides and their children. Putting all accounts together, we can assume that while the increasing rate of international marriage and foreign labor force were largely but slowly contributing to the demographic transformation and people’s recognition of the change, the half-Korean football player Hines Ward’s visit and the subsequent reaction of the South Korean government activated the multicultural discourse further.

The group that is receiving the most attention nowadays is the internationally married couples and their children. And amongst international couples and their mixed-blood children, female marriage immigrants from South/South East Asia and their children have especially been

paid a lot of attention not only by the South Korean government but also by many average South Koreans. There are two main reasons for this special attention paid to South/South East Asian marriage immigrants and their children. First, the sheer number of these women and children increased largely and abruptly since 1990s in South Korea. Before that time, most South Koreans took it for granted that they marry another South Korean who shares the “Korean heritage” and a set of Korean culture and customs. However, as South Korean economy has qualitatively changed from agricultural industry to heavy industry and IT industry, things has changed. Many South Korean men living in rural areas faced the difficulty in attracting South Korean women willing to marry them and embrace country life. Worried about already continuously declining birth rate, South Korean government began to foster international marriages in collaboration with newly emerged international marriage brokers (H.M. Kim, 2007). As a result, a large number of foreign women—especially those who lived in economically less developed South East Asian countries such as Vietnam and Philippines—were encouraged to marry South Korean men. Sometimes a considerable amount of money was paid to the wife’s family in her country, and a beautiful new life in a more affluent nation was promised to these young foreign brides. Out of South Korea’s strategy to remedy the imbalances that existed within the South Korean marriage market and the low birth rate problem, marriage migration from South/South East Asia continued, resulting in considerable changes in South Korean demographic composition.

Second, these marriage-migrants and their children are paid more attention because they are socioeconomically more marginalized and are exposed to more danger of discrimination in South Korean society, even compared to other types of multicultural families. It is not uncommon that these marriage-migrants and their families are economically marginalized because, in many cases, they start from the more marginalized positions: socioeconomically

marginalized South Korean men marry South East Asian Women who would be willing to move to a wealthier country, contributing her own family's economy. In fact, according to the Ministry of Gender Equality press release (2013), poverty rate of multicultural household (41.9%) is much higher than the poverty rate of all household (17.7%) including multicultural households. Migrants from South East Asia and their children are more exposed to discrimination as well. The same document issued by Ministry of Gender Equality also reports that more immigrants who are from South Asia (55.1 %), South East Asia (55.0%), and Pakistan (53.2%) experienced discrimination compared to those who are migrated from the United States (28.5%) or Japan (29.8%).

Two reasons can be assumed out of this result. First, the different physical appearances of South/ South East Asians—darker skin, bigger eyes with thicker double eye-lids—are looked down upon, given that Japanese who are almost undistinguishable from South Koreans are not as much discriminated. Second, economic affluence may be another reason. As Kyung-Koo Han (2007) noted, a sense of cultural superiority over economically less developed countries may be linked to the higher percentage of discrimination experience of South/South East Asian migrants. We can see this by the fact that Americans are not as much discriminated as South/South East Asians despite their supposedly different look (if they are not Asian Americans).

Let me now turn back to more general description of demographic shift. As mentioned earlier, international marriage is a leading force of transformation of population composition. According to Statistics Korea (2012), international marriage composed 9.3 percent of all marriages happened in South Korea in 2011. The number of marriage-migrants in South Korea also grew to 211,000 in 2011 from 127,000 in 2007. The number of children who are born to these international couples constitutes 4.7 percent of all new-born babies in 2011, and more

importantly, the number of these children born to international couples compared to the year prior is increasing at the rate of 8.4 percent, which is much greater than the increase rate of the number of children born to Korean-Korean couples (0.1%). As UN “State of the Future” anticipated that 21.3 percent of South Korean citizen will be “mixed blood” in 2050, further demographic changes and following social changes are unavoidable (Glenn, Gordon, and Florescu, 2012).

Table 2. The Present Condition of Multicultural Demographics

(Unit: persons, %)

	Total			Multicultural			Multicultural ratio		
	2009	2010	2011	2009	2010	2011	2009	2010	2011
Marriage	309,759	326,104	329,087	33,862	35,098	30,695	10.9	10.8	9.3
Birth	444,849	470,171	471,265	19,024	20,312	22,014	4.3	4.3	4.7

Source: Statistics Korea (2012)

A series of this demographic shift give various implications or new problems to deal with. I categorize the three most pressing implications this demographic transformation conveys: the need to redefine what it means to be “Korean,” a challenge of maintaining social integration, the need of educational reform.

To start with, the demographic transformation calls for a redefinition of “Korean.” Unlike countries with a tradition of immigration such as the United States where “being an American” is not necessarily restricted to one ethnicity or cultural background, Korean definition of “being a Korean” has been very restrictive. As noted in the New York Times article on November 29, 2012 (Choe, 2012), traditionally, a Korean meant somebody who is born to two Korean parents in Korea, with typical Korean look and Korean cultural background, including speaking Korean

language, eating Korean food, and conforming to Korean custom. Only a decade ago, school textbooks urged Koreans to be proud of being of “one blood” that trace back to Dan-gun, who is believed to be the common ancestor of every Korean.⁵ Therefore, it is psychologically much more challenging for South Koreans to accept the fact that someone who is not originally from Korea or does not look Korean can also be a South Korean like themselves. But now, in the prospect of becoming a multiethnic society, South Koreans do not have other options but must redefine the meaning of “Korean.”

In a similar vein, the problem of preserving social integration arises. There is an argument that traditional Korea that existed before the advent of mono-ethnic Korean nationalism, unlike present-day South Korea, had had many naturalization policies and practices to deal with immigrants from neighbor countries (K. Han, 2007).⁶ However, contemporary South Korean people have relatively very little experience regarding immigration and its impacts. Unsurprisingly, a large influx of immigrants is still a strange phenomenon to most South Koreans and many people do not like the South Korean government’s support policies for newcomers. In fact, according to a survey (total N=2500) reported by the South Korean ministry of Gender Equality (Ahn, et al., 2012), only 36 percent of the respondents positively reacted to the coexistence of different religions, ethnicity, and culture within a society. Also, 86.5 percent of the respondents answered that “having a Korean ancestor is important,” thus proving continuous tenacity for the “pure blood” construct. We can see that many South Korean people are still not

⁵ Dan-Gun is the legendary founder of the first Korean kingdom that is thought to be built in 2333 BC. He is said to be a grandson of heaven and is considered to be the mythological progenitor of all Korean people.

⁶ Han Kyung-Koo argues, in his article “The archaeology of the ethnically homogeneous nation-state and multiculturalism in Korea” (2007) that both Goryeo and Joseon maintained a policy of welcoming and treating well foreigners who voluntarily crossed the border and became Korean. As a matter of fact, many Japanese and Jurchen (Yeojin) became Korean discarding his/her old ways of living. Joseon, in specific, exempted these naturalized immigrants from tax and also allowed them to take state examinations for public affair. In addition, the “rule of leniency” was applied so that immigrants who committed crime punished less severely than native Koreans.

prepared enough to enter a multicultural society where they will be living in, if not already. Given this, there is a pressing danger of social separation based on the hatred and discrimination against immigrants. Needless to say, social integration is endangered. When people become exclusive and hateful to each other, there is no room for them to open-mindedly dialogue with one another with mutual respect. In this kind of situation where social integration is missing, mature democracy can no longer exist.

Finally, a major reform of educational contents and practice is inevitable. This becomes obvious when we examine the changing demographics of schools in South Korea. Although the total number of schoolchildren is declining—6.7 million in 2012 from 7.7 million in 2007—due to one of the world’s lowest birth rates, the number of students who are from internationally married couples is increasing by 6,000 a year (Choe, 2012). As a result, the number of these multiethnic schoolchildren reached 46,964 in 2012, constituting 0.7 percent of all South Korean school children (J.H. Lee, 2012). This is not a significantly large number yet. But given the annually increasing rate of these children, it is predictable that the students’ demographics will change largely in the future. Given this expected changes, it does not make sense to teach a set image of a homogenous Korean even implicitly. What is required is to educate young children to celebrate diversity and intermingle with reciprocal respect to different cultures. But this is not and should not be the end. Education cannot only mean school service for young children. It certainly has a broader meaning that is engaged with the general public and democratic citizen. South Korean citizens who are older than the traditional schooling age also need to be educated in various ways so that they can come to understand a more fluid definition of “Korean” and recognize the new value and resources a forthcoming multiethnic and multicultural society could offer.

4.2. Efforts to Build a Multicultural Social Atmosphere

Some people think that it is too early or premature to call South Korea a multicultural society presently. Although it is true that the number of foreign residents is skyrocketing nowadays, compared to the obvious multicultural societies such as the United States and Canada, South Korea remains still quite homogeneous. Therefore, there is a perspective that the multiculturalism in South Korea is exaggerated (Park and Hong, 2012). But it is also true that South Korea needs to make some effort to embrace the transition towards multiethnic society. At any rate, there has been a lot of effort to build a multicultural social atmosphere in South Korea.

In the present section, I introduce some efforts made by academia, government, media, and schools. The scholarly realm, which will be covered the first, encompass many diverse topics. While some studies related to policy, education, and media are introduced in scholarly work section briefly, the three topics are further explored afterwards in a fuller scale.

4.2.1. Academic/Scholarly Works

As multicultural discourse emerged full-scale in South Korea in 2006, scholars across many disciplines started paying more attention to the issues regarding immigration, and multicultural policies and education. These disciplines encompass sociology, political science, education studies, social welfare, public policy, anthropology, and so forth. These diverse scholarly works can be classified into six major categories: conceptual/philosophical approaches, policy-related studies, multicultural education initiatives, studies on marriage-migrants, studies on the children from international couples, and the role of media in conveying multicultural ideas. I organize the articles based on their main arguments. Thus, although some articles could belong to more than one category, they are put under only one category that corresponds the main argument the most.

After examining the six categories, I develop a brief discussion that uncovers the hidden problems embedded in the trend of multicultural studies in South Korea.

4.2.1.1. Conceptual/Philosophical Works

There is an expanding body of work concerning the conceptual/philosophical aspects of multiculturalism and multicultural society (H.M. Kim, 2006; 2010; G. Han, 2007, 2012; Hwang et al., 2007; H.S. Kim, 2008, 2010; I. Yoon, 2008; Baik, 2012). These studies illuminate the meaning and the process of multicultural discourses in South Korea from various disciplines across political science, sociology, feminist theory, and so on.

