

# **Political Attitudes and National Identity in Post-Industrial South Korea**

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## **INTRODUCTION: THE BIG PICTURE**

This paper represents a preliminary inquiry into a broader research question. The objective of the broader project is to generate a theory on the endogenous effect of socioeconomic development on nationalism. Nationalism is defined here as the aggregation of political attitudes and national identity. The research focuses on the changes and variations in South Korean nationalism since democratic transition (1987-present).

Scholarship on the relationship between socioeconomic development and value change cannot account for the particular changes in South Korean values. Political scientist Ronald Inglehart theorizes that economic growth and welfare state advances generate the conditions under which predictable patterns of changes in basic values occur. Post-industrial societies, having experienced sustained socioeconomic development over a number of decades, are theorized to follow a particular trajectory of value change, going from “materialist” (industrial-era values) to “post-materialist” (post-industrial values) societies.<sup>1</sup> There are, however, several deviant cases. South Korea is one of them.

Despite joining the ranks of the world’s most economically advanced countries, South Korean society has not followed the same trajectory as have other developed countries. There has been no post-material shift in values. A different pattern of change and variation has taken place. But how, and why? A case-specific investigation can help answer these questions.

Furthermore, a more complete understanding of the effect socioeconomic development has on society can be accounted for by taking into account national identity. Thus, while using a similar theoretical framework as Inglehart, this research looks at a smaller number of cultural variables (political attitudes and national identity). According to values surveys and public opinion polls, significant structural and material changes in South Korea have precipitated the formation of new political attitudes and a new national identity.

For older generations, ethno-nationalism still holds sway over national identity, but recent survey results show ethnic-based identity is on the decline. A new national identity places less emphasis on race and more emphasis on civicness. The data also indicates that political attitudes have become distinctively conservative on issues related to national security. Notably, these changes are most distinctive among South Korea’s youngest generation. Structural changes in post-industrial South Korea can be said to have produced a “new nationalism” among young South Koreans.

To date, no theory can account for the identity and attitudinal changes in South Korea.

Large-N studies focused on basic values ignore the deviant cases while Korea-specific research on the subject is still underdeveloped. Although nationalism holds great promise for bridging these two approaches, the literature on nationalism suffers from conceptual fuzziness and a lack of theoretical parsimony. Conventional definitions of nationalism – e.g., “the political and national unit should be congruent”<sup>2</sup> – do not lend themselves to easy measure. However, a “thin” definition of nationalism (as it is used here) can be operationalized and measured.

Whereas the bigger research effort aims to generate a theory on the endogenous effect of socioeconomic development on nationalism, this paper is aimed only at exploring the value changes and variations in nationalism. Preliminary explanations for what causes these changes and variations will be suggested, but should in no way be considered definitive propositions, much less conclusions.

## **SCOPE AND ROADMAP**

This paper has three sections. The first reports on broad value changes in South Korea over the last two decades (1990 – 2010) using survey data from the World Values Survey (WVS). The point of this section is to examine how basic values have (or have not) changed using the materialist/post-materialist dyad created by Ronald Inglehart. While the link to South Korean nationalism is only tenuous, a connection will be suggested. The point here is to paint a big picture of South Korean political culture.

The second section presents public opinion data collected by the author and a collaborator on South Korean attitudes towards North-South relations and South Korean attitudes towards their own country between 2011 and 2013; data for the total population and by age cohort are analyzed. The point of this section is to show how political attitudes (one of the two variables used in the “thin” definition of nationalism) have recently changed in South Korea. Particular attention is given to the youngest age cohort.

The third section presents data on national identity between 2005 and 2013 (the second variables of nationalism used here); data for the total population and by age cohort are analyzed. The point of this section is to examine how an understanding of what constitutes “Koreanness” (i.e., what makes one “Korean”) has changed in post-industrial South Korea. Like section two, particular attention is given to the youngest age cohort.

While all three sections in this are related to the primary objective of this research, the link between the “bigger picture” (i.e., the WVS data) and the snapshot of South Korea from 2011-2013 is weak, at best. It is not the intention of this paper, however, to make a strong connection; that will be left to efforts later on down the research path. Overall, this paper represents a preliminary investigation and a plausibility probe for the broader research project. This paper is in no way intended for publication, nor are the findings thought to be conclusive.

