

Nation-state in the Age of Transnationalism: Korea's Effort to Build aDe-territorialised Nation and to Promote Long-distance Nationalism among its Diaspora

[Abstract]

Though emigrants have been viewed rather ambiguously in post-colonial Korean history, the South Korean government began to pay serious attention to Korean diaspora from the early 1990s. By the end of the 1990s, through the Overseas Koreans Act (1999), it virtually extended citizenship rights to overseas co-ethnics. Recently, the Korean government also enfranchised its overseas nationals so that the latter can participate in national elections. These new changes in South Korea's policy toward its overseas nationals exemplifies how nation-states have been adapting themselves to the new environment and realities in which citizens are increasingly transnational and the territorial basis of citizenship is continuously weakening. Nation-states such as South Korea, in the face of a rapidly aging population, dwindling fertility rates, and continued emigration of middle-class families, do not seem to have a choice but to go 'de-territorial' and promote long-distance nationalism among its co-ethnics overseas. So far, scholars of long-distance nationalism have focused on the interests of diasporic communities toward their ethnic homelands, but the case of the South Korean state raises the necessity to pay more attention to the efforts of nation-states to maintain and strengthen their connections with their overseas nationals in the face of increasing transnationalism and growing challenges to the territorial basis of nation-states.

I. INTRODUCTION

Nation-states have been facing new challenges with globalization in the last two decades. In particular, the growing transnational lifestyle among their citizens both inside and outside of their borders has imposed new tests to nation-states. According to the United Nations census, the number of international migrants has been increasing rapidly in the last two decades. In 1990 there were about 155 million international migrants globally, and the number grew to 214 million by 2010 (UN 2010). In addition, more and more transmigrants also lead transnational lifestyles, and their life is not confined to just one nation-state, but it is across two or more countries regardless of the fact where they reside. While traditionally nation-states have been based on confined territories, the increasing number of people whose life is across more than two countries has posed unprecedented challenges to nation-states.

Indeed, the rapid developments in communication and transportation technologies have made people more transnational everywhere (Boyd 1989; Ong 1999; Schuerkens 2005). The new challenge that came with transnational lifestyle of citizens were serious enough, and some scholars saw it as an inevitable sign of demise of the conventional nation-states (*cf.* Appadurai 1996). As the number of their nationals and co-ethnics residing overseas increases, governments are pressed to change the conventional concepts of citizenship and voting rights of their citizens. It was in this context that many countries such as Mexico, India, and Poland changed their policies toward their citizens and co-ethnics residing overseas by allowing them more rights as important parts of the national communities (Smith 2003; Bauböck 2007). As Smith suggests, nation-states would change their policies toward

their overseas nationals based on the changed relationship between these nation-states and the global system (Smith 2003: 727).

South Korea, which has nearly 7 million overseas co-ethnics spread all over the world today, was not an exception in terms of its changed relationship with its national overseas. In particular, the fact that Overseas Koreans are mostly concentrated in Korea's powerful neighbors such as China, US, Japan and Russia added more reasons for such change in policy. While the early Korean migrants to Japan, US and other Western countries were for economic opportunities that these countries provided with, recently, more and more well-educated and middle-class Korean families tended to migrate to countries such as Canada, Australia, and New Zealand in search of better life styles and less stressful educational environment. Though Korea passed the 'turning point' in migration sometime in the early 1990s (and thus more people are entering to Korea than the ones who leave Korea), there has been steady number of emigrants from Korea to these countries. As the number of overseas Koreans grew and as South Korea's connection to the global economic community gets deeper, the importance of the overseas Koreans for the South Korean state and society also grew.

Then, what have the South Korean government and society done in reaction to such continuous growth of overseas Koreans? Have there been any efforts from the government side to keep those overseas Koreans to the national community of Korea? If so, what kinds of measures that the South Korean government has taken to deal with the overseas Koreans? If there are any policy changes, then, what did trigger such changes and what have been the primary motivations of the South Korean state in making such changes?

This paper is to explore how South Korea, as a sending country, has dealt with its non-resident citizens and co-ethnics overseas in the age of globalization and transnationalism. Specifically, this paper will investigate how the South Korean state in the last two decades in the face of such challenges, has tried to 'expand' its 'national boundary' by incorporating overseas nationals and to build 'de-territorialised' national community by both allowing overseas Koreans with more rights in domestic politics and economy and also by connecting overseas Koreans to the national community that the state could imagine. In addition, this paper will also explore the factors behind the changing policy of the South Korean state toward its overseas nationals that made the country to pursue such an 'engagement' policy in regard to overseas Koreans. In so doing, the paper will explore the measures the South Korean state has adopted to promote 'long-distance nationalism' among its overseas nationals and co-ethnics. The paper will also analyze the domestic and international causes of the changes in South Korea's policy toward its overseas nationals.