One of the major focuses of this body of studies focus on the different social status of diverse people and their relationships. For example, Hyun Mee Kim (2006) analyzes the dimensions of power relations involved in the process of international marriages between South Korean men and Vietnamese women. Geon-Soo Han (2007) scrutinizes the multiethnic and multicultural shift with respect to class, gender, ethnicity, and so forth. He argues that current multiculturalist discourses in South Korea are closer to empty political rhetoric and slogans rather than a constructive momentum for a genuine social transformation. Han's other work, "Multiculturephobia and the Discourse of Failure of Multiculturalism in Korea: Which Multiculturalism?" (2012) is also noteworthy. In a similar tone to the previous work, he suggests that the multiculturephobia and tiresome reactions in current South Korea are attributable to the indiscrete use of the term "multiculturalism" and the confusing contents of the approaches. However, he does not think it implies the "failure of multiculturalism." Rather, he stresses the importance of the careful reflection of the meaning of "multiculturalism."

There have been some attempts to analyze South Korean multiculturalism with a very South Korea-specific context. The analysis of In-Jin Yoon (2008) is intriguing in this regard. Yoon distinguishes multicultural discourses in South Korean society into two categories. One is “state-led multiculturalism” and the other is “citizen-led multiculturalism.” Then the backgrounds, main contents, and strong and weak points of the two strands of multiculturalism are addressed. The work of Hwang et al. (2007) tells about South Korea’s transformation towards multicultural society and its conceptual background. It covers concepts such as social distance, national identity and multicultural citizenship, and applies those concepts to South Korean multiculturalism. On the other hand, Young Ok Kim (2010) proposes a somewhat ironic argument. He writes that there is a duality in the discourse of multiculturalism as it exists hand in hand with locality. According to him, Korean culture is local culture from its inception, and ironically, South Korea should maintain its monoculturalism based on regional culture in order to connect with the global multiculturalism.

The study done by Hye-Soon Kim (2008) is prominent in that it is started from the author’s own observation on the emergence of multiculturalism in South Korea. She herself has participated in a government project for migrant brides and she learned that multiculturalism in South Korea is a sort of negotiation process that accompanies conflicts of interests. She does not stop at the empirical observation, but further develops her view on the nature of multicultural discourse in South Korea. She takes a position that “making a multicultural Korea” needs to be understood as a “sociological” project rather than a “cultural” process, as the problem of multiculturalism is closer to the citizenship rights issue rather than a simple cultural issue. Despite the different start points, Baik’s examination of the encounter between feminism and multiculturalism (2012) provide a similar conclusion. She contends that feminist issues related to

political and social inequality are not receiving enough attention due to the disproportionately focused attention to the “culture” since the emergence of multicultural discourse in South Korea. In relation to this, she also points out that feminists fail to provide “a reasonable understanding of the reality of women’s oppressions” (p. 160). While Kim H. S. (2008) suggests using a sociological approach rather than a simple cultural approach when examining multiculturalism, Baik (2012) suggests developing a theory and practice that can integrate equality and differences instead of solely focusing on culture.

4.2.1.2. Policy Studies

Another major strand of the research is concerned with multicultural policies and their evaluations (Y. Lee, 2008; Cho and Lee, 2009; K. Hong, 2009; Im 2009; Jung, Choi and Jang, 2009; M.S. Kim, 2009; Pyo, 2009; Yang, Jeong and Jeong, 2010; Lee and Beom, 2010; Cho, 2011; S.M. Kim, 2011). Oftentimes, these studies are financially supported by government ministries and address the legislative or policy-related issues. Most studies are framed in the way that they evaluate the policy first and then provide alternative ways to modify the weak points of established policies.

Many studies focus on macro-level observation of South Korean government’s multicultural policies. Ki-Won Hong (2009) and Myeong Seong Kim (2009) both address the problems of current South Korean multicultural policies and their potential improvements. SeonMee Kim (2011)’s work is distinctive in that she attempts to find the unique aspects of “Korean multicultural policy.” She argues that the South Korean government should not directly import the European multicultural policies since the social contexts are entirely different. Yang,

Cho and Lee (2009) focus on the resource and abilities of adolescents from “multicultural families” and propose policies that could help these adolescents realize their potentials.

There are a group of studies that examine the service aspect of multiculturalism in South Korea as well. Lee and Beom (2010) address the responsiveness of the South Korean government service to multicultural issues with the focus on Chinese foreign brides in South Korea. Jeong and Jeong (2010) analyze the service provided by multicultural family support centers that are the core of South Korean multicultural policy. Jung, Choi, and Jang (2009) compare contracting out and voucher services which are the two popular types of service provided for multicultural families.

Some legislative studies have been done too. Cho (2011) analyzes how national policy for multicultural South Korea has been carried out. He argues that the biggest problem is the overlapping policies that are operated via multiple administrative departments in a competitive manner. Pyo (2009), on the other hand, speculates on the “multicultural family support law.” He proposes a potential solution to the unstable status of marriage-migrants from the perspective of the South Korean constitution.

4.2.1.3. Multicultural Education

Multicultural education in various levels is also a popular theme and examined by many scholars (Choi and Mo, 2007; K. Park, 2009; C. Suh, 2009; Heo, 2010; Cheon, 2011; Chung, 2011; Lee and Yang, 2011; Mo and Lim, 2011; Na, 2011; E. Jeon, 2012; Park and Hong, 2012; Koo, 2012). Scholars interested in multicultural education focus on different themes like textbook/subject matters, modified curriculum, the linkage between multicultural education and democracy, citizen education.

Some scholars examine the multicultural education from a macro-level observation. For instance, Park and Hong (2012) published a grounding work in examining the meaning of “multiculture” in the schooling system. Heo’s work (2010) has a broad scope as well. She speculates on the desirable direction of political education in multicultural society. She suggests cultural democracy, social justice, and procedural democracy as three important directions. Cheon (2007)’s comparative study on South Korean and Japanese multicultural education is noteworthy as well. Cheon shed light on how a neighbor country is dealing with a similar challenge of multicultural education and what South Korea can learn from the comparison. This is important discussion because most educators and education-related policy makers are reminded of Western models of multicultural education, not the East.

Some studies show concerns in South Korean multicultural education. Cheon (2011) explores the risk factors in multicultural education. The absence of control tower and the following confusion in each school are pointed out as major risk factors in his analysis. Chongnam Suh (2009) rings an alarm bell as well. He critiques the current multicultural education in that it normally targets “multicultural students” only, lacking a more comprehensive approach.

Some studies pay attention to the actual education practiced at schools. For example, Lee and Yang (2011) examined the effectiveness of a multicultural program for elementary school students in Seoul by measuring multicultural sensitivity of the children. Similarly, Chung (2011) examines how multicultural citizenship education is operated in middle and high school. One study conducted by Koo (2012) examines the development of a multicultural education program textbook. Examining textbook is always effective and important as it shapes the learner’s consciousness. Mo and Lim (2011), on the other hand, provide quite comprehensive

analysis of current and future multicultural education in South Korea in relation to curriculum, pedagogies, and teacher education programs.

Although most works are inclined towards observations of educational programs and students, some publications focus on teachers. For example, Choi and Mo (2007) write about multicultural efficacy of teachers in Gyeonggi province. Na (2011) examines the teacher education programs. Given that teachers play a crucial role in education, more studies should be done about the expectations, difficulties, efficacy of teacher education and teachers' actual practices in schools in terms of multicultural education.

4.2.1.4. Marriage-Migrants and Their Families

In addition to the three central topics mentioned above, many scholars have also studied marriage-migrants and their children in particular. This is because the marriage-migrants from South/South East Asia and their children who are oftentimes called *Kosian* are at the center of the multicultural discourse in present-day South Korea.⁷ Generally speaking, the increasing number of these groups of people is deemed to have aroused the South Korean people's attention and have brought them into the multicultural discourse. Consequently, many scholars have studied the adaptation process or a satisfaction level of marriage-migrants and their families (Seol et al., 2005; Yang and Kim, 2006; Park, Park and Kim, 2007; H. Choi, 2009; Yang, Choi and Kang, 2009; H.S. Kim, 2010; C.S. Lee, 2010; J. Park, 2010; Yang, 2010; Yoon and Lee, 2010; Park and Yuk, 2012). The topics include the cultural adaptation of the female

⁷ *Kosian* is the word made out of the combination of two words: Korean and Asian. This word is exclusively used to describe the children one of whose parents (normally the mother) is originally from other parts of Asia (usually South/South East Asia). They look different from typical native Korean, thus easily distinguishable by appearance. But the label (*Kosian*) itself is challenged by many scholars as it is deemed to discriminate the children by naming them separately from other Korean or even other mixed-blood children. In fact, the connotation of the word itself is not always positive.

marriage-migrants to a Korean family system, family conflict and satisfaction in multicultural families, the migrant women's relationship with mother-in-law and the local community, and so forth.

The work of Seol et al. (2005) is one of the first vigorous attempts to examine the lives of marriage-migrants. They researched on the internationally married immigrant women's life conditions and government's supporting policy plans. Hye-Soon Kim (2010) also examines marital adjustment of female marriage-migrants. Kim surveyed 172 female marriage-migrants in Busan city and conducted a multiple regression test in order to inspect various factors that affect marital adjustment.

Perhaps the biggest part of the study that is related to marriage-migrants is the satisfaction study. Many scholars have attempted to measure the satisfaction level of the marriage-migrants and their families, and also measure the factors that have impacts on this satisfaction level. For example, Yang and Kim (2006) and Park, Park and Kim (2007) examine what kinds of demo-socio characteristics and marriage factors affect marriage-migrants' marriage satisfaction level. Yang, Choi and Kang (2009) and Yang (2010) address the influence of social participation on the life satisfaction of marriage-migrants. Similarly, Park and Yuk (2012) provide a study on how educational support for marriage-migrants can affect their satisfaction positively.

Some studies pay special attention to relationship aspects. While Ji Young Park (2010) investigates the trends and satisfaction of internationally married couples' relationships, Yoon and Lee (2010) focus on the relationship between mother-in-laws and foreign-daughter-in-laws. Chang Seek Lee (2010) also addresses family relationship within female marriage-migrants' families, in general.

4.2.1.5. Children from Multicultural Families

The next category that is salient in the study of multiculturalism in South Korea is the research on the children from multicultural families (Bae, 2006; J. Kim, 2006; S. Oh, 2006, 2007; Seo and Lee, 2007; Park and Jung, 2008; M. Kwon, 2009; S.H. Park, 2009; Shim, 2009; 2010; Kwon, Lee, and Jeon, 2010; Ryu, 2011; Kim, Lim, and Chung, 2012). These studies highlight the psychological/academic status of the “multicultural children” and their adjustment to the South Korean school system.

