

IMMIGRATION POLICY IN SOUTH KOREA:
AN ANALYSIS OF POLICY TRENDS AND THEIR
REPRESENTATION IN THE CURRENT RESEARCH

1. Introduction

In contrast to European countries that enjoy relatively free movement because of the Schengen Treaty, South Korea, a geographically isolated peninsula with limited avenues for land-based immigration, has taken a more measured approach to immigration policy discussions.¹ Whereas Poland's immigration policy has drawn significant attention in the EU since the 1990s, with input from diverse stakeholders, including NGOs, labor unions, the media, and political bodies,² South Korea's immigration policy has only recently come into focus, particularly following the 2018 Jeju Yemeni refugee crisis and pressing demographic shifts. In a report from the 2023 Korean Policy Briefing, the Ministry of Justice outlined plans to establish a centralized authority to coordinate border, migration, and immigration policies, aiming to stimulate national growth by attracting skilled professionals through region-specific visas. Furthermore, the Ministry intends to integrate and manage foreigner data disseminated across multiple government agencies by 2024. The Ministry of Justice seeks to promote human dignity by expanding support for crime victims and socially vulnerable individuals, as well as by strengthening human rights protections for migrant foreigners and detainees. The Ministry's initiatives include

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¹ C. Lee, 이민정책의 세계적 흐름과 과제 [Global Trends in Immigration Policy], 국제사회보장리뷰 [Global Social Security Review] 2017, vol. 1, pp. 67–81, <http://dx.doi.org/10.23063/2017.06.7> (access: 17.12.2023).

² P. Sadowski, K. Szczawińska, *Poland's response to the EU migration policy* [in:] *The migrant crisis: European perspectives and national discourses*, eds. M. Barlai, B. Fähnrich, Ch. Griessler *et al.*, Lit Verlag, Zürich 2017, series Studien zur politischen Kommunikation, Bd. 13, pp. 211–234.

developing tailored support systems for crime victims, launching online psychotherapy programs, and implementing a birth registration system for foreign children, as well as establishing departure waiting facilities outside airports.

This study offers a baseline analysis of immigration policy, now increasingly considered a strategic response to South Korea's low birthrate and aging population, which are central concerns of recent policymaking. As of 2019, foreign residents in Korea numbered approximately 2.2 million, comprising 4.3% of the total population, placing the nation on a trajectory toward evolving into a multicultural society. Among these groups, North Korean defectors, a globally unique population, numbered 33,658 in 2020, representing roughly 0.06% of the population. Although the annual number of defectors has stabilized around 1,300 since 2012, the proportion of long-term residents has risen, with 80.5% residing for over five years. As residence duration increases, the need for cultural integration becomes more pressing, with a significant portion (61.6%) of individuals reporting experiences of discrimination due to differences in cultural communication (18.0%).³

2. Literature Review

2.1. Concept and Scope of Immigration Policy

The Basic Plan for Foreigners' Policy defines immigration policy as "a policy providing permanent or temporary membership in society to foreigners and their families who seek residence in the Republic of Korea, encompassing necessary conditions to facilitate their integration from a holistic standpoint." According to the Immigration and Foreign Affairs Policy Division of the Ministry of Justice, foreign and immigration policies are designed to address "the population decline crisis due to low birthrate and aging, and the global competition to attract talented individuals," with the goal of "securing national growth engines through orderly openness supported by the public and social integration that fosters harmonious growth within Korea's shared values."⁴ Lee identified a paradigm shift toward a more community-based approach for foreign residents post-pandemic, correlating with the rising number of foreign residents in Korea.⁵ A 'people-first labor policy' that emphasizes

³ "The Kukmin Daily, Republic of Korea", www.kmib.co.kr; 인종차별적이고 반인권적인 2차 외국인정책기본계획을 반대한다 이주운동의 반격이 필요하다, <http://www.pssp.org/bbs/view.php?board=sola&nid=5957> (access: 16.05.2023).

⁴ 법무부 [Ministry of Justice], Korea Immigration Service, www.immigration.go.kr (access: 23.05.2024).

⁵ H. Lee, *A Study on the Improvement of the Ordinance for Supporting Foreign Residents: Focusing on the Area of Support as a Policy for Social Integration in Region*, "Korean Journal of Immigration Policy & Administration" 2024, vol. 7, no. 1, pp. 23–42.

prioritizing Korean employment without limiting foreign workforce participation could effectively support labor needs in industrial sectors and increase the number of caregivers, preparing for Korea's anticipated transition to an ultra-aged society, as demonstrated by the foreign housekeeping pilot program set to launch in Seoul in 2024.⁶

2.2. Types of Immigration Policies

Immigration policies are classified into exclusionary, assimilative, integrative, and multicultural policies.⁷ They can also be categorized into policies concerning the movement of financial assets or other resources, policies governing the utilization of immigrants' resources, policies on the inflow and outflow of immigrants within the domestic legal labor market, policies for immigrant integration and statistical data, and policies for participation in international migration discussions.⁸ Policies are also categorized by immigration targets, including foreign workers to support the domestic labor market, high-level professionals, marriage migrants, and multicultural families formed through family reunification. Refugees and undocumented immigrants, along with North Korean defectors – who have been displaced from their residences for over 50 years⁹ – are also included in this study. The Third Basic Plan for Foreigners' Policy (2018–2022)¹⁰ outlines foreigner policy as encompassing border management, citizenship policies, and immigrant social integration.¹¹ Border and immigration management involves immigration screening, visa issuance, and

⁶ M. Lee, *이주돌봄노동자 고용에 관한 입법 필요성 및 방향에 관한 고찰* [A Study on the Necessity and Direction of Legislation on Employment of Migrant Care Workers], *법과사회* [Korea Journal of Law & Society] 2023, vol. 72, pp. 175–217, doi: 10.33446/KJLS.72.5.

⁷ G. Han, *이민정책론* [Immigration Policy], 박영사 [Parkyoungsa], Seoul 2016, pp. 193–223.