In regard to the study of long-distance nationalism, the great majority of diaspora studies has focused on the perspective of diasporas— i.e., by dealing with the question how diasporas tried to come close to their ethnic homelands—instead of considering the perspectives of sending countries (Anderson 1992; Glick Schiller 2001; Brand 2006; Gamlen 2008; Bauböck 2010). Considering the relative dearth of sending societies' perspective in promoting long-distance nationalism, this paper's focus on sending country and its efforts to be connected with overseas nationals and co-ethnics will give us a new understanding of the relationship between homeland and diasporas. In particular, such a study will help us understand the states' efforts to control and 'instrumentalize' its citizens abroad (*cf.* Brand 2006).

II. KOREA'S EFFORTS FOR DE-TERRITORIALISED NATIONAL COMMUNITY AND LONG-DISTANCE NATIONALISM

The number of Korean migrants overseas grew through the 1960s when the South Korean government pursued active emigration policy to relieve the population pressure and also to earn foreign currency.

The government actively promoted Korean emigration to Latin American countries such as Paraguay, Brazil and Argentina in the early 1960s. It also sent miners and nurses to West Germany. After the US changed its immigration policy in 1965, substantial number of Koreans began to migrate to the US and the number reached 25,000 to 30,000 each year through the 1970s and 1980s. Koreans were also sent to Vietnam both as soldiers and workers during the Vietnamese War. After the end of the Vietnamese War, Koreans went to Middle East as engineers and construction workers. After the 1980s Korean migration to Europe and Ocean was active.

While South Korean government was eager to send people overseas, it did not pay much attention to overseas Koreans until the early 1990s and it did not have clear policy toward them. Koreans in Japan was an exception as South Korean government had to counter North Korea that actively engaged with Koreans in Japan. If there was any policy, it was a policy to encourage emigration so that population pressure at home would be released and remittance would be made home for satisfying the much needed foreign currency in the country. These goals were proclaimed in the Overseas Emigration Act of 1962 (Yoon 2007: 91). Before 1991 South Korean government did not even compile statistics on the whole Korean diaspora and it even did not collect statistical data on expatriates who took foreign citizenship (Kim 2009: 152). It was only in the beginning of the 1990s when South Korean government began to include kin-foreigners (ethno-national kin who are legally foreigners) such as Korean Chinese and Soviet Koreans to the category of overseas Koreans. With this, the number of overseas Koreans swell from 1.47 million in 1989 to 5 million in the late 1990s (Yoon 2007: 91).

South Korean government's relative indifference to overseas Koreans except their pro-North Korean (and anti-South Korean) activities and remittances to South Korea saw changes in the late 1980s, and overseas Koreans became important not only for the population policy and financial help, but also for political and cultural reasons. First of all, the long forgotten ethnic Koreans in China (Chosŏnjok) and Soviet Koreans in Central Asia (Koryŏsaram) and Sakhalin (Sakhalin Koreans) emerged as important members of the pan-Korean national community in the late 1980s. This was the time when South Korean government pursued the 'Northern Policy', which was purported to establish diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union and China. The Northern Policy was both for the establishment of diplomatic relations with the socialist bloc countries at the end of the Cold War and also for the development of market in these countries.

Inclusive Concept of the National Community

In 1995 the South Korean government adopted *chaeoetongpo* (Overseas co-ethnics) as the official term for overseas Koreans. Until then, several terms were used in government documents, including *haeokyopo* (emigrants), *Hangukkyomin* (Korean immigrants), *haeoeHanin* (overseas Koreans) or *chaeoekungmin* (Korean citizens overseas). The term of *ChaeoeTongpo* reflects the popular attitude of Koreans toward their overseas co-ethnics by referring to them as "brothers" (*tongpo*). For most domestic Koreans living in Korea, the Korean nation includes all the people who share Korean 'blood', and they normally do not feel any difficulty in imagining overseas Koreans as part of their 'nation'.