## **I. PARTIAL POST-MATERIALIST SHIFT & THE IMPLICATIONS**

Based on extensive survey research in the latter half of the 20th century, Ronald Inglehart hypothesized that the populations of the advanced industrial countries were undergoing transformation of individual values, moving from “materialist values” to a fundamentally new set of “post-material” values. Drawing from psychological needs and socialization theories, Inglehart purports to explain how political values are a function of

individual needs and experiences during the process of socialization. Materialists, having experienced economic uncertainty and physical insecurity, give priority to order and stability and thus to economic and military strength. Post-materialists, having experienced greater economic and physical security, prioritize individual well-being, social bonds, and tolerance towards diversity.<sup>3</sup>

Core to the validation of the thesis is the post-material index, constructed on the basis of responses to a series of survey questions that have been continually administered cross-nationally for more than 30 years, thanks to the efforts of the World Values Survey's (WVS).<sup>4</sup> The post-material index is computed using a 4-item battery (see below) relating to national priorities or policy preferences as perceived by the respondent. Respondents are asked to rank issues by what is most important for the nation. Respondents selecting both "maintaining order in the nation" (1a) and "fighting rising prices" (2a) are classified as materialists. Those selecting both "giving people more say in decisions on the government" (1b) and "protecting freedom of speech" (2b) are classified as post-materialists. Those selecting both a "materialist" and a "post-materialist" item are classified as mixed.

**4-Item Battery**

1a. Maintaining order in the nation	1b. Giving people more say in decisions on the government
2a. Fighting rising prices	2b. Protecting freedom of speech

Source: Coding Rules, World Values Survey

Since he originally proposed the post-materialism thesis in the 1970s, the amount of data upon which to draw has increased substantially. With the release of the sixth wave of data, students, scholars, and analysts can make meaningful cross-national and time series comparisons using data collected between 2010-2014. Fortunately, for Koreanists taking a social science approach, South Korea has been included in all six waves (the sixth wave was conducted in 2010).<sup>5</sup>

South Korea is an interesting case for several reasons: it experienced a sort of hyper-modernization, going from rice paddy backwater to export-producing economic powerhouse in the span of only a few generations; reached, as of 2013, a GDP per capita more than five times the average for East Asia and the Pacific; made the transition from authoritarianism to democracy; and is the only country to transition from ODA recipient to donor. Intuitively, one might expect these structural and material changes to produce changes in South Korean society somewhat similar to other advanced countries. However, despite South Korea's economic and political developments, there are significant structural differences between South Korea and the advanced western countries that Inglehart and his collaborators have studied. Social welfare policies are still largely underdeveloped and a always volatile export market laves Korean industries open to external shocks. South Korea also faces an existential threat in North Korea—a country that quite literally threatens to exterminate it. Given these differences, one ought to expect some differences in values vis-à-vis other advanced nations.

Indeed, data over the last 30 years suggest that, despite a temporary spike in the number of "mixed-types" following the democratic transition at the end of the 1980s (see Wave 2 in Table 1), South Korea has only made a partial post-material transition; the number of materialists remains consistently high, across all age cohorts. A simple explanation,

indicated above, might be the best: although it has reached a high level of sustained economic prosperity, South Korea continually remains volatile to exogenous shocks. The 1997 Asian Financial Crisis and the 2010 sinking of the *Cheonan* navy corvette and shelling of Yeonpyeong Island are two examples, amongst others. In fact, Wave 5, which shows a significant increase in the number of materialists (across all age cohorts, but especially amongst the youngest cohort), suggests that the 1997 crisis caused significant variation in values.<sup>6</sup>