Many studies address the challenges these “multicultural children” have to face. For example, Shim (2009) addresses racial identity perception and psychological struggles of the children from “multicultural families.” Seo and Lee (2007) focus on various difficulties the children from international marriage families in agricultural regions, in particular. Knowing there are numerous difficulties these children experience, some scholars specifically look at the adjustment issues. Sun Hee Park (2009) examines the social adjustment process of children from multicultural families as well as their characteristics. Park and Jung (2008) examine how these children adjust to South Korean elementary school system. Ryu (2011) categorizes various adjustment types of children of multicultural families in rural areas.

There are some works which focus on the language issues. Although many children from multicultural families are actually fluent in Korean language, especially if they were born and raised in South Korea, it is true that some of them have less sophisticated Korean language ability, mostly due to their mother’s lack of fluency in Korean. Therefore, Kim, Lim, and Chung (2012) and Kwon, Lee, and Jeon (2010) address the language development and Korean proficiency of the “multicultural children.”

And of course, there are a considerable amount of studies that address the educational issues related to these children in particular. Education was covered previously in this section, but what is different here is that these studies have a specific interest in “multicultural children” rather than the overall direction or evaluation of multicultural education as a whole. Some scholars like Myung-Hee Kwon (2009), Sung Bae Oh (2006, 2007) write about the reality of children born to internationally married couples. Jeong-Won Kim’s work (2006) on the reality of children from Mongolian foreign workers’ family is noteworthy because it focuses on the minority group children who are not born into “female marriage-migrants” who usually receive most attention.

The studies examining the school life of “multicultural children” are also valuable. Bae (2006) covers the conflicts and difficulties that children from migrant workers’ families encounter and look for the ways to resolve these conflicts. Shim (2010), on the other hand, provides an interesting study that examines the elementary school students’ attitudes toward “multicultural children.” This study is of much value because the peer relationship is a crucial factor in determining whether the school life is enjoyable or depressing due to discrimination.

4.2.1.6. Media

The last category that I would like to address before moving to discussion is media. There is no doubt that media has a powerful influence on people’s cognition and perception of the world. Therefore, many scholars have analyzed media to see how multiculturalism or “multicultural population” are represented through various media (G. Han, 2007; Lee and Ahn, 2007; J. Yang, 2007; Kim and Kim, 2008; M.H. Kim, 2008; Kim, Park, and Lee, 2009; Kim, Yoo, and Kim, 2009; J. Hong, 2010; Oh and Lee, 2011; C. Oh, 2012)

While there are studies that cover the relationship between media and multiculturalism in a very broad sense (Lee and Ahn, 2007; Kim, Yoo, and Kim, 2009), many scholars focus on a particular topic such as TV programs or the press. In this regard, most attention is given to the representation of marriage-migrants probably because they are the ones who appear on TV and the press the most. When it comes to TV programs, Oh and Lee (2011) and Geon-Soo Han (2007) try to interpret how the marriage-migrants are represented in various TV programs. Kim, Park and Lee (2009) choose two specific programs they examine: “Chatting with Beauties” and “Love in Asia.” Myung Hye Kim (2008) examines a TV drama “Golden Bride” in specific. (Some of these programs are covered in more detail later.)

Some scholarly publications are concerned with the press. For example, Jung Hye Yang (2007) and Kim and Kim (2008) analyze the news reports on the migrant workers. Ji-A Hong (2010) observes how marriage-migrant women are depicted in South Korean major newspapers and the power relations these specific representations bring and reinforce. In a similar sense, Changwoo Oh (2012) examines newspaper editorials in terms of reality construction in relation to multiculturalism.

4.2.1.7. Discussion

We cannot deny the fact that these scholarly works are enriching the multicultural discourse occurring in South Korea. It may be better to have a lot of discussion than to have too little. However, there are some worrisome elements to this burgeoning passion and attention. By focusing heavily or even disproportionately on the “multicultural people” and the policies and education especially prepared for them, native Koreans might be misled to think that these “multicultural people” are intrinsically different from “normal Koreans.” This may lead average

South Korean citizens to unconsciously objectify “the foreign women and their kids” and make “them” as a mere object of the study. For a truly intermingling and understanding social atmosphere, it is vital for native Koreans to perceive the immigrants as the same human individuals as they are.

On a similar note, it becomes problematic if these studies lead general public to unnecessarily sympathize with or feel threatened by the “multicultural people.” Native Koreans should not see the “multicultural population” as “poor/dangerous people” who always need further help to manage a normal life. But, unfortunately, the image of the immigrants and their children shown in the most academic publications are somewhat negative, whether it is intended or not. Migrant women are oftentimes reported not to be adapting to the new life style so well, and the *Kosian* children are deemed to lack Korean language ability or social ability.

One instance of this negative image of the multicultural population can be found in the article written by Myung-Hee Kwon (2009). In the process of explaining the current situation of South Korea in the face of entering multicultural society, she writes:

It is easy for migrant children . . . to realize the situation where he/she cannot have any kind of hope for the future, and thus quit schools and go for a physical labor or give up their lives. When these . . . kids become all grown-ups and express their anger towards society, South Korea could fall into uncontrollable confusion (p. 2).

She depicts the children from multicultural families as hopeless and potentially threatening. Although she apparently wanted to say that in order to prevent this depressing

situation we need to take an action, her remarks instantly make a negative image attached to people from multicultural backgrounds.

Another example can be found in the work of Chongnam Suh (2009):

Most foreign workers move to South Korea with a considerable amount of debt. Consequently, their lives in South Korea is challenging both in terms of economics and time. It is for sure that they lack the capacity to grow and educate their children (p. 86). . . . Many female marriage-migrants come to South Korea through marriage brokers, and their husbands are supposed to pay a lot of money for the marriage. A majority of women have a “Korean dream” due to the Korean wave.⁸ They agree to get married, expecting the life they have seen in the drama (P. 91).

These words given by Chongnam Suh (2009) fit the negative stereotype that foreign workers are poor and problematic and the marriage-migrants are ignorant and troublesome. Articles addressing migrated workers and marriage immigrants barely highlight the success stories of foreign workers or marriage-migrants who chose to come to South Korea because they really fell in love with a Korean spouse. They are mostly about desperate foreign workers and poor South/ South East Asian women who came for monetary benefits and absurd dream of romantic Korean husband.

Many articles published recently, not only the articles of Myung-Hee Kwon and Chongnam Suh, depict the multicultural population as if they are always struggling, or having

⁸ The Korean wave or “Hallyu” refers to the increase in the popularity of Korean entertainment and culture over the Korean borders. This phenomenon began in the late 1990s in Asia, and more recently, is spreading to the other parts of the world as well. The Korean dramas and Korean pop music are the two leading forces of this phenomenon.

some sorts of trouble in their lives. This may be true, at least to a certain degree, given their oftentimes oppressed socioeconomic status. But it appears that the scholarly articles pay much more attention on the problematic dimensions of these people's lives as it appeals to or stimulates the academic field more effectively. This tendency should be self-censored and refrained for the genuine integration of citizens from diverse backgrounds. Now, let me turn to multicultural policies created and implemented in South Korea.

4.2.2. Policy

Facing an unprecedented phenomenon of domestic multiculturalization, the South Korean government started to create a variety of policies to support “multicultural families.” The start point of all of these policies was the establishment of multicultural family support center in 2006. The Ministry of Gender Equality and Family first established twenty one centers of this kind, and gradually increased the number every year, now reached more than two hundred.⁹ The major services these centers provide include Korean language education for marriage immigrants, Korean culture and history education, and family consulting. The table 3 indicates the tasks the centers serve, in greater detail.¹⁰

⁹ Although the official English name for the ministry is the ministry of gender equality, the direct translation of the Korean official name to English is the ministry of women and family. This is why this ministry is taking a big role in multicultural policy in which female marriage-migrants are the center of attention.

¹⁰ This table is a simplified version of the original classification provided in “The Successful Settlement of International Marriage Migrant Women and The Establishment of Sustainable Multi-Cultural Society in The Rural Area of Korea.”(Kim, Heo, and Hwang, 2011, p. 58-59).

Table 3. Tasks of the Multicultural Family Support Center

	Task	Object of the Task	Examples
Essential Tasks	Korean language education	Marriage-migrants	Everyday expressions, learning words and sentences
	Understanding multicultural society	Marriage-migrants	Understanding multiculturalism, marriage and family, history and culture of various countries and Korea, South Korean educational/welfare system
	Family education	Multicultural families	Parents education, spouse education, mother-in-law education (role, culture, communication focus)
	Consulting		Problems concerning a spouse, mother-in-law, children
	Supporting group	Multicultural families	Computer/information education, interpreter/translator training
Specialization Tasks	Emotional support	Multicultural families	Mentoring, club-activity
	Boosting competency	Multicultural families	Computer/IT education, vocational training for interpreter/translator
	Improving the conception of multicultural families	Neighbors of multicultural families	Multicultural symposium, campaign, festival, education
	Training for professionals	Neighbor citizens	Training for Korean language teacher, multiculturalism teacher, professional consultant

Source: Kim, Heo, & Hwang (2011)

One might be amazed by how comprehensive the services offered at the centers are. One thing to note, however, is that most services target “multicultural families,” not the general citizens in South Korea. It appears that, despite the beautiful slogan of “multiculturalism,” the people who need to make the move are not the Korean-Korean citizens but those who immigrate. The centers teach marriage-migrants the history and culture of Korea, the way to communicate with their mother-in-law and husband, and so forth. They do not focus as much on educating general citizens about the new people and the new culture in their neighborhood. The only program prepared for “non-multicultural” citizens is the vocational training to become a Korean language teacher or multicultural families’ consultants. Even this program is classified into “specialization task,” not the “essential task.”

This inclination towards “multicultural families” is understandable to some extent since the centers are originally designed specifically to support multicultural families. But it is not clearly answered whether or not this narrowly targeted support is more effective or more necessary than a more general support for all citizens. Furthermore, other policies provided by different institutions are not that different from this narrow approach as well.

In present-day South Korea, under the coordination of the office of the prime minister, eleven different government ministries/institutions are undertaking various projects in relation to multicultural family. These institutions have been providing diverse programs almost in competition with one another. The major programs furnished by different ministries are listed in the table 4.