⁸ S. Ko, H. Lee, Y. Cho, *A Study on the Trends and Implications of Overseas Research on Immigrant Social Integration Policy*, “Korean Journal of Immigration Policy & Administration” 2022, vol. 5, no. 2, pp. 71–86; Y. Cho, *국제이주와 개발: 글로벌 이주 거버넌스의 형성과 이민정책의 변화* [International Migration and Development: The Shaping of Global Migration Governance and Changes in Immigration Policy], *국제정치연구* [The Journal of International Relations] 2015, vol. 18, no. 1, p. 167, doi: 10.15235/jir.2015.6.18.1.151.

⁹ J. Jang, S. Kim, H. Kim, *난민 정착지원 정책개발을 위한 북한이탈주민 정착지원 정책과의 비교 연구* [A Comparative Study on Settlement Policies for Refugees and North Korean Defectors: Focusing on Policy Implication for Supporting Settlement of Refugees in South Korea], *입법과 정책* [Legislation and Policy Studies] 2021, vol. 13, no. 1, pp. 89–116, doi: 10.22809/nars.2021.13.1.004.

¹⁰ H. Lee, *경계분석을 활용한 이민정책 구조화에 관한 연구: 이민정책 연구에 나타난 정책문제 및 정책과제를 중심으로* [A Study on Immigration Policy Structuring Using Boundary Analysis: Focusing on the Policy Issues and Policy Tasks Presented in the Study of Immigration Policy], *국가정책연구* [Public Policy Review] 2020, vol. 34, no. 3, pp. 83–85. doi: 10.17327/ipa.2020.34.3.004.

¹¹ *Ibidem*, pp. 85–88.

entry permits, while foreigner residence management includes refugee recognition, residence permits, and deportation. Social integration policies address multiculturalism, anti-discrimination programs, and immigrant adaptation, with local government ordinances supporting foreign residents' community integration across areas such as economy, safety, human rights, health, housing, and education.¹²

2.3. Areas of Immigration Policy: Implemented Policies by Ministries

In 2018, the Ministry of the Interior and Safety published the Targeted Support Measures for Foreign Residents,¹³ which classified migrants into categories such as foreign workers, foreign nationals, international students, and multicultural families (including married and naturalized immigrants, children of mid-career immigrants, and children born in Korea). In terms of social service support, the government categorizes families as domestic, multicultural, or other foreign families, providing support in areas including housing, medical care, children's education, family support, and employment. The measures are broadly organized into categories of immigration, settlement, social integration, stable settlement support, and inclusion in public education, with related policies currently being implemented by various ministries.

Ministries such as the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Gender Equality and Family, the Ministry of Employment and Labor, and the Office of the National Security Council are implementing policies for foreigners living in Korea, naturalized Koreans, multicultural families, overseas Koreans, refugees, and North Korean defectors.¹⁴ The Immigration and Foreign Affairs Headquarters oversees border and foreign resident management, including visa and undocumented immigrant control, naturalization processes, social integration programs, refugee screening, and international migration. It also conducts enforcement work in cooperation with the Ministry of Defense and the National Police Agency. Immigration management was transferred from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to the Ministry of Justice in 1961, and it was handled by the Immigration Management Division under the Prosecutor's Office of the Ministry of Justice. The

¹² H. Lee, 외국인주민 지원 조례 개선 방안 연구: 지역사회통합 정책 지원 영역을 중심으로 [A Study on the Improvement of the Ordinance for Supporting Foreign Residents: Focusing on the Area of Support as a Policy for Social Integration in Region], 한국이민정책학보 [Korean Journal of Immigration Policy & Administration] 2024, vol. 7, no. 1, pp. 23–42, doi: 10.46894/kaipa.2024.7.1.2.

¹³ 외국인주민 정책대상별 관계부처시책 [Relevant Ministries' Policies for Foreign Residents], www.mois.go.kr/cmm/fms/FileDown.do?atchFileId=FILE_000828819c0JeAU&fileSn=0 (access: 1.02.2024).

¹⁴ Under the Ministry of Justice, there are currently six immigration and alien bureaus, 13 immigration and alien offices, 24 branch offices, two foreign shelters, and one immigration and alien support center nationwide.

Immigration and Foreign Affairs Office was renamed the Immigration and Foreign Affairs Agency and the Immigration and Foreign Affairs Office on 10 May 2018, due to revisions to the Immigration and Foreign Affairs Policy Headquarters. The Immigration and Foreign Affairs Office combats illegal immigration by addressing smuggling and conducting passenger screenings, and has implemented strict enforcement measures on undocumented immigrants since 2015. Since 2018, the Ministry of the Interior and Safety has operated a special immigration investigation team dedicated to investigating immigration-related crimes that facilitate illegal immigration.¹⁵ In addition, to enhance the collection of foreign tax arrears, which has been increasing due to the increase in illegal immigration prevention activities and campaigns, voluntary departure of illegal immigrants, and the number of foreigners staying in Korea, the Ministry of the Interior and Safety has piloted the “Foreigners’ Tax Arrears Verification System,” which has been in operation since May 2016 at the Ansan Branch of the Incheon Immigration and Foreigners Affairs Office, limited to local taxes.¹⁶ The government is also promoting the use of foreign labor and flexible employment in rural areas and primary and secondary businesses that are experiencing labor shortages through the implementation of the foreign inflow policy and seasonal worker system and is helping to attract foreign talent and encourage foreign employment and long-term stay in high-tech industries through the foreign skilled worker scoring system. The special naturalization of outstanding talent and restricted multiple citizenship policy actively attract foreign talent through the special naturalization of talent in specific fields. Other areas of foreigner management include international student policies, attracting investment immigrants, inclusion policies for overseas Koreans, and expanding the multiple visa system to attract foreign tourists. To help immigrants settle and integrate into society, the Ministry of Justice has been implementing a social integration program since 2009. For immigrants who have difficulty participating in group-based education because of pregnancy, childbirth, disability, employment, or living in remote areas, the Ministry of Justice operates “online video education,” in which one instructor teaches nine immigrants in real time through computer video cameras and activates special classes, such as night and weekend classes, to reflect the characteristics of immigrants who have difficulty participating in daytime education, such

¹⁵ H. Lee, K. Nam, 이민정책·행정 관련 공무원의 전문성 제고를 위한 대학교육 연계 방안: 교정직, 사회복지직과의 비교를 중심으로 [A Study on the Connection with University Education to Enhance the Professionalism of Immigration Policy Administration Public Officials: A Comparative Study with Correctional and Social Welfare Officers], *다문화와 평화* [Multiculture & Peace] 2019, vol. 13, no. 2, pp. 172–193, doi: 10.22446/mnpisk.2019.13.2.009.