Though the general popular discourse has always embraced ethnic Koreans residing overseas as an essential part of the Korean nation, as stated above, the South Korean policy toward overseas Koreans had been rather indifferent until the early 1990s. The Nationality Act of South Korea was against dual citizenship, and extra-territorial citizenship was not recognized. However, this changed by the early 1990s and the South Korean state began to actively embrace overseas Koreans. In 1995 when South Korean government was preparing to establish the Overseas Koreans Foundation, the Overseas Koreans Foundation Act defined *tongp'o* (Koreans) as "persons of Korean descent who live abroad regardless of citizenship". By so doing, the South Korean government included anyone with Korean ancestry, regardless of their citizenship, as 'Koreans' and they came to be the object of the South Korean state's overseas Koreans policy. Such an act virtually expanded the boundary of the Korean nation to ethnic Koreans in China and the Soviet Union, who had not been included in the government statistics until then.

According to the Overseas Koreans Foundation, which was established in 1997 by the South Korean government under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade to support overseas Korean communities and also to carry out programs to network them, in 2010 there were over 7 million Koreans living outside of Korea in 2010, which was about 15% of South Korean population and 10% of entire Koreans including North Koreans. Overseas Koreans were concentrated in China (3 million, including 1.9 million Chosŏnjok), USA (2 million), Commonwealth of Independent States (0.5 million), and Japan (0.9 million including 0.3 million Koreans who are naturalised citizens of Japan). Now the number of overseas Koreans was well set and the boundary of the Korean national community is clearly defined at least in terms of the government's perspective.

Overseas Koreans Foundation(1997) & Overseas Koreans Act 1999 (revised in 2004)

The South Korean state's attention to overseas Koreans and extraterritorial citizens materialized with the establishment of the Overseas Koreans Foundation in 1997, of which goal was "to promote the interests of overseas Koreans by fostering and promoting Korean culture". In 2003 the Chairman of the Overseas Koreans Foundation, Kwon Byŏng-hyŏn, stated that territories do not confine the boundaries of nations any longer in the 'Digital Age':

The twenty-first century is the 'Era of Diaspora' and the traditional concept of national boundaries is shifting toward economic and cultural bodies dispersed around the world but bound by a common national identity... The concept of nation is now one of dispersed communities spun by economic and cultural factors, rather than territorially bound areas(*The Korea Herald*, 15 January 2003).

The Overseas Koreans Foundation issues a quarterly magazine *ChaeoeTongpoSosik*, and the general tone of the magazine is pan-Korean nationalism. For example, a 1998 article in the magazine stresses the importance of overseas Koreans in making Korea a "wealthy and powerful" country. It states:

Needless to mention, there are overseas Jews behind Israel's influence in global politics and economy. Israel is not the only example. The remarkable economic development of China would not have been possible without the support of the fifty million overseas Chinese. It would not be an exaggeration to say that the rise of the Vietnamese economy after the War was possible only thanks to the annual remittance of the one and half billion dollars from the overseas Vietnamese. Though they had fled from their motherland as 'boat people', they are now fulfilling their filial duty to their motherland. Now is the time when our country needs the patriotism both from the domestic Koreans and overseas brothers. No country will willingly suffer the pains [of financial crisis] in place of us, and no country will pay our debt [to the IMF] for us. We should overcome this economic crisis and repay the debt only with our own resources and national wisdom. There cannot be any difference between domestic Koreans and overseas Koreans since any crisis of our country will be the crisis of our nation (Kim Pong-gyu 1998:3. My translation).

In 1999 the South Korean government promulgated the 'The Act on the Entry, Exit, and Status of Overseas Koreans', which allowed extensive legal rights to overseas Koreans. Specifically, the new law allowed overseas Koreans to visit and stay in their home country almost indefinitely, engage freely in most types of economic activities, and enjoy various social and legal benefits. This was virtually giving almost equal rights to overseas Koreans with the locals. Initially, the law meant to give equal treatment to all Koreans residing overseas regardless of their citizenship status. Nevertheless, later, ethnic Koreans from China and the CIS were excluded from the privileges due to the protests from the governments of China and the CIS countries as well as the Korean Ministry of Labour's concern for the possible domestic labour market disturbance by Korean migrants from China and the CIS countries. This law was a clear sign that the South Korean state was willing to include overseas Koreans to its version of the Korean nation.