Table 4. Each Ministry's Multicultural Policies

	Contents
Ministry of Law	Central/local government's foreigner policy management/coordination, civil affairs administration service for marriage-migrants, "happy start" program (education for Korean language/understanding South Korean society), holding various festivals for better understanding of multiculturalism
Ministry of Security and Public Administration	Support for foreign residents' settlement, support for municipality's effort to develop multicultural society, encouragement for foreign residents' local participation
Ministry of Health and Welfare	Medical/health insurance support for foreigners, free medical check-up for foreigners and homeless people
Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Tourism	Cultural support for foreign workers (culture education, Korean language education), language classes for foreign workers and marriage-migrants
Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology	Educational support for children of foreign workers and marriage-migrants (after-school program for multicultural children, special consultant for multicultural children, development of a new curriculum reflecting the multicultural attributes)
Ministry of Gender Equality	Management of marriage brokers, Korean spouse education, Korean language education, pregnancy support, translation service, intervention in case of crisis/domestic violence, vocational training
Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs	Sending Korean language teacher and education helper, financial support for the expense of bringing up a child, Korean etiquette/culture/cooking classes

Source: Kim, Heo, & Hwang (2011)

The three main critiques about these policies are: first, the government-led transition towards multiculturalism; second, absence of control tower that can coordinate various projects; and third, the assimilationist attributes embedded in the programs.

First of all, many scholars have pointed out the problem of government-led transition towards multiculturalism (H.J. Kim, 2007; K. Oh, 2009; Ko, 2012). The focal point of this criticism is that the government began to implement many supporting programs for “multicultural population” without deep reflection of reality or a consideration of public sentiment. The government itself seemed not to know what to do exactly in the face of the newly emerging multicultural society. As a variety of programs were introduced and practiced mainly by the government, and also in a somewhat hasty manner, average native Korean citizens did not have enough opportunity or time to ponder about what the transition towards multicultural society meant. Seemingly comprehensive and highly supportive system for immigrants even provoked some native Korean citizens to be against the “benign” policies focused on “foreigners.”

Next, some people critique the absence of control tower that can harmonize and coordinate a course of multicultural projects (S.M. Kim, 2011; Cho, 2011; J. Jeon, 2011, Kang, 2011). It is strange that there is no control tower when the government is leading a transition. However, this sounds feasible, given the overlapping components of policies indicated in the above table. As we can see above, many different ministries are actively involved with multicultural efforts. They create multiple programs in the hope to support the multicultural population. Although the office of the prime minister affirms that the office is responsible in harmonizing and coordinating different projects provided by different ministries, it still seems like there is no actual control tower. This becomes obvious when we see that many programs such as Korean language lessons and cultural studies are overlapping across different ministries.

These overlapping projects may result in not only the waste of government budget, but also the ineffectiveness of managing and evaluating the practice of overall projects.

Lastly, the problem of the hidden character of the policies is often pointed out. It is discussed that the official efforts provided by South Korean government are closer to an assimilation process rather than genuine efforts to respect and integrate immigrants' life style and values (S.O. Lee, 2007; I.J. Yoon, 2008). This critique is valid in that the majority of the policies are geared towards the adaptation of the immigrants to South Korean society, not the change of attitudes or conceptions of native Koreans. Again, we can see that the most programs provided by the ministries are only targeting the "multicultural families", not the general citizen. It may be true that the marriage immigrants and foreign workers need additional support to settle down in South Korea and live a fulfilling life. However, in any case, if the South Korean society only forces these new-arrivals to adapt to South Korean society, without trying to change from the inside, it can be considered a silent cultural violence. On the other hand, the government's approach is understandable in the sense that most South Koreans do not recognize South Korea as a multicultural society yet. Although they are aware that there is an increasing number of foreigners and immigrants, many South Koreans still take the myth of homogeneous Korea for granted. Therefore, in their deepest part of the minds, those who need to change and adapt are of course the immigrants, not themselves. I think this hidden belief is also applied to the government's policies. Despite good intentions to help immigrants, South Korean government makes a mistake where they naturally expect the immigrants to change themselves, but not expect as much from the native Koreans.

I have listed the government's policy with respect to multiculturalism and also introduced some critiques of those. Although I will address this in greater detail a little later, I

think there is one more, and perhaps the most pressing problem that is easy to overlook. That is the problem of the labeling and stigmatizing the “multicultural families.” Similar to what I have pointed out in addressing the scholarly publications earlier, by offering separate policies especially prepared for the “poor immigrants,” the government is leading, albeit unintentional, native Korean citizens to think that the immigrants are intrinsically different from them, and in many cases, poorer and unhappier than them. Needless to say, this hinders the genuine integration of the diverse people in changing South Korea.

In the hope to complement the weak points in the current multicultural policies, the central government recently announced “the Second Basic Plan for multicultural Family Policy.” In sequence to the first plan which served three years since 2010 to 2012, the second plan is designed to be practiced for five years from 2013 to 2017. In this second plan, the number of the government institutions involved in the implementation of the multicultural policies increased from the existing eleven to thirteen. Also, the government created six major tasks that it wishes to pursue (Ministry of Gender Equality, 2012). The summary of six major tasks is:

- ① Reinforcing the integration education for the multicultural families
 - Understanding both countries’ culture when internationally married
 - Increasing Multilingual TV programs
- ② Establishing and operating fifty preparatory school for multicultural children
 - Before the multicultural children enter an elementary school, they could go to the preparatory school for a better adaptation to South Korean education system
 - Special education for talented students in languages, math, science, and art and physical aptitude
- ③ Constructing a stable family life
 - Reinforcement of the examination of international marriage visa
 - Introduction of “multicultural family coordinator”
 - Family education, childcare service
- ④ Supporting marriage-migrants’ socioeconomic participation

- Benefiting private institutions/companies that hire many marriage-migrants
- ⑤ Improving the legal system and constituting a better understanding of multicultural families
 - In the preparation of the multicultural children's entrance to military service, multicultural education for soldiers are planned
- ⑥ Restructuring the multicultural policies
 - Creating a "long-term development plan for multicultural family support center"
 - Reinforcing an all-embracing governing system

Many improvements are made in the second plan compared to the existing approach. For instance, it focuses more on the reciprocal understanding of culture. However, it still seems that the mutual effort to understand different cultures is quite limited to international couples themselves, not expanded to the broader citizens. Another good improvement that can be found is that it calls for a better collaboration and harmonization amongst different government institutions. It appears that the government is aware of the problem of the absence of the control tower and emphasizes the harmony amongst different ministries.

However, once again, the cognitive segregation and distancing between the "average Korean" and the "multicultural families" are easily found in the announcement. This is evident in the second main task which includes establishment of a special preparatory school exclusively for the "multicultural children" which sounds very segregative in a sense. It dangerously assumes that the children from multicultural families may have more difficulty in adapting to the school system. Special support for the employment of marriage-migrants also could be dangerous in the midst of overall difficulty of finding a decent job in current South Korean society. When people start to feel that the government is focusing too much on "multicultural people," while paying inadequate attention to the native Korean's impending difficulties, the dissatisfaction against the

government could be wrongly redirected to the marriage-migrants and other immigrants, resulting in an increased hatred level.

4.2.3. Media (TV Programs)

In his well-known work, “Orientalism,” Edward Said (1995) has sharply pointed out the distorted representation of the East in the eyes of the West. His argument reveals how the powerful group simplifies and objectifies the “others” in order to define itself as more normal and desirable. This process of simplification and objectification of the less powerful group of people could be applied to various power relations existing in our daily lives.

With regards to this potentially twisted representation of the “others,” the mainstream media plays a critical role, without a doubt. Media not only conveys but also forms certain images, symbols, and even myths that shape identity and everyday lives of people (Kellner, 2003). The representation of minority group in media is of particular importance as it structures the general public’s conception or stereotypes about the minority group (Lee and Ahn, 2007). The “representation of the others” could be used as a tool to justify the inferiority of the minority and the superiority of the majority (Oh and Lee, 2011); This can be applied to the multicultural discourse in South Korea. A variety of media address multiculturalism. However, the way they approach this topic is not very diverse. Through relying on four articles which indicate a specific interest in the medial portrayal of multicultural population (G. Han, 2007; Lee and Ahn, 2007; Kim, Park and Lee, 2009; Oh and Lee, 2011; C. Oh, 2012), I would like to illuminate the ways in which South Korean media convey multiculturalism.

The most powerful media in our era must be visual media such as TV programs. Since around 2006, a variety of TV programs have been created in South Korea to cover multicultural

issues. Among numerous programs, the three most representative programs that are widely discussed are: “Chatting with Beauties” (KBS), “Finding the Best Foreign Daughter-in-laws” (MBC) and “Love in Asia” (KBS).¹¹ For background knowledge, “Chatting with Beauties” is the KBS TV show that features foreign female residents in South Korea and voices these women’s candid comments on South Korean society and their lives there. “Finding the Best Foreign Daughter-in-laws” mostly focuses on how the migrant women are nurturing their homes well and “Love in Asia” primarily depicts the love stories and daily lives of marriage-migrants. These shows undoubtedly contribute to the average Korean citizen’s secondhand exposure to “multicultural population” and this may positively affect their recognition of migrants. However, there are some downsides to these shows as well.

The first downside highlighted is the double-standard reinforcement (Kim, Park, and Lee 2009). While both “Chatting with Beauties” and “Love in Asia” reveal the lives of foreign residents living in South Korea, the message these two programs convey are significantly different from each other. “Love in Asia” mostly features the South/ South East Asian marriage-migrants and depicts their struggling to become a good wife and daughter-in-law in rural areas. Their individuality oftentimes is dimmed and they are usually depicted as “good wives” who are obedient and quiet. In contrast, “Chatting with Beauties” features only single foreign women, most of them being a Caucasian, and lets them freely critique the problems of South Korean society. South Korean audiences are expected to listen to the words of the “beauties” and become more “global” by accepting those critiques. Kim, Park, and Lee (2009) argue that these different representation of the two different groups of foreigners in TV programs—those who are from

¹¹ MBC refers to Munhwa Broadcasting Corporation and KBS is an abbreviation of Korean Broadcasting System. Both of the broadcasting systems are one of the three most representative channels in South Korea, along with SBS, which is Seoul Broadcasting System.

European backgrounds and those from developing Asian countries—reveals and reinforces the fixed stereotype that average South Koreans have about “advanced Europeans” and “poor South Asians.”

The second critique of these shows is concerned with the implicit assumption of “desirable assimilation.” For instance, Geon-Soo Han (2007) focuses on how these shows reinforce the typified image of desirable immigrants. He specifically finds this tendency in “Finding the Best Foreign Daughter-in-laws.” According to his analysis, this show in particular, normally highlights the immigrant wives who master traditional Korean culinary skills and even local dialects. Although the program is originally designed to “move forward to a healthy multicultural society” (G. Han, 2007, p. 34) it covertly forces immigrants to perfectly adjust their lives in conformation to South Korean life style. In other words, the program, albeit aiming to contribute to happy multicultural society, serves the assimilationist ideology rather than the genuine multicultural ideology based on mutual respect.