¹⁶ Since May 2017, the program has been expanded to include local and national taxes and customs duties at 16 immigration and foreign offices, and since 2018, it has been expanded to 38 immigration and foreign offices nationwide to prevent leakage of national funds.

as foreign workers and conversation instructors.¹⁷ In fields such as law and medicine, the social integration volunteer program promotes the social integration of foreigners in Korea. In addition, it runs an immigrant early adaptation program for long-term foreign residents and supports immigrant networking activities. As the demand for international marriages has increased rapidly since the 2000s, the Minister of Justice has designated that those who wish to marry residents of seven Asian countries (China, Vietnam, the Philippines, Cambodia, Mongolia, Uzbekistan, and Thailand) must complete a guidance program for international marriages before they can invite their spouses.¹⁸ Since 2018, the Guidance Program for International Marriages has included human rights education on respect for human rights, conflict resolution, and domestic violence prevention to promote the human rights of marriage migrants and support their successful settlement in Korea.

The Republic of Korea acceded to the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and the 1967 Protocol relating to the Status of Refugees on 3 December 1992, and the Refugee Convention entered into force on 3 March 1993. On 10 December 1993, provisions related to refugees were established for the first time in the Immigration Control Act and the Enforcement Decree of the same Act, and on 10 February 2012, the Refugee Act was enacted and implemented on 1 July 2013 (Ministry of Justice).¹⁹ Because of geopolitical characteristics, refugees entering Korea are primarily through ports and asylum applications at airports. In 2018, the Jeju Yemen refugee crisis caused a major social ripple, with an influx of 500 refugees. As Korea grows as an economic powerhouse, the number of economic refugees is gradually increasing, and the Ministry of Justice is supporting refugees through the Immigration and Foreigner Support Center to help them settle into Korean society, including language training and childcare.

The Ministry of Strategy and Finance has announced a plan to utilize foreign labor in a declining population, supporting additional foreign policies, such as using

¹⁷ M. Park, I. Jeon, 대한민국 이민정책의 역사와 방향에 관한 연구: 캐나다 다문화주의와 이민정책을 중심으로 [A Study on the History and Direction of Korea's Immigration Policy: Focusing on Canadian Multiculturalism and Immigration Policy], 한국행정사학지 [Korean Public Administration History Review] 2023, vol. 59, no. 59, pp. 104–106.

¹⁸ Y. Kim, 한국 내 이민자들에 대한 사회적 지지의 유형화 연구 – 공적 영역의 구조적, 기능적 지지 유형을 중심으로 –. [A Study on the Types of Social Support for Immigrants in Korea – Focusing on the Types of Structural and Functional Support in the Public Domain], 인문사회 21 [The Journal of Humanities and Social Science 21] 2023, vol. 14, no. 2, p. 2905, doi: 10.22143/HSS21.14.2.199.

¹⁹ J. Ryu, 한국 난민체도의 문제점과 이주아동의 사회적 기본권보장을 위한 법적 연구 – 한국의 미등록 이주아동의 현황과 사회적 기본권보장을 중심으로 [A Legal Study on the Problems of the Korean Refugee System and the Protection of Migrant Children's Basic Social Rights – Focusing on the current status of unregistered migrant children in Korea and the guarantee of basic social rights], 비교법연구 [The Journal of Comparative Law] 2023, vol. 23, no. 1, pp. 251–295.

foreigners staying in Korea as an alternative to the declining birthrate, supporting the settlement of international students in Korea, and attracting excellent foreign workers with specialized skills. In addition to contributing to the development of domestic industries by enhancing skilled labor systems, the ministry is also supporting activities to attract talented human resources to secure future economic growth. The ministry is providing institutional support in the areas of attracting foreigners and supporting their settlement, such as expanding opportunities for Korean language education in overseas elementary and secondary schools, improving the management system and supporting international students' settlement in Korea, and establishing new visas to revitalize the digital economy. Some social integration policies are also in place for immigrants and naturalized citizens. Unlike the Ministry of Justice's social integration program, the Ministry of Strategy and Finance's social integration program includes measures to strengthen social integration education and support multicultural students' school life. Social integration education refers to global citizenship education for Koreans in schools. Support for multicultural school life includes expanding Korean language classes and distance education.

Skrentny notes a stark contrast between European and East Asian immigration policies, with the latter providing limited accommodations for low-skilled asylum seekers and refugees and not allowing foreign workers to bring their families.²⁰ However, according to 2023 data, the Ministry of Employment and Labor is implementing policies to harmonize overseas workers with domestic labor markets. It functions through the employment permit system, which enables small and medium-sized enterprises facing labor shortages to obtain employment permits from the government to hire non-professional foreign workers, the Foreign Worker Business Transformation Map, and the specialized Re-entry Employment Program for Foreign Workers. Additionally, it provides support for foreign workers' stay in Korea through the Stay Support Service and runs support centers and counseling centers for foreign workers with cultural, language, and other issues.

The Ministry of Gender Equality and Family provides support for youth with migrant backgrounds, support and counseling services for victims affected by international marriages and multicultural family issues. The Ministry of Women, Gender Equality and Family operates the Social Adaptation Program for North Korean Refugee Youth, the Training of Support Personnel for Migrant Youth, and the Rainbow School²¹. The targets of support are youth with migrant backgrounds aged 9 to 24 years, youth from multicultural families under Article 2, paragraph 1 of the Multicultural Family Support Act, and other youth who have migrated to

²⁰ J.D. Skrentny, *How to Understand Immigration Policy*, "Brown Journal of World Affairs" 2013, vol. 20, no. 1, pp. 139–152.