Embracing Adoptees

The South Korean government began also showed special attention to Korean adoptees, whose number is over 200,000 and form about 3% of overseas Koreans. While the Korean society has been uneasy as it has considered such a large number of adoptees as a ‘national shame’, recently the Korean government ‘rediscovered’ the importance of Korean adoptees and tried to re-incorporate them to the Korean national community. The reasons why these adoptees were seen important by the Korean government were due to their living in highly developed Western countries, and their being well educated, which was seen as beneficial for Korea’s economic development scheme (T. Hübinette 2006; E. Kim 2003, 2007). On an official visit to Sweden, which has been one of the most prominent importer of Korean adoptees, countries that President Kim Dae-jung asserted that the adoptees formed the basis for the physical bond between the two nations, and by so doing the South Korean state renewed its attention to political function of Korean adoptees (Tobias Hübinette 2003: 257).

To support the Korean government’s effort reconnect Korean adoptees to the national community, the Overseas Koreans Foundation has run the Summer Program for Adoptees. The Overseas Koreans Foundation states its goal regarding adoptees as “to help adoptees form [Korean] identity and to strengthen the relationship between them and Korea (<http://oaks.korean.net>). In this context, in 2010 the South Korean government legalized dual citizenship for Korean adoptees. The official press announcement of the Overseas Koreans Act noted that the American adoptees’ unique mixture of biological Koreanness and American cultural knowledge would be of great significance in “bridging Korea with the global community” (E. Kim 2007: 507). Adoptee reconciliation is thus conveniently merged with the nation’s vision of a global Korean family, which at the most basic level is united by blood (Tobias Hübinette 2003: 263).

Bringing Ethnic Koreans Back

South Korean government also has brought back some ethnic Koreans to their homeland after the 1990s and this includes the descendants of independence fighters residing in China or the former Soviet Union, Sakhalin Koreans, Korean Chinese and North Korean refugees. Though sometimes the government efforts were criticised as too passive, slow and limited way, the South Korean state has taken efforts to bring those ethnic Koreans from overseas.

Those who had fought for the independence of Korea before and during the Japanese colonial period and their descendants have been treated specially in South Korea, and the South Korean state has given citizenship and settlement funds to those independence fighters and their descendants residing overseas. In particular, those people living in China and CIS have returned to their homeland since the early 1990s. They are typically given settlement funds, housing, education and other supports. This year 13 people – descendants of independence fighters - from China were given citizenship (SBS August 13, 2012).

The most well-known permanent returnees accepted by the South Korean state are elderly ethnic Koreans from Sakhalin. This was done mostly from humanitarian considerations and there are more than 3,000 Sakhalin Korean returnees by now. The program began in 1996 with the help of the Japanese government.

North Korean refugees are another group that are brought to South Korea by South Korean government. North Koreans are legally ‘Koreans’ by South Korean constitution, which defines the whole Korean peninsula as the territories of ‘Korea’ (South Korea) and North Koreans are automatically considered as ‘Korean citizen’. They are given various settlement supports including housing and job training once settle in South Korea. Their number has reached 23,000 in 2012.

Qualified Korean Chinese can become South Korean citizens by recovering their old nationality. Through the 2000s average 1,500 Korean Chinese have recovered their Korean citizenship. Though

most of them are elderly people, often their children and other relatives follow them through invitation visa program.

Building Diasporic Networks

The South Korean government has worked to build networks of overseas Koreans including Korean traders (Overseas Korean Trade Association), adoptees as stated above, youth groups, women, Korean women who married foreigners, and so on. In so doing, the South Korean government provided overseas Koreans with the foundations of networking such as regular meetings and websites. Regularly, overseas Korean leaders are invited to Korea to participate in various networking events such as the Overseas Korean Association Leaders' Conference. The South Korean government also organizes various events including the Overseas Korean Sports Event, National Unification Advisory Meetings and so on – which are to promote networks among overseas Koreans as well as with their ethnic homeland.

In particular, the Overseas Koreans Foundation has played a leading role in building both offline and online networks among the ethnic Korean youths overseas. There are also many other programs that indirectly help overseas Korean youths to visit Korea and work or study there through which the new generation ethnic Koreans build their networks and also get connected to their ethnic homeland. This includes the EPIK and TaLK, which allow young people from English speaking countries to teach English at various levels of schools in South Korea.

Supporting Korean language and culture among Korean diaspora

South Korean government also has supported Korean language education and Korean culture among Korean diaspora, through which the new generation born overseas (and adoptees) can maintain their Korean culture and identity. Overseas Koreans themselves organise ethnic schools everywhere to teach Korean language and culture for the new generation. The 1990s the South Korean government's supports come in various forms and they include supplying textbooks, inviting students to Korea for language and other training, sending teachers to overseas Korean schools, offering training for overseas teachers in Korea and so on.