The third major critique about these “multicultural” programs is the negative portrayal of minority people and their home countries—especially female marriage-migrants. Oh and Lee (2011) interviewed 10 female marriage-migrants about their opinion on the “Love in Asia” program. These women are from Vietnam, Philippines, Cambodia, Thailand, Mongolia, China, Japan and Mexico, and are all living in Chang-won city, South Korea. According to the interviews, many of these women, especially who have lived in South Korea for a relatively longer and who studied longer, complain about the negative portrayal of marriage-migrants that the TV show conveys. For example, a woman from Thailand who has lived in South Korea for twelve years says that she dislikes the show since it always depicts the marriage-migrants as the poor people from poor countries. It is disappointing to her when the program only talks about

depressing stories of the migrant women, leaving successful stories of many marriage-migrants in the shadows. Two women from the Philippines and Cambodia also point out the similar problem. They do not understand why “Love in Asia” portrays only the poor rural area of Philippine and Cambodia, while not adequately showing wealthier parts of the nations. In addition to this, it is also criticized that the program depicts these women as incompetent mothers who cannot speak decent Korean—when some of them are actually very fluent in Korean—or extremely introverted or socially incapable—when some of them are very successful in social life, securing a respected job such as university professor.

In response to these distorted representations, Changwoo Oh (2012) stresses the embedded nature of media: it needs to constantly select appealing incidents that will make good footage. This process of “selection” brings in only a limited number of incidents amongst almost infinite incidents happening everywhere. Then what is really important is what incidents are selected and how. In order to avoid reckless objectification of a certain group of people, it is essential to maintain a certain level of ethics in the course of this selection process. It needs to be continuously observed and critiqued whether or not the media system shows unnecessarily distorted image of a particular group of people. Also, the power relations and political/economic systems should be carefully examined as they usually have considerable impacts on the selection/representation process in media.

4.2.4. In-Class Education

Education is one of the major concerns that South Korea needs to deal with, in the face of a multicultural society. Affected by the considerable amount of national attention, many educational efforts have been made since the mid two thousand. Textbooks have been changed to

be more inclusive and multicultural education for school teachers has been created and operated. Some schools in regions that are heavily populated with “multicultural families” have been designated as “role model schools” for multicultural education and a variety of new educational programs have been established in those schools.

However, many weak points were discovered in the process of establishing a new type of education. Many academics point out the shortcomings of current multicultural education operated in classrooms in South Korea (K. Seol, 2012; Y. Yang, 2008, Mun and Park, 2009; Seo, 2009; Chang, 2011; S.M. Kim, 2011; K. Lee, 2012; Park and Hong 2012; M. Park, 2012). Putting the proposed problems together, there are five main critiques. First, South Korean multicultural education is disproportionately focusing on the “multicultural children,” ignoring the necessity to educate the general public about multicultural trends. Second, education is still at the level of “assimilation,” implicitly forcing the immigrants to adjust their lifestyles to conform to the South Korean norm. Third, in many cases, the immigrants are understood as the objects who always seek for sympathy and assistance. Fourth, the understanding of culture itself is too unsophisticated. Due to a superficial understanding of culture and ethnicity, a holistic approach to culture is hampered. Finally, teachers who are in charge of multicultural education tend to consider the task either a bothersome work or too difficult of a task to conduct without decent guidelines.

In this section, I would like to introduce three meaningful writings which examine the in-class reality of multicultural education. The first one is an academic essay written by an elementary school teacher: “The error of multicultural education that forces to adopt Korean identity” (K. Lee, 2012). The essay tells us about what is actually happening in current South Korean classrooms. The second work is a scholarly article that examines the expressions in the

renewed textbooks, in relation to multiculturalism: “Analysis on the Contents about Multicultural Changes in Social Studies Textbooks” (K. Seol, 2012). The last article is about how teachers are prepared for the multicultural education. Chang (2011) interviewed fifteen school teachers who are in charge of multicultural education in her article “A Study on the Performance Reality of Multi-cultural Education System in the Elementary School.”

Kikyuu Lee (2012), as an elementary school teacher, is concerned with the predisposition of a classroom atmosphere where “being multicultural” is seen as inferior. He writes that one of the cursing words that children commonly use nowadays is “you look multicultural!” This is a depressing report, without a doubt. Lee proposes the question of what has made the word “multicultural” so mired, and he finds the reason in the largely misdirected multicultural education. He believes that many parts of current multicultural education further provide, rather than decrease, a source of ethnic discrimination. The main problem is objectification of and widened cognitive distance from “multicultural people.”

For example, Lee brings into light the presumption hidden in the third grader’s ethics textbook. The textbook suggests “various types of families” including single-parent family, the elderly family, multicultural family, and so on. Then children are asked what the similarities and the differences of these families are. There is this assumption where the proposed types of families are somewhat different from the “normal” families, usually lacking something important—a father, children, or the “right skin color.” The multicultural family is objectified and intentionally differentiated here. Lee believes this cognitive separation between “normal family” and the “abnormal family” is detrimental to children’s balanced perception of ethnically different families. According to him, it would have been enough to naturally propose different

types of families in the book, suggesting that all families can live happily irrespective of their different family composition or skin color.

The shallow understanding of ethnicity and ethnic identity is also problematic. A lot of textbook contents and after-school materials seem to have dualistic views on ethnicity. According to Lee’s analysis, a person cannot belong to multiple ethnic/cultural groups and has to be categorized to one or the other, in the context of current educational contents. It is not uncommon that even biracial children are naturally required to choose only one ethnic identity, and of course, the identity chosen should be “Korean.” A short episode introduced in the same third grade ethics textbook illustrates this well. A half-Korean and half-Vietnamese Jung-Hyun acclaims she is South Korean, although she looks different. It is not allowed for Jung-Hyun to be simply “half-Korean and half-Vietnamese.” A supplemental material for after-school multicultural education conveys a similar message (Figure 2). The worksheet tries to teach children that there are diverse people who look different and enjoy different cultures. However, it sharply categorizes “Asian, White, and Black” and even introduces different geographical regions

Figure 2. “Different Appearance of People”



Source: K. Lee (2012)

depending on their appearance—Asians in Asia, Whites in Europe, Africans in Africa. This sort of “multicultural education” accentuates, rather than decreases, the stereotypes that children have about different ethnicity and culture.

This is not a simple problem of assimilation or stereotype. The bigger problem is the absence of genuine understanding that every individual is different and special in their own way

and they make their own culture. For South Korean children who have been raised in a uniquely homogenous country, it is essential to understand that every person is unique and different from each other. They need to learn that somebody could belong to more than one culture and ethnic groups or could live in a place where they look different from the majority of the residents there. It is not “we, Koreans” and “those multicultural people”, but unique individuals who make their own cultural values. As Lee notes, “there has never been the period when there existed only one culture. Culture is made of different lives of each unique individual” (p. 12).

The next article that I want to note is Kyu Joo Seol’s “Analysis on the Contents About Multicultural Changes in Social Studies Textbooks” (2012). The study analyzes seventeen social studies textbooks at various levels—elementary, middle, and high schools, focusing on the contents related to multiculturalism. The textbooks studied were renewed in 2007 in order to incorporate more multicultural perspectives. As a result of his analysis, Seol concludes that a lot of “multicultural” contents are stereotyping the “multicultural families,” rather than fostering positive images of them.

For instance, textbooks often contain sentences like “Hasan’s parents are illegal residents and thus, are not sure whether they can keep staying or have to leave sometime soon” or “Leanam from Vietnam felt offended when a waiter at a restaurant looked down on her for her appearance.” What Seol stresses is that, even though these expressions are used in the process of asserting that we should not discriminate against the “multicultural families,” it could lead to a negative labeling of “multicultural families.” Children may think that migrant workers are mostly illegal residents or that Vietnamese are bad-looking. He mentions that it is not to get rid of every negative expression in the textbooks, but to balance it with more positive contents, as

the textbooks influence learners both consciously and unconsciously, regardless of the original intention (S.M. Lee, 2012).

Seol's contention becomes especially valuable when considering the pervasive atmosphere which devalues the multicultural attributes in South Korea. It has started to be pointed out that the multicultural factors are understood as separated from the mainstream culture and are significantly downgraded. This view parallels with the various reports suggested in numerous newspaper articles (Ko, 2012; Baek, 2013; I. Choi, 2013; Hong and Lee, 2013).

For example, a migrant child confesses that she feels bad whenever her friends call her "multiculture" instead of her actual name (Hong and Lee, 2013). Some inconsiderate teachers even say things like "multicultural kids' stay after the class for after-school program" (Ko, 2013). Here, the teachers so naturally segregate "multicultural kids" from other children. And of course, this discriminative message could harshly hurt the vulnerable children's hearts. One of the most serious side effects is that children come to focus on different ethnicities even more after "multicultural education" because the education usually and openly differentiates the South Korean children and multicultural children (Ko, 2012). Jasmine Lee, the first congresswoman who is not ethnic Korean, also admits that the "multicultural family" or "multicultural household" have become negative labels in current South Korean society (Baek, 2013).¹² At an interview with Daily Ahn press (Baek, 2013), she primarily critiques the separation that says "you are multicultural, we are Korean." Without a doubt, cognitive separation and stereotyping are the two major problems in current multicultural education and need to be ameliorated.

¹² Jasmine Lee is the first and only non-ethnic Korean to become a lawmaker in Korea. She was elected as a proportional representative in Korea's national assembly in 2012. She was originally born in the Philippines, but became a naturalized Korean when she married a Korean man. When she met her husband in Philippine, she was a college student majoring in Biology, and they married after a two and a half year relationship. She is actively involved in creating and reforming multicultural policies in Korea.

The last article is “A Study on the Performance Reality of Multi-Cultural Education System in the Elementary School” written by Chang, On Jeong (2011). There is no doubt that the role of school teachers is critical in the process of multicultural education. In the article, Chang interviewed fifteen elementary school teachers who are in charge of multicultural education in their respective schools. As expected, the teachers perceived multicultural education as a difficult challenge. Among the many problems found, I have included some especially noteworthy points.

The first problem that stands out is the lack of experienced multicultural educators. Although the government is trying to offer multicultural education training, not many teachers actually benefit from this. A teacher even confessed that she took an online course to learn about multicultural education, but there were not enough practical lessons to help the teacher create and coordinate meaningful multicultural education programs. What is worse is that the local government designates the “role model schools’ for multicultural education without enough consulting with school faculties. Designated as a role model school without adequate preparation, teachers often feel lost and unsure about what to do.