²¹ 이주배경청소년지원재단 [Migrant Youth Foundation], www.rainbowyouth.or.kr (access: 10.06.2024).

Korea and are experiencing difficulties in social integration and academic adjustment (North Korean refugees and mid-career immigrants).²² The Fourth Basic Plan for Multicultural Family Policy, revised in 2023, plans to introduce a new system to address the problem that the number of long-term resident married immigrants has increased, the types of multicultural households have diversified, and the discrimination experience of married immigrants has decreased significantly; however, the nation's multicultural acceptance remains low, and the educational attainment of school-age multicultural youth is lower than that of the general population. In line with the policy outcomes of the 3rd Basic Plan for Multicultural Family Policy, the Ministry of Gender Equality and Family Affairs is promoting multicultural understanding education and tailored support for multicultural children at various stages of growth to reduce the gap in educational attainment and reflect the needs of multicultural families. With the goal of realizing a harmonious society that grows together with multicultural families, the Ministry of Gender Equality and Family Affairs plans to promote policies for multicultural families from 2023 to 2027 with goals that include providing tailored support for multicultural children and adolescents according to their growth stages, supporting marriage immigrants through different phases of settlement, promoting multicultural acceptance based on mutual respect, and strengthening the foundation for the implementation of multicultural family policies.

In the 2023 Multicultural Education Support Plan, the Ministry of Education proposed a plan to create a multicultural-friendly educational environment by providing customized support without blind spots that considers the educational needs of multicultural students, improving the multicultural acceptance of school members, embedding the multicultural education support system, and supporting school adaptation and stable growth. Services such as customized Korean language education for overseas students, multicultural education in collaboration with families and communities, and foreign language guidance for students transferring to domestic schools through collaboration with related organizations are being provided, and the Korean language ability diagnosis and correction system has been expanded to all school levels.²³

The Ministry of the Interior and Safety supports local governments in implementing policies to support foreign residents that reflect local characteristics, and local governments are also implementing multicultural migrant support centers,

²² O. Park, Y. Oh, *중도입국 청소년의 적응에 관한 국내 학술지 연구동향 탐색* [Exploring research trends on the adaptation of immigrant adolescents in Domestic Journals], *청소년시설환경* [Youth Facilities and Environment] 2022, vol. 20, no. 1, pp. 17–18.

²³ H. Kim, H. Kim, *이주배경 아동·청소년의 교육권 보장 실태에 관한 연구* [Education Rights of Immigrant Children and Adolescents in Korea], *도시연구* [Korean Journal of Urban Studies] 2024, vol. 25, p. 80, doi:10.34165/urbanr.2024..25.69.

multilingual guides in Gwangsan-gu, an area with a high concentration of foreign residents, and mobile classes in Asan, Chungcheongnam-do.

3. Measure and Method

3.1. Selection of research subjects

Until June 2023, there were no KCI-listed journals specifically in the field of immigration policy. The KCI candidate journal, Korean Journal of Immigration Policy & Administration (한국이민정책학보), has published a total of 53 articles since its establishment in 2016. Additionally, there are only three journals related to “immigration” registered in KCI: “Korean Journal of International Migration” (한국이민학), “The Journal of Immigration & Multiculturalism” (이민다문화연구), and “Journal of the Korean Association for Immigration Administration” (한국이민행정학회보). Consequently, this study analyzed major journals listed in KCI as of June 2023, including “European Studies” (33 articles), “Humanities & Society21” (14 articles), “EU Studies” (10 articles), “Law Review” (10 articles), “World Regional Studies” (10 articles), “Korean Social Policy” (9 articles), “Korean Journal of Public Administration” (9 articles), “Contemporary Society & Multiculturalism” (9 articles), “National Policy Studies” (8 articles), “Ethnic Studies” (8 articles), and other journals (263 articles) that have published immigration-related research.

“European Studies,” “EU Studies,” “World and Regional Studies,” and “Ethnic Studies” were used for comparative studies and analyses of immigration policies abroad, while “Law Review” provided precedent studies on immigration-related laws. Journals such as “Korean Social Policy,” “Korean Journal of Autonomous Administration,” and “National Policy Studies” contributed research on domestic administrative and policy matters related to immigration. Additionally, “Modern Society and Multiculturalism” published numerous articles focusing on multiculturalism. The initial analysis period is organized by presidential administration, encompassing a 20-year span from the Roh Moo-hyun (노무현) administration to the current Yoon Seok-yeol (윤석열) administration, a timeframe during which substantial discussions on establishing an immigration agency emerged. Accordingly, the study period is delineated into the Roh Moo-hyun (노무현, 2003–2007), Lee Myung-bak (이명박, 2008–2012), Park Geun-hye (박근혜, 2013–2016), and Moon Jae-in (문재인, 2017–2021) administrations, while the Yoon Seok-yeol (윤석열, 2022–2023) administration is excluded due to its nascent stage. A total of 418 papers (comprising 408 KCI-listed papers and 10 high-ranking journal articles) were initially selected for analysis. Of these, 114 papers were excluded as they were deemed outside the study’s scope such as historical analyses on the Japanese colonial period and

24 literary papers covering topics like diaspora translations. Ultimately, 280 papers were selected for in-depth analysis, focusing on those that defined immigration policy's concept, scope, and policy aims, addressed policy challenges, and advocated specific policy positions.²⁴

3.2. Research Methodology

According to prior studies²⁵ on research trend analysis, trends in educational administration research have been analyzed in either a single or mixed form, depending on research topic, purpose, and method²⁶. A synthesis of these studies indicates that, while research topics, purposes, and methods are commonly examined, the basis for analysis varies among researchers. In this study, 280 papers were analyzed using either a single or mixed approach, following the trend analysis methods established in earlier studies. Research fields were categorized based on the KCI classification, and trends in policy service, social issues, legal systems, and policy targets by regime were analyzed using keywords and abstracts identified by the original authors of each paper.