The South Korean government also runs numerous “Korean Cultural Centres” (run by the Ministry of Culture, Tourism, and Sports) and “Korean Education Centres” (run by the Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology) in major cities of the world. The Ministry of Education has operated many language schools called *ChaeoeKungminKyoyugwon* (the Educational Center for Korean Citizens Residing Overseas) since the early 1990s. Though the name of this institution implies that they are mainly for South Korean citizens who are residing in foreign countries, these educational centers have been opened mostly in areas where there are very few South Korean citizens but where there are large numbers of overseas Koreans, i.e. the cities of Tashkent, Alma Aty or Vladivostok. As well, these institutions offer only basic level Korean language courses, which would not help South Korean citizens who must be fluent in Korean. My observation of these institutions in Alma Aty and Tashkent directed me to believe that they were to promote Korean language and culture among the Korean ethnics in those countries of the former Soviet Union and China. By so doing, these educational centers are to increase national consciousness of overseas Koreans for a greater Korean national community. In these areas there are also a few other institutions from South Korea that perform similar functions in: schools operated by South Korean churches, Kwangju Hangul School (language schools funded and operated by the Municipal Government of Kwangju), and so on. These institutions might help overseas Koreans play the roles of economic, political and cultural agents for the interests of South Korea in the future. These centres have played important role in educating overseas Korean youths in terms of Korean language and culture education.

In addition, the South Korean government has long operated various programs to invite overseas Koreans to Korea for cultural tourism and family reunions. In the early 1990s thousands of Koreans in Sakhalin and China were invited to visit South Korea. There is also the Festival of Koreans of the

World (*SegyeHanminjokTaehoe*), which has been held every two years since 1989. The Festival is funded by the Association of National Physical Training, a semi-governmental organization, and representatives of overseas Koreans from all over are invited.

Overseas Suffrage (2012)

In addition to all overseas Koreans to visit and conduct business in Korea through the Overseas Koreans Act (1999, and revised in 2003), in 2011 the South Korean government also allowed overseas Koreans, who still maintain Korean nationality regardless of their permanent residency overseas, to participate in the national elections. Though such a measure came to be realized after many years' of political pressures from overseas Koreans as well as political groups within South Korea, it signifies the growing importance of overseas Koreans in South Korea's domestic public sphere.

As a matter of fact, South Korea had allowed overseas suffrage briefly in the 1960s and 1970s when South Korean soldiers were sent to Vietnam during the Vietnamese War, but this was abandoned when the Vietnamese War ended in 1975. In 1999 a group of Koreans living in Japan appealed for a constitutional petition regarding the exclusion of overseas Koreans from voting, but the South Korean Court declared it was not unconstitutional. However, in 2007 the court overturned its 1999 decision, and declared that denying voting rights to overseas Korean nationals was against the Constitution (Kalicki 2009a, 2009b). This resulted in the law change in 2009, and in 2012 expatriates voted first time.¹ Younger generation overseas Koreans expressed their concerns that overseas Korean suffrage can weaken Korean migrants' involvement in the mainstream societies and governments (Chung 2009).

Through these measures that are designed to incorporate overseas Koreans into the broader Korean national community, the South Korean state promotes 'long-distance nationalism' among Korean diasporas and also creates 'de-territorialised' Korean national community outside of its territories. This creates pan-Korean nationalism among Koreans both in Korea and overseas. As Bauböck correctly states, "if nations are defined as imagined communities of shared language, culture, history, or descent, then membership need not be confined to those who reside in a state where this nation is established" (Bauböck 2007: 2414), and the South Korean state (the same is true for the North Korean state, too, as far as this matter is concerned) accepts such a notion.

III. WHY DE-TERRITORIALISED NATION?

As seen above, the South Korean state began to pay serious attention to overseas Koreans in the early 1990s, and since then it has taken various measures to incorporate ethnic Koreans overseas into the Korean national community. This involved embracing overseas ethnic Koreans into the imagined community of the Korean nation regardless of their living overseas (thus, 'de-territorialized') and promoting long-distance nationalism among them. Now, the question is, why the South Korean state decided to build 'de-territorialised' national community in the 1990s? This chapter will explore the domestic and international necessities and benefits that made the South Korean state allow overseas Koreans to enjoy almost equal rights with South Korean citizens.