As the local government designates the role model schools based on the total number of “multicultural students,” sometimes the special budget for multicultural education goes to a school that does not really need the special aid or education. Some “multicultural students” speak fluent Korean and are already doing well in the South Korean educational system, but are categorized as “multicultural students” who need further help. In this case, schools that have the higher number of “multicultural students,” irrespective of actual situation where the students are doing great just like other South Korean students, receive the special support. Given this unidirectional administration, what the students really want for multicultural education is not seriously considered. As teachers also have no idea what is the best way to operate multicultural

education, many programs remain one-time events. The examples of multicultural education programs are presented on the next page (Table 5). Chang's study originally has ten different schools, but I include two schools here due to the limit of the space. But other schools are very similar to these two schools in terms of their programs, objects, and the number of the session.

We can see that the programs are mostly a one-time event and the contents are not necessarily "multicultural" but more about learning Korean culture. The objects of the education are also disproportionately inclined to the "multicultural students," rather than providing the program to all of the students in the schools. As another teacher interviewed in Chang's article pointed out, this narrow focus of education is not very effective in improving general perception about different cultures. It is also proposed that the "multicultural students" oftentimes do not like the "special treatment," leading to low participation rates. Cho et al. (2011) also reflects the teachers' faced difficulty in multicultural education with regard to the problem of reverse discrimination—as native South Korean children do not benefit from many additional education the school provides—and artificial distinction between multicultural children and native South Korean children.

4.2.5. Summary of Problems

For the sake of clarity of further discussion, I synthesize the problems or blind spots of South Korean multicultural efforts that has been pointed out above. There are three major problems: a) misunderstanding of the nature of culture, b) unnecessarily strict distinction between "multicultural people" and Korean-Koreans, c) objectification and stigmatization of "multicultural people."

Table 5. Role Model Schools' Multicultural Education Programs and Frequency

School	Program Contents	Objects (persons)	Number of Session
B Elementary School	Additional study: Korean, Math	multicultural students (5)	Twice a week
	Painting	multicultural students (29)	Once
	Korean cooking class: Bibimbab	multicultural students (29)	Once
	Korean cooking class: Hwajeon	multicultural students (29)	Once
	Magic class	multicultural students (27)	Once
	Traditional Etiquette class	multicultural students (28)	Once
	Baking a cake	multicultural students (29)	Once
	Dual Language experience: watching movie	multicultural students (11)	Once
	Field trip to Jeon-Ju traditional village	multicultural students (32)	Once
	Field trip to Solomon Law Park	multicultural students (29)	Once
C Elementary School	Korean language education, other subjects aid	multicultural students (9)	Once or twice a week
	Tracing ancestor's footprints: field trip to Hanbat educational museum	multicultural students (27)	Once
	Field trip to Jeon-Ju traditional village	multicultural students (27)	Once
	World food: baking a cake	multicultural students (27)	Once
	Korean paper handicraft	multicultural students (27)	Once
	Cooking traditional cuisine	multicultural students (27)	Once
	Watching a movie	multicultural students (27)	Once
	Watching a family musical	multicultural students and their parents	Once
	multicultural literature activity	All students	Once
	Training for parents and teachers	Teachers, parents	40 hours

Source: Chang (2011)

The first and foremost problem is that there is the serious misunderstanding of the nature of culture. This is too pervasive to even notice what the problem is, but is of great importance because it is a foundational reason for the two following serious problems. The problem is people's misperception that culture is something that is static and never changes. People tend to believe that the cultural heritage is and should be preserved rather than evolved. For example, "Korean culture" is something that is concrete and cannot easily change for many South Koreans. There is a fixed image of what Korean culture is and who deserves inheriting the culture. The same logic is applied to minority groups' culture; There is a distinctive and unchangeable Vietnamese culture, Filipino culture, and many others. Therefore, many South Korean people cannot easily encourage "others" or themselves to more aggressively intermingle and create a new norm of the society in which they live. To them, it is very strange to even imagine that different cultures can be intermixed with each other and create a new social norms and values. But as Sze and Powell (2004) suggest, culture is not unchangeable entity but is mutable and evolves over time in various contexts.

The static view over culture gives rise to the second problem. The second problem is the unnecessarily strict distinction between "real Korean" and "multicultural people." This clear distinction is possible only when we assume static culture that does not cross the "borderline" of other cultures. As we examined thus far, government policy, media, and even in-class education programs overtly distinguish "multicultural people" from the "average Korean." As a consequence, unlike the countries like the United States, where the term "multicultural" refers to the society as a whole, the same term pinpoints the specific minority group in the context of South Korea. To rephrase, whereas everyone is deemed to be a part of "the multicultural United States," it is only the foreigners or even people of darker skin (as European descendants are not

categorized as much as “multicultural”) in South Korea. This is clearly a flawed categorization. Even among South Koreans, there must be cultural differences according to their different socioeconomic status, the regions they live in, family structures, and so on. But under the slogan of multiculturalism, all South Koreans are deemed to be homogeneous and are consequently exempt from the multicultural education and “Multicultural people” are considered to be inherently different by nature from the native Koreans. A bigger problem is that people are not simply categorized but are ordered. “Multicultural people” are oftentimes regarded as “second-class citizens” in this situation. Here, the “recognition of difference” is emphasized more than necessary. This eventually hinders the genuine integration of diverse people into the more inclusive social atmosphere in South Korea.

Last but not least, objectification and stereotyping of the foreign people and their children are serious problems. Under the efforts to make a multicultural society, adults who are not originally from South Korea or their children are constantly objectified and stereotyped. As we examined above, these people are projected to general citizens’ mind as a poor and even dangerous group. Even if it is true, to some extent, that many people who belong to this “multicultural” group are socioeconomically marginalized in South Korean society, positive aspects of their lives are hardly introduced. As a consequence, the words like “multicultural family” and “multicultural population” became too polluted to be used in a neutral way. Most of the time, it is associated with the negative images of people from poorer Asian countries. Scholars, policy makers, TV program producers, and even textbook writers keep labeling this particular group and proposing the fixed image of “poor multicultural family.”

5. Interculturalism as an Alternative in Changing South Korea

As I mentioned in the introduction, some societies suit interculturalism better than multiculturalism. It all depends on what sort of historical and cultural background the given society has already. Here, I propose interculturalism as a promising alternative to multiculturalism in South Korea, assuming that it would be a better fit than multiculturalism particularly in the Korean context.

As I covered earlier, some opponents of interculturalism think that interculturalism does not meaningfully differ from multiculturalism. But it seems quite obvious that, at least, interculturalism less emphasizes the apparent differences amongst people and celebrates the intersections of different cultures. Interculturalism also pays special attention to ceaseless interactions that is believed to be capable of creating a common social norm and achieving further social integration. In the following, I explain why interculturalism may better address the existing problems in South Korea than multiculturalism. I first suggest the two important backgrounds that need to be taken into account when assessing the compatibility of multiculturalism and South Korean situation. Then I explain how interculturalism can be more fitting to South Korean context, by addressing the three major problems that have been proposed earlier from the intercultural perspective.

5.1. Why It Is Difficult To Be Compatible: South Korea and Multiculturalism

It is important to note the underlying reasons why multiculturalism does not function well in South Korea and instead reinforcing existing problems of segregation and stigmatization. There

are two dimensions that I want to address here: One, homogeneity myth and collectivism, and Two, the demographic composition that has not reached truly “multi” cultural level. These two cultural contexts provide the explanation about why it is difficult to remedy the existing discriminative problems in changing South Korea, simply by improving the practice within the existing frame—multiculturalism.

5.1.1. Homogeneity Myth and Collectivism

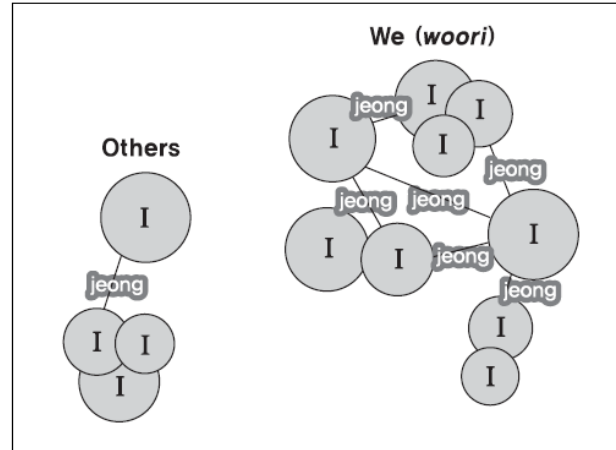
As a result of continuing effort to break the “one-blood” myth that Koreans have held for a long time, nowadays it is almost tabooed to say in public that South Korea is a single-raced country. Although it has been pointed out that the homogeneity of Korean ethnicity is flawed and mythical (K. Han, 2007), many South Koreans still believe—or although they do not “think” they still “feel”—that all Koreans are more or less originated from the same ancestors; Some statistics would help to evidence this.

When the SBS conducted a survey about the mono-ethnicity perception in 2006, 65.2 percent of respondents (N=2000) answered that Koreans are mono-ethnic group (Hu, 2013). People’s perception would have been changed since the 2006, as the multiculturalism was adopted vigorously after 2006. Unfortunately, there has been no comparable survey on the exact same question, at least to my knowledge. But there is another telling survey result that is more recent. According to a survey (Ahn, et al., 2012) supported by the Ministry of Gender Equality, 86.5 percent of the respondents (N=2500) said that blood lineage is important in deciding nationhood. Given these result, we can safely suspect that South Koreans still assume that being a South Korean citizen largely depends on from whom you are born, not your personal decision or the country that you live in.

This homogeneity myth may be reinforced by the collectivistic tradition in Korea. Although it is dangerous to generalize the dualistic conception that the West is individualistic and the East is collectivistic, it is true at least to some degree, that Asian countries have stronger sense of “we-ness.” Korean “we-ness” can be easily found in its daily usage of language. As opposed to English where “we” is simply the plural version of “I”, in Korean, “we” and “I” could be used interchangeably. In other words, “we” is another singular form that can be used in the place where “I” should be used. For example, Koreans commonly say “our house,” “our parents,” “our dog,” when they actually mean “my house,” “my parents,” and “my dog.” It even sounds more natural when it is said “our” than “my” in these expressions.

Chung and Cho (2006) suggest that this different usage of language prompts significantly different development of self-image of Korean people as compared to that of Westerners. From this enhanced and **Figure 3. We vs. Others**

normalized identification of “I” and “We” is linked to the distinct worldview that sees the people basically as “we vs. others.” The figure on the right side tells about this clearly. Jeong that is placed between individuals (I) refers to “the emotional and psychological bonds that join Koreans” and it divides “the



Source: Chang and Cho (2006)

world into different degrees of us/we versus them” (Chang and Cho, 2006, p. 1).