3.2.1. Research field

The research fields included all social science disciplines in the data. A total of 43 fields were studied on immigration policy, including other public, urban/local, and administrative law. Policy studies were categorized into healthcare/welfare/social policy and policy studies, and social work was categorized into social research/analysis, social work, and community welfare. The research fields were classified according to the KCI Academic Citation Index.

3.2.2. Research topic

For the research topic, the research was conducted using five large classifications and three to seven subclassifications for each classification. The classification of

²⁴ H. Lee, 경계분석을 활용한 이민정책 구조화에 관한 연구: 이민정책 연구에 나타난 정책문제 및 정책과제를 중심으로 [A Study on Immigration Policy Structuring Using Boundary Analysis: Focusing on the Policy Issues and Policy Tasks Presented in the Study of Immigration Policy], 국가정책연구 [Public Policy Review] 2020, vol. 34, no. 3, pp. 83–85, doi: 10.17327/ippa.2020.34.3.004.

²⁵ H. Yoo, K. Eum, 한국 교원정책연구의 최근 주제동향 분석 [The Recent Topic Trend of Teacher Policy Studies in Korea], 교육정치학연구 [The Journal of Politics of Education] 2014, vol. 21, no. 3, pp. 29–60; B. Shin, Y. Lee, K. Park, 교원정책 연구 동향 분석 [Analyzing Trends of Teachers Policy Studies], 한국교원교육연구 [The Journal of Korean Teacher Education] 2018, vol. 35, no. 2, pp. 211–240.

²⁶ H. Yoo, K. Eum, 한국 교원정책연구의 최근 주제동향 분석 [The Recent Topic Trend of Teacher Policy Studies in Korea], 교육정치학연구 [The Journal of Politics of Education] 2014, vol. 21, no. 3, pp. 29–60.

residence management aspects according to the Basic Plan for Foreigners' Policy was subdivided into social issues, and the classification of social integration policies was subdivided into service items. In addition, I further analyzed the data by policy type, target, and law and system.

To confirm the comprehensive nature of the study, the classification by policy type was categorized into five distinct areas as follows: 1) immigration policy, which encompasses asylum policies, migration policies, immigration policies, and refugee policies; 2) equality policy, which includes studies that examine policies that promote the principle of equality and nondiscrimination against immigrants; 3) multicultural policy (multicultural family support policy), which focuses on studies that analyze policies related to multiculturalism, interdependence, multicultural coexistence, and interculturality; 4) social integration policies, which encompasses studies with keywords such as assimilation, integration, social integration, cultural adaptation, civic integration, and symbiosis; and 5) immigrant welfare policies, which includes policies related to immigrant social rights, immigrant life satisfaction, and welfare.

Studies dealing with social issues were further categorized into five subcategories: 1) foreign crime, which includes foreigner crime prevention, foreigner crime, foreigner police officers, foreigner security measures, and transnational crime; 2) fear of crime (phobia), which includes studies with keywords such as social security, xenophobia, racial attitudes, fear of crime, and threat perception; 3) refugee issues, which includes studies on refugee conflicts, refugee crises, resettled refugees, and boat people; 4) illegal immigration and immigration management, which consists of illegal immigration, border management, transportation regulations, illegal migration, illegal stay, and undocumented migrants; and 5) citizenship and visas, which encompasses citizenship, nationalization, and supplemental birthright citizenship.

The services for foreigners were categorized into settlement and adaptation services, healthcare services, multicultural services, and services related to nationality acquisition and visas. Key words such as job search support policy, adjustment to life in Korea, social adjustment, immigrant early adjustment program, immigrant early adjustment support center, cultural adjustment, and settlement support were classified under item (1), "settlement/adjustment services," while studies on migrants' subjective health, depression, prevention measures, and access to healthcare services were classified under "healthcare services." The "multicultural services" category comprised studies organized under the following keywords: multicultural communities, family support centers, family support policies, governance, and education. Immigration policies were categorized into seven subcategories. The subjects of immigration policy were categorized into seven subcategories: female marriage migrants, illegal immigrants, North Korean defectors, brain drain, foreign high-level workers, international students, foreign workers, and multicultural families. In the case of foreign laborers, they are categorized as specialized laborers (E-1 to E-7) and nonspecialized laborers (E-9) according to the type of visa. For the

multicultural family category, I included multicultural youth who were members of multicultural families. Married female immigrants are also members of multicultural families; however, there are many studies on married female immigrants alone, and they are categorized as a separate category.

In terms of laws and institutions, I categorized them into the family invitation system, employment permit system, military service system, and immigration law. In the case of “immigration law,” I included all previous studies that dealt with comprehensive immigration law.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1. Trends in Research Fields

The trends in social sciences research on immigration policy are presented in Table 1. Studies have been actively conducted across fields such as education, law, social work, sociology, and policy studies, with a noticeable increase in research within regional studies. Since 2005, when both domestic and international demand for immigration surged, the volume of immigration-related studies has risen sharply.

Table 1. Trends in Research Fields

Discipline	N (%)	Discipline	N (%)	Discipline	N (%)	Discipline	N (%)
Management	1(0.4)	Basic law	2(0.7)	Social science information	1(0.4)	Population/elderly/community sociology	2(0.7)
Economics	1(0.4)	Other Law	8(2.9)	Social welfare survey/analysis	1(0.4)	Japan studies	1(0.4)
Police administration	7(2.5)	Other social sciences	18(6.4)	Social welfare studies	6(2.1)	Policy studies	13(4.6)
Tourism	1(0.4)	Other social sciences in general	8(2.9)	Sociology	5(1.8)	Political process	1(0.4)
Education	2(0.7)	Other public administration	3(1.1)	Gender economics	1(0.4)	Political society	3(1.1)
Pedagogy	7(2.5)	City/local administration	3(1.1)	Broadcasting	3(1.1)	Political diplomacy	31(11.1)

Defense/security policy	1(0.4)	Law	24(8.6)	Early Childhood Education	1(0.4)	Geography	4(1.4)
International/regional development	3(1.1)	Northern Europe Studies	3(1.1)	Ethics education	1(0.4)	Regional development	1(0.4)
International relations/cooperation	1(0.4)	Social science in general	33(11.8)	Medical/welfare/social policy	6(2.1)	Regional Welfare	1(0.4)
Regional Studies	39(13.9)	Korean Language Education	1(0.4)	Administrative law	2(0.7)	Law (Constitution)	3(1.1)
Regional Studies General	2(0.7)	Korean political society	4(1.4)	Public administration	16(5.7)	Total	280 (100.0)

Source: KCI Academic Citation Index (access: 17.12.2023).