**Table 1: World Values Survey Post-Materialist Index (4-item) for Waves 2-4: South Korea**

<b>Wave 2: 1991</b>				
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>Age</b>		
		<b>up to 29</b>	<b>30-49</b>	<b>50 and more</b>
Materialist	25.4	25.7	25.3	25.4
Mixed	70.3	73.1	68.8	69.5
Post-materialist	2.7	1	3.6	3.4
<b>(N)</b>	<b>1251</b>	<b>405</b>	<b>609</b>	<b>236</b>
<b>Wave 3: 1996</b>				
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>Age</b>		
		<b>up to 29</b>	<b>30-49</b>	<b>50 and more</b>
Materialist	47.2	30.9	51.5	64
Mixed	45.7	57.5	43	34.9
Post-materialist	6.5	11.6	5.5	1.2
<b>(N)</b>	<b>1249</b>	<b>398</b>	<b>586</b>	<b>258</b>
<b>Wave 4: 2001</b>				
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>Age</b>		
		<b>up to 29</b>	<b>30-49</b>	<b>50 and more</b>
Materialist	46.3	35	47.3	57.3
Mixed	47.7	51	48.8	41.2
Post-materialist	5.7	13.7	3.6	1.1
<b>(N)</b>	<b>1200</b>	<b>314</b>	<b>619</b>	<b>267</b>
<b>Wave 5: 2006</b>				
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>Age</b>		
		<b>Up to 29</b>	<b>30-49</b>	<b>50 and more</b>
Materialist	53.9	42.1	53.9	62.1
Mixed	43.7	53	44.3	36.3
Post-materialist	2	4.5	1.3	1.4
<b>(N)</b>	<b>1200</b>	<b>260</b>	<b>572</b>	<b>368</b>
<b>Wave 6: 2010</b>				
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>Age</b>		
		<b>Up to 29</b>	<b>30-49</b>	<b>50 and more</b>
Materialist	44.2	31	44	52.1
Mixed	48.5	57.3	49.2	42.4
Post-materialist	5.1	9.8	6	1.2
<b>(N)</b>	<b>1200</b>	<b>246</b>	<b>538</b>	<b>416</b>

**Source:** World Values Survey Data

Using cross-national comparison, South Korea's partial post-material shift is better shown. As comparative chart below indicates, the number of materialists in the United States and Japan is significantly lower, and, for the US, the number of post-materialists significantly higher (until wave 5, this number sustained an averaged well above 20%).

Given Japan’s long-lasting economic woes, it should come to no surprise that the number of post-materialists is as low as it is. Even so, economic woes troubling Japan has not caused a total post-material reversal. Interestingly, the numbers for Taiwan closely approximate South Korea’s. This should also be expected, given that Taiwan, like Korea, faces an existential threat to its national sovereignty and is also heavily volatile to external shock due to its export-oriented economic structure.

**Table 2: South Korean Values in Comparative Perspective**

<b>Post-materialist index (4-item)</b>						
	TOTAL	Country Code				
		China	Taiwan	Japan	South Korea	United States
Materialist	38.3	58.2	47.0	24.1	45.2	23.8
Mixed	53.0	39.0	45.7	67.7	49.6	59.1
Postmaterialist	8.6	2.7	7.3	8.3	5.2	17.1
(N)	(8,578)	(2,092)	(1,174)	(1,960)	(1,173)	(2,179)

Like any large-scale survey, the WVS data on South Korea only reveals so much about society—a dynamic, multifaceted web of people, places, and things. Nevertheless, WVS data provides a meaningful broad overview of social changes that can help researchers and analysts identify social trends over time and in comparison. This paper in particular will take a closer at what a mixed values society looks like by using survey data measuring political attitudes and national identity – i.e., nationalism. As the data below suggests, there seems to be at least a correlation between broader value changes and variations in South Korean nationalism.

## **II. A NEW NATIONALISM? POLITICAL ATTITUDES IN AN ERA OF STRENGTH AND PROSPERITY**

In October 1, 2013, soldiers, tanks, and missiles rolled through the streets of central Seoul for the first time in nearly a decade. For the many observers, this might have been seen as a tougher stance from a new administration towards North Korea. While correct, this surface reading masks an important underlying trend. Public opinion data suggests that a new nationalism is on the rise in South Korea and that it is the result of a newly forming South Korean identity. This new nationalism is a natural outgrowth of the country’s material development and newfound confidence; and as such will not be a passing phase. Instead, any understanding of the region will require taking a newly confident Korea into account as it seeks to take on a more prominent role in East Asia.

Many South Koreans are now coming to terms with the fact that they are citizens of a “strong and prosperous country.” As such, Koreans have begun to view themselves and their country in a way that reflects political, social, and economic realities. Korea’s new nationalism views the state of South Korea with an increasing level of confidence, sees North Korea as a threat, is less based on ethno-nationalism than previous strands of nationalism in Korea, and presumes that South Korea is on the rise in both East Asia and the world.