As we can see here, the process that distinguishes “us” and “them” is quite deeply embedded in Korean people’s cognition. When this long tradition of distinguishing in-group and out-group meets multiculturalism, the problem of unnecessary distinction is likely to be

aggravated. This is because multiculturalism presupposes the presence of multiple cultural groups that are distinctive and non-overlapping from one another. It calls for attention towards the ethnic-minority people and claim that South Koreans need to embrace them with benevolent attitude. However, despite the good intention, the approach allows and even encourages South Korean citizens to process this new information regarding the immigrants and ethnic minorities in the way that they are already familiar with: inherently different out-group and connected in-group. The status of “others” becomes more salient in this context. As a consequence, multiculturalism appears to reinforce, rather than reduce the overt segregation and isolation of minority people. This explains why the word “multicultural family” or “multicultural child” came to refer to a specific minority group, oftentimes accompanying negative connotations.

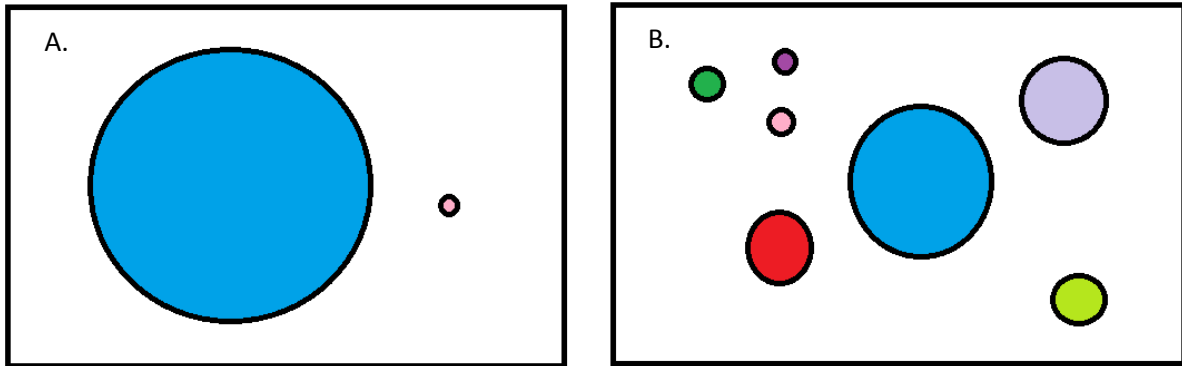
5.1.2. Not a “Multi” Cultural Society Yet: Only “Mainstream Korean” versus “Minority” Culture

Another distinctive feature of Korea that needs to be taken into consideration when discussing multiculturalism is the composition of population itself. This is simple but is of great importance. As a matter of fact, South Korea may not be able to be called “multi” cultural society yet. In order for people to think a society is “multicultural,” it is necessary that there are considerable size and number of relatively powerful minority groups that are comparable to the mainstream culture. That way, different cultures can count as one of the “multiple cultures” that coexist side by side with noticeable representation. However, when the size of minority group(s) is too small, it is more like a simple combination of “mainstream culture” and “minority culture” rather than a comprehensive “multicultural” society.

The size or the relative power of minority group(s) in South Korea is not even close to become a comparable culture to mainstream Korean culture. According to Statistics Korea (2012), the number of “multicultural household” in South Korea is 386,977, constituting only 0.02 percent of total household which is 17,339,422. To my knowledge, there is no ethnic composition information collected, but putting all relevant information such as household composition and new-born babies’ statistics together, the percentage of non-ethnic South Korean in the total population logically cannot exceed 5 percent at maximum. Compared to the United States, where African Americans constitute 12.6 percent, Asians 4.8 percent, and Hispanic/Latino 16.3 percent of the total population (US Census, 2010), and some European countries such as France, Germany, Italy, and Switzerland where 10 to 13 percent of population is multiethnic (Kim, Y.S., 2009), we can sense just how small the portion of ethnic minority groups are in South Korea. In sum, the current situation in South Korea is not where multiple cultures that are comparable to each other are coexisting; but rather, a small minority group(s) exists at a periphery while Korean culture abide maintaining its incomparable mainstream size and power.

With this tiny portion of minority group, it is virtually impossible to build a genuine “multi” cultural society. It is too easy that people regard the minority group as a simple exception to mainstream group, not adequately recognizing them as a considerable cultural group. Given this situation, the simple “recognition of differences” could be a poison, rather than a medicine.

Figure 4. Difference between majority vs. minority configuration in Korea and other countries



Source: Author

The figure 4 would help understanding this more clearly. South Korean situation is depicted in the Box A. The big circle is native Korean group and the tiny circle is ethnic/cultural minority group (in reality, there is diverse minority groups even within the tiny circle but it is not illustrated in this figure). The Box B is closer to the situation of the United States. There is a mainstream culture which is based on White majority; however, there are multiple cultures that are of comparable size and power even in comparison to the mainstream group.

In settings like the Box B, multiculturalism could work okay and makes more sense since there truly exist “multiple” distinctive cultures. The minority groups may have their own support system and, even if they are not perfectly integrated to the unified identity, it would be still okay for them to remain there as a powerful minority. This is not to say that minorities in the Box A should give up their own culture and identity. The point is that, realistically speaking, expecting this tiny minority group to operate just like the big minority groups in the Box B is too much. It is a lot harder for them to “coexist” with the mainstream culture with balanced power. Forcing them to be a member of “multicultural society” when there seemingly is only huge mainstream and tiny minority culture can be a “violent expectation” in a sense.

Multiculturalism that is adopted to “not-yet-multicultural” society is bound to create various side effects. Since there is a significant gap between the reality in South Korea and the ideal circumstances where multiculturalism can function the best, multicultural efforts that are made by different societal sectors in South Korea turn out to be either an exaggerated distinction of minorities from mainstream Koreans or a tacit assimilation. This is not the problem of inherent legitimacy of the paradigm as much as it is a problem of the right “fit” to a certain social context.

5.1.3. Summary

I suggested the two distinctive characteristics that further explain why multiculturalism cannot function as well in South Korean context. The myth of homogeneity—collectivistic tradition that reinforces the mono-ethnic belief—and the limitation of the population composition that does not quite fit the multiculturalism are introduced. Considering these inherent traits that do not match well with multiculturalism, it becomes clear that the problem lays not in the practical level of multiculturalism, but the discourse of multiculturalism itself. Another frame that suits better with the current South Korea is necessary. And I believe that the promising alternative is interculturalism.

5.2. Interculturalism As a “Better Fit”

Let me now turn to how interculturalism can be a “better fit” to the proposed problems. In the previous section, I summarized the three major problems of current multiculturalism in South Korea. Those were a) the misunderstanding of the nature of culture, b) the unnecessarily strict distinction between native Koreans and “multicultural” population, and finally c) the

objectification and stereotyping of these people. Interculturalism offers valuable lessons and that correspond to all of these three given major problems. In the following, I explain how interculturalism can better address the given problems than multiculturalism can, with consideration of the Korea's special features—homogeneity myth and collectivism, and the too small minority group—that just have been articulated.

As covered earlier, interculturalism starts from the belief that culture and identity are mutable by nature. It contents that culture and people's cultural identities change as time passes and as affected by various contextual factors and constant interactions amongst people. The prefix “inter” suggests this. There are multiple groups but they exist within active interaction, and thus are more open to potential changes. By contrast, multiculturalism conveys a somewhat fixed worldview either explicitly or implicitly. As we can also infer from the prefix “multi,” the cultural groups under multicultural paradigm are deemed to simply “be there” rather statically. No motional nuance is embedded in the term. The presumption of distinct, separated groups is accentuated under the multicultural discourse. People tend to think that a certain group of people are bound to a certain culture and barely changes. This is the very basic reason why South Koreans cannot easily accept the fact that children born to non-ethnic Korean parent(s) can also become Korean. They have the fixed image of Korean and believe it never changes. But of course, this is a mythical belief.

Adopting this new and more reasonable understanding of culture can be a potential remedy for problem a) misunderstanding of culture. There is ample evidence that naturalization of foreign-born immigrants and their children existed throughout Korean history (Han, 2007). Also, it is for sure that the definition of Korean is continuously changing given the fact that more and more foreigners immigrate to South Korea and give birth to a child in South Korean territory.

Regardless of skin color or where their parents are from, if one decides and believes he/she is Korean, then he/she *is* Korean. Or, some may even think they are half Vietnamese and half Korean and want to keep the both lineage simultaneously. In the long term, Korean culture could change a little bit with the addition of Vietnamese cultural heritage if there is a considerable inflow of Vietnamese culture. There should be no problem with this too. With the fixed notion of culture, this is hard to accept as one may think “Vietnamese culture and Korean culture are different and cannot be mixed anyhow.” However, it is time for South Korean people to abandon the notion of unchangeable culture and believe that a person’s cultural identity could change and could be formulated according to their sociopolitical context, natural environment, or even personal will.

Interculturalism must be the right paradigm to use in fostering this dynamic and fluid notion of culture and cultural identity. Through the ceaseless interactions between people and diverse culture, an all-inclusive South Korean culture needs to be made.

On a similar note, the problem b) unnecessary distinction between Korean and “multicultural population” can be better addressed. When people begin to accept the fact that culture constantly changes and the notion of Korean could also change, the distinction naturally becomes much less meaningful. It is not as important to tell who belong to where, as every individual is deemed to be special in their own sense, simultaneously contributing to the greater wholeness. The focus is not on the border lines between different cultural groups but on the integration of diverse backgrounds and values, which is crucial for the eventual integration of the society as a whole.

Whereas multiculturalism only reinforces the myth of Korean homogeneity by naturally assuming that there are clearly-cut different groups, interculturalism directly tells to

this myth that homogeneity is nothing more than a fiction since the culture continuously changes its form. The collectivistic notion of “we” and “other’s,” or in-group versus out-group relationship loses its momentum as they are challenged by intercultural paradigm. Instead, how to form a common cultural norm in the given society and how to intermingle and interact at a more intimate level should be the focus of intercultural South Korea. And the new intercultural approach must be more effective than the multiculturalism paradigm as it, finally, calls for a genuine transformation from the existing dualistic worldview of South Korean to the more open and global viewpoint.