4.1.1. Analysis by Policy Type

Table 2 displays the trend analysis by policy type. The frequency of studies increased across administrations, from the Roh administration through the Moon administration. Research on equality policies began during the Park administration, while multicultural policies have been ongoing since the Lee administration. Overall, research on general immigration policies and social integration policies for immigrants has been the most prevalent.

Table 2. Analysis of frequency by policy type

Type	Government	N
Immigration policy	Roh Moo-hyun (2003–2007)	1
	Lee Myung-bak (2008–2012)	20
	Park Geun-hye (2013–2016)	22
	Moon Jae-in (2017–2021)	36
Equality policy	Roh Moo-hyun (2003–2007)	0
	Lee Myung-bak (2008–2012)	0
	Park Geun-hye (2013–2016)	1
	Moon Jae-in (2017–2021)	3
Multicultural policy	Roh Moo-hyun (2003–2007)	1
	Lee Myung-bak (2008–2012)	14
	Park Geun-hye (2013–2016)	15
	Moon Jae-in (2017–2021)	19

Social integration policy	Roh Moo-hyun (2003–2007)	0
	Lee Myung-bak (2008–2012)	13
	Park Geun-hye (2013–2016)	21
	Moon Jae-in (2017–2021)	37
Immigrant welfare policy	Roh Moo-hyun (2003–2007)	1
	Lee Myung-bak (2008–2012)	1
	Park Geun-hye (2013–2016)	3
	Moon Jae-in (2017–2021)	5
Total		85

Source: own work.

4.1.2. Analysis by Service Type

As shown in Table 3, research on settlement and multicultural services increased sharply during the Moon administration. The data also reveal a generational trend toward increased studies on migrant services. Research on settlement support, multicultural services, and nationality acquisition services is nearly equivalent, though only six studies addressed healthcare services for immigrants – a potential limitation due to selecting only social science papers.

Table 3. Analysis of frequency by service type

Type	Government	N
Settlement/adjustment services	Roh Moo-hyun (2003–2007)	0
	Lee Myung-bak (2008–2012)	1
	Park Geun-hye (2013–2016)	5
	Moon Jae-in (2017–2021)	14
Healthcare services	Roh Moo-hyun (2003–2007)	0
	Lee Myung-bak (2008–2012)	0
	Park Geun-hye (2013–2016)	2
	Moon Jae-in (2017–2021)	4
Multicultural Services	Roh Moo-hyun (2003–2007)	1
	Lee Myung-bak (2008–2012)	3
	Park Geun-hye (2013–2016)	5
	Moon Jae-in (2017–2021)	12
Total		64

Source: own work.

4.1.3. Analysis by Social Issues

Studies on social issues became more prominent starting with the Lee administration. Unlike other areas that saw a steady increase in study frequency, research on illegal immigration and immigration management showed a slight decline under the Moon administration compared to the Lee and Park periods. In terms of social issues, the highest number of studies were related to the fear and hatred of foreigners, with 16 studies. In the overall immigration policy-related research, the least number of studies dealing with social issues related to foreigners (32 out of 280) were conducted in the social sciences (table 4).

Table 4. Analysis of the frequency of research on social issues

Type	Government	N
Foreign crime	Roh Moo-hyun (2003–2007)	0
	Lee Myung-bak (2008–2012)	1
	Park Geun-hye (2013–2016)	4
	Moon Jae-in (2017–2021)	3
Fear of crime (phobia)	Roh Moo-hyun (2003–2007)	0
	Lee Myung-bak (2008–2012)	4
	Park Geun-hye (2013–2016)	5
	Moon Jae-in (2017–2021)	7
Refugee issues	Roh Moo-hyun (2003–2007)	0
	Lee Myung-bak (2008–2012)	2
	Park Geun-hye (2013–2016)	3
	Moon Jae-in (2017–2021)	8
Illegal immigration and immigration management	Roh Moo-hyun (2003–2007)	0
	Lee Myung-bak (2008–2012)	4
	Park Geun-hye (2013–2016)	4
	Moon Jae-in (2017–2021)	2
Citizenship and visas	Roh Moo-hyun (2003–2007)	0
	Lee Myung-bak (2008–2012)	4
	Park Geun-hye (2013–2016)	6
	Moon Jae-in (2017–2021)	12
Total		32

Source: own work.

4.1.4. Analysis by Law and System

Table 5. Analysis of research trends related to law and system

Type	Government	N
Family invitation	Roh Moo-hyun (2003–2007)	0
	Lee Myung-bak (2008–2012)	0
	Park Geun-hye (2013–2016)	1
	Moon Jae-in (2017–2021)	3
Employment permit	Roh Moo-hyun (2003–2007)	0
	Lee Myung-bak (2008–2012)	1
	Park Geun-hye (2013–2016)	2
	Moon Jae-in (2017–2021)	5
Military service	Roh Moo-hyun (2003–2007)	0
	Lee Myung-bak (2008–2012)	0
	Park Geun-hye (2013–2016)	0
	Moon Jae-in (2017–2021)	3
Immigration law	Roh Moo-hyun (2003–2007)	0
	Lee Myung-bak (2008–2012)	8
	Park Geun-hye (2013–2016)	13
	Moon Jae-in (2017–2021)	19
Total		45

Source: own work.

The analysis in Table 5 shows that research on the family invitation program began with the Park administration, while studies on the military service commenced under the Moon administration. With the continuous increase in immigration, research on immigration law and foreign employment authorization has grown steadily, with studies on immigration law comprising 40% of total immigration policy research.