In the relationship between homeland government and overseas nationals, nation-states tend to revise the former's relationships with the global system (Smith 2003). Numerous cases including the relationships between the Mexican state and its nationals in the US, the Italian state and its nationals

¹Kalicki reports that the debate in South Korea regarding overseas suffrage involved citizen's rights issues such as tax payment and military services as well as ethnic affiliation. Meanwhile in Japan, where the overseas suffrage was given in 2006, the debate was very much based on ethnic affiliation (Kalicki 2009a, 2009b).

in the US, and the Polish state and its nationals in the US showed this when these nation-states changed their relationship with their overseas nationals when these countries engaged in the global system (Smith 2003). I argue that the South Korean state also changed its stance toward overseas nationals when there were changes in its engagement with the global system. In addition, South Korea's domestic needs also contributed to the changes in the government's policy toward overseas Koreans.

1. Economic Needs

International migration has been used by sending countries for economic benefits, especially the remittance sent by the migrants to sending countries. South Korea was particularly keen about remittances from overseas Koreans from the early stage of its economic development. For a long time, Koreans in Japan played an important role in investing in their ethnic homeland, and South Korea benefitted greatly from the money sent by Koreans in Japan. Sending miners and nurses to West Germany in the early years was an example. The motivation that the South Korean government had when it decided to send miners and nurses to West Germany in 1963 was for the desperately needed economic development fund. The South Korean state needed funds to proceed with its economic development plan, and sending Korean workers to advanced countries was a good means to obtain such funds. This would also relieve the tough employment market within the country.

Later in the end of the 1980s, overseas Koreans were seen even more important for the growing South Korean economic interests in the global economy. Overseas Koreans were a good source of new technologies and managerial techniques as well as foreign investments to Korea. At the end of the Cold War, the South Korean society and government 'discovered' the two and half million ethnic Koreans in the communist countries of China and the Soviet Union, and the potential economic (as well as political) benefits of these people were recognized quickly. These ethnic Koreans could help South Korean businesses that were eyeing on the new markets for both consumption and resources in the newly opening Soviet Union and China at the end of the 1980s. It was the time when the fast growing South Korean companies were facing challenges everywhere in terms of obtaining natural resources, which were very much in the hands of the Western and Japanese capital, and they were also in the position to develop new markets for their products. Both China and the Soviet Union suddenly emerged as new possibilities when the Cold War eased in the end of the 1980s and the presence of the ethnic Koreans in these two gigantic markets could not be better. The excited Hyundai's Chŏng Chu-yŏng, who wanted to develop natural resources in Siberia, expressed his confidence and expectation:

Although Japan began developing the Siberian resources much earlier than we Koreans did, the Japanese have not achieved much particularly because of the unresolved territorial disputes between Japan and Russia. We can outdo the Japanese as we have many advantages compared to them. One of our advantages is that there are many ethnic Koreans on Sakhalin and in Siberia, and they speak Korean. In addition, we can utilize those Korean Chinese in Manchuria for our resource development projects in Siberia... Working with the people who share the same language with us is much easier than working with those whose language is different from ours. These are the reasons why we Koreans can outdo the Japanese in developing Siberian resources." (Chŏng 1997).

Chŏng was not alone in recognizing the untapped and enormous potential that the overseas Koreans could contribute to the development of the Korean economy in the global arena. When there were debates on the establishment of the Overseas Koreans Foundation in the mid-1990s, the discourse that overseas Koreans are the 'asset' of the nation was in its peak. One prominent proponent of such a discourse was Yi Wŏn-bŏm, who led a private research institute on the overseas Koreans. Yi insisted that *haeotongp'o* (overseas 'brothers') is a national asset, and the Korean government should do its best in helping overseas Koreans by establishing a government organization such as the Overseas Koreans Foundation (Yi 1997). To do so, Yi argued, that the Korean government should change its negative view on overseas Koreans in which overseas Koreans were very much considered as a burden rather than an asset. In his logic the overseas Koreans and the Korean nation are tied together

to share same destiny. Yi said: “Overseas Koreans’ status cannot be enhanced without the enhancement of the status of Korea in the global community, and the enhancement of the power of Korea cannot be possible without the enhancement of the status of overseas brothers” (Yi 1997).