In close relation to this transformation, the tendency that objectify and stereotype the minority group would gradually disappear as well. According to social identity theory (Tajfel, 1970, 1971, 2010), people tend to express in-group favoritism and out-group prejudice to boost their self-esteem. This phenomenon is explained in that people’s self-esteem is intimately related to what group they belong to and how the group is valued in a society. In order to have higher self-esteem, people need to evaluate their in-group more positively as opposed to out-group(s). The distinction between in-group and out-group does not even need a concrete distinctive factor. Merely distinction itself could lead to the in-group favoritism and out-group prejudice (Bigler, 1997, 2007; Ruble et al., 2004; Sani and Bennett, 2004). For example, simply assigning different colors—red for one group and green for another group—to two groups evokes the group members to favor their own group and dislike the other group (Bigler, 1997).

This suggests two clear messages. One, labeling and distinguishing the minority group(s) could be dangerous in itself. Simply conceiving them different from themselves, South Koreans may disvalue the distinguished minority group even more. Two, therefore, if the distinction becomes blurred and less clear, the irrational stereotyping would also be extinguished.

Making South Koreans to regard the minority group also as an in-group member, as comparatively more inclusive interculturalism suggests, would significantly help foster a positive rather than negative image of minorities in the future South Korean society. Unsurprisingly, this may better address the problem c) labeling and stereotyping.

In summary, if people regarded culture as a mutable object that flows and changes with the passage of time, the strict distinction between the native Korean and “multicultural people” would not have occurred as people know that the distinction is meaningless, given the constantly changing nature of culture. Once people realize that culture is a mutable object that is hard to define with only one or two factor(s), they would not unnecessarily distinct or stereotype the targeted out-group. This makes sense as there is no such thing like definite in-group (Korean) and out-group (Foreigner), given the complex nature of culture, per se. Individuals are all unique and have their own culture that is made out of different life experiences and backgrounds. In that regard, interculturalism—which regards culture as a flow and, thus, does not focus too much on difference between groups but the unity of society—would be a better fit, especially in the South Korean context. Understanding culture and cultural identity as a flexible flow and perceiving foreign factors as positive resources rather than negative threat, South Korea will achieve a less discriminative and more integrative intercultural society.

6. Conclusion

In this study I argued that different societies should adopt different approaches to their nation’s citizen education. As opposed to the dualistic debate over which paradigm is better between multiculturalism and interculturalism, I proposed the possibility of diverse contextual fit that

could emerge differently and match differently with various social context. Inspired by the fact that only Western countries have been discussed in the course of debates so far, I brought to the debate the case of South Korea. I expect that shedding light onto a part of the world that has been marginalized in the debate would allow a more legitimate and more objective evaluation of the two paradigms since it finally starts to take into consideration the whole world, rather than parochially focusing on a few North American and European countries.

Although it is not very easy to clearly define what multiculturalism and interculturalism are, respectively, by analyzing the existing scholarly publications, I made a tentative distinction between the two discourses. Even though some people critique interculturalism as not being meaningfully differentiated from multiculturalism (Levey, 2012; Meer and Modood, 2012; Wieviorka, 2012), I found that interculturalism significantly differs from multiculturalism, at least at some crucial points. To summarize, interculturalism sees a person's identity and cultures much more flexible and changeable than multiculturalism does (Sze and Powell, 2004; Portera, 2008). Also, it further emphasizes continuous interactions rather than simple recognition of difference, and tries to see the foreign factors as positive resources, rather than negative risks (Portera, 2008; Titley, 2012). As a result, while multiculturalism focuses heavily on the peaceful coexistence of various groups per se, interculturalism aims at the further unity of a society as a whole, by and implementing new rules and social norms that are created by ceaseless interactions amongst diverse groups (Maxwell et al., 2012; Titley, 2012).

South Korea, which started to seriously recognize the situation that it was about to enter a multiethnic and multicultural society, has been putting a lot of efforts to build a favorable multicultural atmosphere since 2006. On the background of this seemingly sudden change, there was skyrocketing inflow of foreign immigrants with a considerable increase of the number of

foreign brides who married South Korean men. Despite the South Korean government and many other institutions' good intentions, however, many problems have been discovered in both macro and micro levels.

The three major problems that I found in South Korean multiculturalism are a) the misunderstanding of the nature of culture, b) unnecessarily strict distinction between native Koreans and “multicultural” population and c) objectification and stereotyping of minority. These problems are intimately linked to each other. Under the multicultural slogan, not only general citizens but also South Korean government and schools seem to regard culture as something static and fixed. They claim a “multicultural South Korea” that treats everybody equally, but this notion of assumed differences hinders genuine incorporation of newly emerged minority groups. For example, by treating the foreign immigrants differently from the native Korean population, the phrases “multicultural family” or “multicultural children” becomes tainted. People tend to think of immigrants and their children not only as an out-group that is inherently different from native Koreans, but also as a poor and dangerous group. In this regard, “multicultural people” are oftentimes treated as “second-class citizens.” This has led to a deplorable situation where people in the minority do not want to be called “multicultural” anymore and the native South Koreans complain about the special support for “foreigners” in South Korea. As a result, multiculturalism reinforces the cognitive and social distances between “original Korean” and “foreign, multicultural minority,” rather than earnestly incorporating minority groups.

Given this situation, I proposed interculturalism as a potential alternative to multiculturalism in South Korea. My argument is that, for South Korea's earnest transformation towards becoming a globalized nation, interculturalism would be a better option. This contention

is based on the two specific contextual facts. First, South Koreans have traditionally believed the homogeneity of Korean heritage and have held a quite collectivistic worldview. They are accustomed to view the world with the frame that focuses on groups, rather than idiosyncratic individuals. Naturally, they have developed the spontaneous process of distinguishing in-group and out-group, which could be evidenced by the unique language expressions that distinguishes “us” and “others,” rather than “my” and “your.” Keeping the long lasted belief of homogeneity that has been protected and reinforced by Korean collectivism, new immigrants are seen more as “out-group” that South Koreans cannot incorporate to their already-set Korean in-group. With this regard, multiculturalism reinforces, rather than ameliorating the cognitive segregation between “us, Koreans” versus “others.”

Second, the size of minority groups in South Korea is still too small to count as a comparable culture that constitutes “multiple cultures” existing in South Korea. Unlike countries like the United States where even ethnic minorities command a considerable portion of total population, South Korea has, at least at the current point, a disproportionately huge mainstream population which is native South Korean and a tiny group of immigrants or ethnic minorities. Multiculturalism that is adopted to a “not-yet-multicultural” society cannot avoid creating various side effects because the approach does not quite fit. Since there is a significant gap between the reality in South Korea and ideal circumstances where multiculturalism can function the best, multicultural efforts that are made by different societal sectors turn out to be either exaggerated distinction of minorities from mainstream Koreans or tacit assimilation.

In the end, I suggested that interculturalism would address the proposed problems much better, at least, in South Korean society. This is because it calls for a foundational transformation of cognition and behavior of South Korean people. It tells people that culture is a flow by

definition and could change over time and there is no concrete reason to be afraid of or avoid such changes. Once accepting this fluid notion of culture and cultural identity, distinguishing and labeling minority group becomes much less meaningful, since the assumed differences are resources for potential positive change, rather than threats or obstacles. A more important thing than merely recognizing differences and existing together in a same place without too many troubles is finding the way to actually integrate the different groups and achieve social unity that not only embraces but appreciates and utilizes differences as valuable resources. In this sense, interculturalism urges people to intermingle with diverse groups of people including minorities, via constant and mutual interactions, and finally incorporate them as a part of their society, rather than leaving them as a permanent alien within the society. And of course, this transformation of cognition cannot be easily found in multicultural approach in South Korea, which oftentimes reproduces and reinforces the traditional Korean perception that Koreans belong to one “pure” ethnic group and any other group is out-group that cannot be “one hundred percent Korean.”

But there is one caveat to note when implementing an intercultural approach. As Will Kymlicka (2012) noted, there might be a potential risk associated with interculturalism. Kymlicka worries that interculturalism may “play into the hands of xenophobes who reject both multiculturalism and interculturalism” (p. 5) Given that both British prime minister David Cameron and German prime minister Angela Merkel announced the “failure of multiculturalism” in the United Kingdom and Germany and widespread backlash against multiculturalism has been formed accordingly (Tittley, 2012), Kymlicka’s warning comes valuable. Interculturalism must not be confused with assimilation which forces the minority group to abandon their own culture and be a part of the mainstream culture. It is also not about simply rejecting multiculturalism. In interculturalism, people are not forced to be the same as the mainstream people, but are also not

forced to be remote and different from the mainstream. For that reason, some people view interculturalism as an attempt to “find a compromise between the polar opposites of multiculturalism and assimilation” (Emerson, 2012, p. 2). However, interculturalism is not simply a middle-point of multiculturalism and assimilation. Rather, it is something that pursues another level and shape of integration that goes beyond the mere recognition of differences or forceful assimilation.

Finally, I would like suggest some implications for future research in this field. The present study explored the problems at a conceptual level. It focused primarily on the differences between multiculturalism and interculturalism as different discourses, rather than focusing on how the two discourses can be realized in practice. Although I analyzed the concrete policies and educational practices and found some serious problems resulting from the multiculturalism rhetoric in South Korea, I did not provide a specific after-plan or a concrete way to move towards interculturalism. I wish that future studies with a similar topic will address the actual application of interculturalism in South Korea at a more practical level. I am well aware that the application of a paradigm is hugely different from conceptual calculation. This study is a sort of thought experiment. Therefore, in order to be certain about the effectiveness of the alternative paradigm, interculturalism, the implementation of the paradigm needs to be empirically tested. I hope that this study provides an impetus to further pursue this area.

Educating citizens to not only embrace and respect diversity but also to actively interact and create a social norm that can benefit everyone is a challenging task. Choosing and implementing the best fitting paradigm is also very tricky as we discovered in this thesis. However, to achieve a genuine meaning of democracy, a continuous endeavor to find and apply the right paradigm is crucial. James Banks (2008) has stressed the importance of raising the

“transformative citizen.” According to Banks, it is “a citizen who takes action to actualize values and moral principles beyond those of conventional authority” (p. 137). Regardless of the side—multiculturalism or interculturalism—a person takes, pondering about the most effective way to build a healthy and just society itself should be highly valued. And in the center of all of these endeavors, there is dialogue. Before finishing, I would like to include a quote from UNESCO’s *UNESCO World Report: Investing in Cultural Diversity and Intercultural Dialogue* (2009):

Dialogue between cultures must create space for mutual perception and appreciation of overlapping, multiple and dynamic cultural identities of every individual and social or cultural group (p. 44).

I hope the healthy debate over different paradigms including multiculturalism and interculturalism will encourage citizens to contemplate the meaning of diversity and social integration. There may not exist the “right answer,” but the process to try to find and pursue the right direction is incalculably valuable in itself.

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