4.1.5. Analysis by Policy Target

In terms of policy targets the highest number of studies focused on married female immigrants (56), followed by multicultural families (39) and foreign workers (25). Research on married female immigrants, foreign workers, and multicultural families has shown a steady increase. However, only a single study addressed illegal immigrants during the Lee administration, and two studies discussed brain drain under the Park administration. Research on high-skilled foreign professionals began under the Lee administration and saw increased attention under the Moon administration, while studies on North Korean defectors have been ongoing since the Park administration.

Table 6. Analysis of research trends according to policy targets

Type	Government	N
Female marriage migrants	Roh Moo-hyun (2003–2007)	4
	Lee Myung-bak (2008–2012)	11
	Park Geun-hye (2013–2016)	17
	Moon Jae-in (2017–2021)	24
Illegal immigrants	Roh Moo-hyun (2003–2007)	0
	Lee Myung-bak (2008–2012)	1
	Park Geun-hye (2013–2016)	0
	Moon Jae-in (2017–2021)	0
North Korean defectors	Roh Moo-hyun (2003–2007)	0
	Lee Myung-bak (2008–2012)	0
	Park Geun-hye (2013–2016)	2
	Moon Jae-in (2017–2021)	0
Brain drains	Roh Moo-hyun (2003–2007)	0
	Lee Myung-bak (2008–2012)	1
	Park Geun-hye (2013–2016)	0
	Moon Jae-in (2017–2021)	8
Foreign high-level workers & international students	Roh Moo-hyun (2003–2007)	0
	Lee Myung-bak (2008–2012)	5
	Park Geun-hye (2013–2016)	9
	Moon Jae-in (2017–2021)	11
Foreign workers	Roh Moo-hyun (2003–2007)	0
	Lee Myung-bak (2008–2012)	0
	Park Geun-hye (2013–2016)	1
	Moon Jae-in (2017–2021)	4
Multicultural families	Roh Moo-hyun (2003–2007)	0
	Lee Myung-bak (2008–2012)	4
	Park Geun-hye (2013–2016)	8
	Moon Jae-in (2017–2021)	27
Total		91

Source: own work.

4.2. Trends in Research topics by Administration

4.2.1. Roh Moo-hyun Administration (2003–2007)

The participatory government inaugurated on 25 February 2003, marked a pivotal point in South Korea's immigration policy. The administration underscored that issues related to foreigners' human rights, living conditions, and legal status had not

been sufficiently addressed before, prompting policy-level discussions. Although immigration policy research was not active during this period, studies focused on married female immigrants. President Roh's 74th National Task Conference, which included the Comprehensive Plan for the Social Integration of Female Married Immigrant Families and Mixed-race Migrants,²⁷ laid the groundwork for policies supporting married female immigrants in Korea.²⁸ In April 2006, President Roh advocated for a law regulating international marriage brokers to ensure transparency and prevent human rights violations, reflecting the rising number of international marriages. The administration also took steps to support social integration and basic livelihood support for married migrant women, relaxed citizenship criteria, and enacted anti-discrimination laws that considered multicultural factors. In 2008, a registration system for international marriage brokers was established, and the foreign employment permit system was introduced.

4.2.2. Lee Myung-bak Administration (2008–2012)

During the Lee administration, academic research on immigration policy in general began. Following the rising anti-immigrant sentiment in East Asian countries, several studies have been conducted on the fear of crime, illegal immigration, and immigrant management. Similar to the Roh administration, studies on married female immigrants were conducted. The basic direction of the Lee government's foreign policy is to strengthen national competitiveness by opening up the country, actively attracting talented people such as experts, and introducing skilled workers as needed, but in principle not allowing them to settle for more than a certain period of time and giving preferential treatment to compatriots in terms of social integration and strengthening Korean capabilities. Second, developing our society into a mature multicultural society in which human rights are respected, prepare for the emergence of a multicultural society due to the increasing number of immigrants settling in Korea, and ensure that the human rights of foreigners are a universal value of an open society. The third strategy is to prove a residence order based on laws and principles, consistently and strictly enforce laws against illegal immigration, and effectively deal with foreign crimes by systematically managing the border. The Refugee Act of February 2012 and the Nationality Act of 2010 were enacted and revised.²⁹

²⁷ ‘여성결혼 이민자 가족 및 혼혈인·이주자의 사회통합을 위한 종합대책’.

²⁸ J. Park, 한국의 다문화주의와 다문화정책의 선택적 적용 [The Selective Adaptations of Multiculturalism and Multicultural Policies], 한국정책학회보 [The Korea Association for Policy Studies] 2010, vol. 19, no. 3, pp. 259–288.

²⁹ W. Choi, Y. Lee, W. Choo, 중앙정부의 다문화정책 조정에 관한 연구 - 한국과 독일의 다문화정책 비교를 중심으로 [A Study on the Central Government Multicultural Policy Coordination: Focusing on a Comparison of Multicultural Policies between Korea and Germany], 한독사회과학논총 [Zeitschrift der Koreanisch-Deutschen Gesellschaft fuer Sozialwissenschaften] 2012, vol. 22, no. 1, pp. 44–48.