Therefore, the groups that supported governmental level engagement with the overseas Koreans insisted that Pan-Korean nationalism is the choice of Korea in the 21st Century as did a researcher at the Samsung Economic Research Institute:

There live two millions of Koreans in China, eight hundred thousand in Japan, one million and two hundred thousand in the U.S. Their number is roughly five million, including those who are not identified or registered. The fact that overseas Koreans are concentrated in the four super powers, which are our neighboring countries at the same time, is greatly advantageous for our global policy. We, cooperating with those overseas brothers, must form the “Pan-Korean Economic and Cultural Community” with them. Let our brothers overseas act intermediaries in developing bilateral relationships between their host countries and their mother country (South Korea). Let them, principally, be loyal to their host countries and, secondarily, let them work to develop [friendly] relationship between their host countries and South Korea. In this very respect, the pan-Korean nationalism is fundamentally different from the illiberal pan-Germanism or pan-Slavism (Ku 1995: 177-178).

In late 1997 when South Korea faced with a financial crisis, the call for overseas Koreans, particularly those in the wealthy Western countries, for investment in South Korea was prevalent. As a matter of fact, the 1999 Overseas Koreans Act, which was to allow overseas Koreans’ economic activities including investments in Korea, was to a certain degree the direct result of the 1997 financial crisis.

2. Demographic Needs

The radical change in the South Korea’s policy toward overseas Koreans cannot be explained without considering the various needs arose within the Korean society.

As a matter of fact, the very first ‘overseas Koreans policy’ of the South Korean state came with the need to relieve the domestic population pressure in the 1960s when the country began to take systematic efforts for economic development. South Korea was, just as most of the underdeveloped countries in Asia and Africa, under a big population pressure in the 1960s, and emigration was a good way to relieve the domestic population pressure. This is why the South Korean government actively pursued emigration to Latin America in the early 1960s before the US changed its immigration policy that did not allow non-European immigrants.

In the early 1990s, when South Korea changed its policy toward overseas Koreans, the country was facing different demographic challenges: dwindling fertility rate and rapidly aging society. [Give details of population changes, fertility rates, and the increase of aging population]. Together with such adverse demographic trends were the increasing number of foreign workers in South Korea’s labour market. More serious challenge was the lack of females in countryside, where desperate males began to bring brides from other countries such as China, Vietnam, Mongolia, and the Philippines. [Statistics]

Meanwhile, well-educated and relatively wealthy middle-class families were continuously migrating to other countries such as Canada, Australia, and New Zealand for education and less stressful life style. [Give statistical data on Koreans leaving Korea in the 1990s and 2000s]. Should such a trend continue, the country would have decreased ‘Korean’ population and with increased number of non-Korean residents. Such a project should have given an alarm to any government, especially countries like South Korea, where ethnic nationalism has been a norm.

Though there were some overseas Koreans returning to South Korea after the 1990s as the economic situation of South Korea continuously improved and offered new opportunities, with the continuous

outmigration of Koreans, the overall number of overseas Koreans continued to grow. If such a trend continued, the size of the territorially-based Korean nation would inevitably decrease. In face of these challenges, it is clear that the South Korean state did not have any choice but to incorporate its overseas co-ethnics into the Korean national community no matter where they reside. There emerged a good reason why every Korean should be counted either they are in Korea or overseas. In a sense, the South Korean government adopted the concept of 'flexible citizenship', even though the very concept of this 'flexible citizenship' was invented to describe the individuals, particularly the Hong Kongese in the West, who take multiple citizenship as a kind of 'insurance' (Ong 1999).

3. Politico-cultural Needs

However, there were more reasons than demographic and economic reasons stated above, for the South Korean state's action to build de-territorialised national community and to reinforce long-distance nationalism among its diasporas. They are political and cultural reasons. First of all, the South Korean state requires political supports from its overseas nationals for its international and inter-Korean policies. This was evident in Korea's diasporic history during the colonial period when overseas Koreans were the only hope for the nation's future. Most of the nation's independence movements were carried out outside of the country and this included the anti-Japanese struggles of in China, and the Soviet Union, Korean Americans' efforts to influence the international community for the independence of Korea.

Such political supports from overseas Koreans became even more important when the descendants of the first generation migrants in the US and other countries were successfully integrated into the mainstream society. Numerous ethnic Koreans occupied influential positions in public sector, educational institutions, and other private organizations. More or so, most of Korean migrants in the US and other western nations are highly educated and took up middle-class status, and through their political and cultural activities they could exert some influence in their host countries. This became increasingly important for South Korea as it is more closely engaged with the global system.