4.2.3. Park Geun-hye Administration (2013–2016)

Under the Park administration, research on social integration policies was conducted in addition to immigration policies. There have also been some studies on services related to citizenship acquisition and settlement support services because of the increase in migrant influx. Research on crime fear (xenophobia), illegal immigration/immigrant management, and married female immigrants has remained dominant. During the administration, the Second Basic Plan for Foreigners' Policy was implemented, and it stated that it would "continue to promote the values of the First Plan while reflecting the diverse and conflicting demands of the public on foreigners' policies" and "promote a balanced policy that emphasizes order and safety, and the responsibility and contribution of immigrants." The policy goals of the Second Foreign Policy Framework Plan are outlined as follows: "Openness" – to support economic revitalization and attract talented individuals; "Integration" – to promote social integration where Korea's shared values are respected; "Human Rights" – to prevent discrimination and promote human rights, as well as respect cultural diversity; "Safety" – to ensure a safe society for both Koreans and foreigners; and "Cooperation" – to foster joint development with the international community. Notably, "safety" is a new policy objective introduced in the Second Framework Plan, in contrast to the First Foreigner Policy Framework Plan. The government emphasized that this addition addresses Korean citizens' concerns over racial, cultural, and identity conflicts stemming from an influx of foreigners, referencing the "declaration of failure of multiculturalism" in several major European countries.³⁰

4.2.4. Moon Jae-in Administration (2017–2021)

During the Moon administration, social integration policies were actively studied alongside immigration policies. The vision of the 3rd Basic Plan for Foreigners' Policy is "A safe Korea where human rights and diversity are respected,"³¹ and its core values are "coexistence (상생)," "integration (통합)," "safety (안전)," "human rights (인권)," and "cooperation (협력)."³² The policy aims to achieve an orderly openness that people empathize with, a society where immigrants are integrated through self-reliance and participation, a safe society that people and immigrants can create together, a just society where human rights and diversity are respected,

³⁰ B. Yoon, M. Hui, 외국인정책과제의 연계성 분석 및 향후 추진방향 – 제2차 외국인정책 기본계획의 정책과제를 중심으로 [Linkage Analysis on Foreign Policy Program and Future Development Direction – Focusing the Foreign Policy Master Plan II], GRI 연구논총 [GRI Review] 2015, vol. 17, no. 3, p. 145.

³¹ "국민공감! 인권과 다양성이 존중되는 안전한 대한민국."

³² S. Ra, S. Eom, 한국 외국인 정책의 가치 지향성 분석: 중앙정부를 중심으로 [The Analysis of Value Orientation of Foreign Policy in Korea: Focused on the Central Government], 다문화와 평화 [Multiculture & Peace] 2019, vol. 13, no. 2, pp. 31–32.

and future-oriented governance based on cooperation. In contrast to previous years, there has been a significant increase in research on migrant settlement support services, with a focus on multicultural services. This can be seen in the focus of the studies, whereas under the previous administration, research on married female migrants was dominated by studies on married female migrants; the most active research under the Moon administration has been on multicultural families. In addition, research on refugee issues has increased after the Yemeni refugee crisis in Jeju in 2018. As a result, the priorities of the 3rd Basic Plan for Foreigners included promoting advanced refugee policies that the international community agreed with, promoting cultural diversity and enhancing acceptance, and internalizing welfare support for immigrants' social integration.

5. Conclusion

Synthesizing these findings reveals distinct shifts in immigration policy research trends across administrations in South Korea. Under the Roh administration, the focus of immigration policy began shifting from simple management toward a more comprehensive approach centered on social integration, with an emphasis on improving treatment and upholding human rights. The Basic Act on Foreign Policy, enacted in 2005, marked a commitment to creating an “open society living with foreigners.” This shift continued under the Lee administration, which, in 2008, introduced the First Basic Plan for Foreign Policy with a focus on fostering a “multicultural society.” By 2009, the government had launched the Social Integration Committee and promoted initiatives like the “Accompanying Foreigners and Married Immigrants Project.” The Second Basic Plan for Foreigners, finalized in 2012, was fully implemented in 2013 following the inauguration of the Park administration. While this plan supported talent attraction and social integration, it also placed particular emphasis on enhancing the quality of life for foreign residents in Korea, with concurrent efforts to address illegal immigration and strengthen screening processes for marriage immigration.

Academic research during the Lee and Park administrations primarily centered on residence management rather than social integration. However, studies focusing on social integration began to increase significantly under the Moon administration. It is notable that, overall, political party affiliation does not appear to have a significant effect on public attitudes toward immigration in Korea. Instead, variations in research trends by administration reflect broader shifts in the external environment and socio-political context unique to each regime.

This evaluation, however, is constrained by reliance on abstract data, which limits access to the specific details of each study analyzed. Additionally, the sample size for this study was relatively small, comprising only 280 articles from KCI- and

Excellent-listed sources. Time limitations further confined the investigation, restricting the trend analysis to research periods, fields, and topics only. Future studies would benefit from using the same dataset to expand on the objectives, data characteristics, and research methods outlined in this study. Finally, it is worth noting that since the Yoon administration, research trends may continue to evolve as discussions regarding the establishment of an Immigration Service have begun.

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STRESZCZENIE

POLITYKA IMIGRACYJNA W KOREI POŁUDNIOWEJ: ANALIZA TENDENCJI POLITYCZNYCH I ICH REPREZENTACJA W BIEŻĄCYCH BADANIACH

Znaczącym elementem polityki imigracyjnej, proponowanej jako alternatywne rozwiązanie dla malejącego wskaźnika urodzeń i starzejącego się społeczeństwa, jest badanie problemów politycznych związanych z imigracją. W poniższej pracy analizie poddano główne czasopiśma wymienione w KCI w celu określenia, w jaki sposób krajowe środowisko akademickie reaguje i bada występujące wyzwania. Początkowy okres analizy został opracowany na podstawie danych administracji rządowej obejmujących 20-letni okres od czasów rządów Roh Moo-hyuna aż po obecny rząd Yoon Seok-yula. Aby uzyskać wiedzę na temat charakteru, zakresu i rozmiaru problemu politycznego wybrano 280 artykułów, które zawierały jasne definicje koncepcji, obszaru i celów polityki imigracyjnej oraz opis problemu politycznego. Wyniki badań wykazały istotne różnice pod względem podjętej treści w badaniach na temat polityki imigracyjnej w każdym z rządów. Od 2005 r., kiedy krajowe i międzynarodowe zapotrzebowanie na imigrację wzrosło, liczba powiązanych analiz naukowych zwiększyła się gwałtownie. Analizując materiały naukowe, zaobserwowano, że tematami przeprowadzonych badań była ogólna polityka imigracyjna i integracja społeczności imigrantów. Najczęściej skupiano się jednakże, zgodnie z analizą celu polityki, na zamężnych imigrantkach.