For example, the South Korean news media reported the news that the newly elected government in France, the Hollande Administration, appointed Fleur Pellerin, an ethnic Korean, as the Junior Minister for Small and Medium Enterprises, Innovation, Digital Economy at the Ministry for Productive Recovery. Ms. Pellerin was born in Seoul and she was adopted by a French family when she was only 6 months old. This news was a big hit in South Korea as it was first time when an ethnic Korean female became a minister of a Western country (Yonhap News 2012). In any regards, as Korean migrants settled in their host societies and entered into the main stream society, the Korean society and government together recognized the importance of utilizing the political and cultural influence of those overseas Koreans for South Korea's global strategy.

In addition, there were also cultural reasons why the Korean society and government came to pay closer attention to overseas Koreans. For example, the existence of the 2-million strong ethnic Koreans in China was a welcome for Korean nationalists in the early 1980s when there was a concern on the universalizing effects of globalization (McDonaldization) was in the air. This was due to the Korean Chinese having maintained Korean language and culture. The maintenance of Korean language and tradition by the Korean Chinese was deemed important for the survival of the Korean language and culture in the age of globalization, in which minor languages can be lost. Some even suggest that the South Korean government should help Korean Chinese maintain their Korean language and culture within China as maintaining substantial number of Korean speakers is important for the survival of Korean language and culture in this globalizing world (*cf.* Kwōn 2000).

It was in this context when the Korea Research Institute for Vocational and Educational Training (KRIVET) suggested the South Korean government to invest in the Korean Chinese community in China for the development of human resources among Korean Chinese. It was on the basis that this would be helpful for the reunification of the two Koreas, development of Northeast Asia, and South

Korea's human resource need (cf. Cho 2002). In any regards, the Korean government realized the political, economic and cultural benefits of incorporating overseas Koreans into the Korean nation (Shin 2006).

As explored, the South Korean state has endeavored to create the 'de-territorialized Korean nation and encourage long-distance nationalism among the diasporic Koreans overseas. It also has tried to build a global 'Korean network' while fostering pan-Korean nationalism. The South Korean case exemplifies how nation-states, in the face of globalizing and transnational world, adapt themselves to the new environment to strengthen their presence rather than weakening as some have suggested. Indeed, there has been resilient forces that press for correspondence between nation and state in this transnational era, which makes nation-states to take 'nationalising' effort (Brubaker 1996).

IV. CONCLUSION

As Waldinger and Fitzgerald point, the transnational lifestyles and activities of migrant are restrained and shaped by nation-states (Waldinger & Fitzgerald 2004), and nation states intervene in the life of transmigrants for its own needs and goals. This is exactly what the South Korean state has tried to do in regard to its overseas co-ethnic population by allowing them semi-citizenship rights including voting, supporting them to maintain their language and culture and helping them with building a global networking.

The various measures that the South Korean state has taken recently toward the Korean diaspora and non-resident citizens were to meet the internal and external challenges that the South Korean state and society faced. Even though these changes were sometimes initiated by politicized overseas Koreans, the South Korean state actively sought to embrace overseas Koreans to meet the demographic, economic, political and cultural needs of the country in its relations to the global system.

Studying about the relations between diaspora and sending state using the cases of Mexico, Italy, and Poland, Smith argues that the relations between sending-state and diaspora evolve through the state's changing relations with the global system, their domestic politics, and the migrants' ability to act politically with respect to the homeland (Smith 2003).

Is South Korea, then, moving to the direction of 're-ethnicisation' and taking the measure of 'embracing emigrants, and bashing immigrants' as Joppke observed in some European countries (Joppke 2003)? Not really. Instead, South Korea seems to be moving toward a more liberal and civic regime at least at the moment. As a matter of fact, South Korea was the first country in Asia that allows foreigners to participate in national elections in 2006. In this sense, the South Korean state's case seems to fit to Baubock's "stakeholder model", which allows both non-resident citizens and non-citizen resident to participate in voting (Baubock 2007).

Nevertheless, in the author's opinion, the South Korean state and society will continue to pursue this line of active engagement policy toward its overseas nationals. This is due to the economic, demographic, political and cultural needs that the county has in the face of the globalizing and transnationalism. In fact, considering the low fertility rate, aging population, together with increasing non-Korean population within South Korea, it seems doubtful if South Korea has any option other than further embracing its overseas nationals.

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