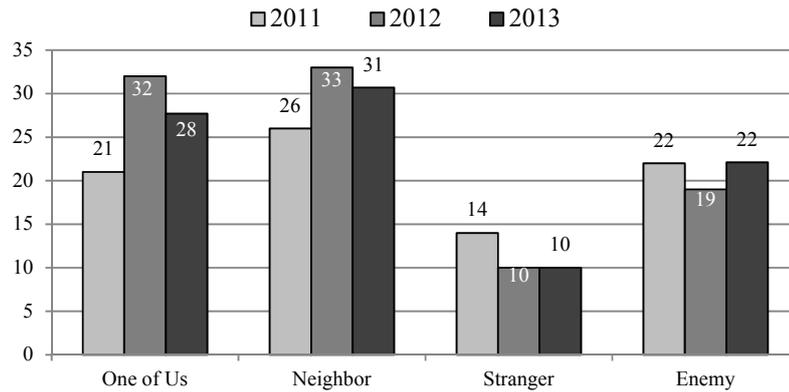
### *Political Attitudes Towards North Korea*

Koreanist Brian Myers has argued that race-based ethnic nationalism is at the root of a clear division between the nation and state in South Korea. In his words, South Korea is the “unloved republic.”<sup>7</sup> One of Myers' main points is that an absence of trust in the South Korean state has significant implications for the Republic of Korea's North Korea policy. Myers asserts that because of the particular race-based, state-distrusting nationalism characteristic of South Koreans, provocation from the North can actually result in the strengthening of pro-Pyongyang political parties and the adoption of a less confrontational North Korean policy. “As counterintuitive as it may sound to Americans unfamiliar with South Korean ethno-nationalism,” writes Myers, “the DPRK can more effectively strengthen South Korean parties sympathetic to the North by seeking conflict with the ROK.”<sup>8</sup>

While Myers is certainly correct that race is a major component of Korean nationalism,<sup>9</sup> his argument of the effect the North-South divide has on political attitudes no longer stands to scrutiny. Public response to recent North Korean provocations reveals a different trend. South Koreans are increasingly viewing North Korea not with sympathy – as one would another member of the nation – but with hostility. Although it may be a stretch to say that South Korea is the loved republic, gone are the days when pro-Pyongyang tendencies, buttressed by South Korea's ethnic-based identity, could be used to drum up support for the North and cause internal conflict in the South. In fact, it is likely folly to speak of North and South Korea as one “nation.” Recent public opinion data presented in this section and later on highlights the widening divide between the two nations on the peninsula.

In a South Korean public opinion poll conducted between 2011 to 2013, respondents were asked how they viewed North Korea: as “one of us” (*uri*; 우리) – the term originally used in the questionnaire – as a neighbor, a stranger, or an enemy.<sup>10</sup> As Figure 2 illustrates, 2012 is the high watermark for the data for those citing North Korea as “one of us”. Yet, just 32 percent viewed North Korea in this way. Given that the ethnic connection is often cited as making reunification inevitable, one-third hardly seems like a large enough slice of the population to support such a claim. At the same time, 33 percent cited North Korea as a neighbor and 19 percent cited it as an enemy.<sup>11</sup>

**Figure 2: Perceptions of North Korea**



**Source:** The Asan Institute for Policy Studies

The argument put forward by Myers that provocations by North Korea strengthen pro-Pyongyang parties in the South rests upon two assumptions: (i) North Korean provocations will elicit a harder-line approach from the ROK government; and (ii) as the people distrust the state, hardline approaches are condemned by the people, thus giving rise to pro-North sentiments.

The data from 2011 to 2012 would seem to support this line of thinking. Following the provocations of 2010, President Lee Myung-bak took a much harder-line approach to North Korea than did his immediate predecessors; for example, after the sinking of the *Cheonan* naval corvette, the Lee administration proceeded to cut off all economic ties with North Korea, except for the Kaesong Industrial Complex.<sup>12</sup> After his policies took hold in 2011, there was an increased likelihood of North Korea being viewed as “one of us.” But the data does not stop in 2012. The inclusion of the 2013 data suggests that South Koreans were not likely reacting to the hardline policy of the Lee administration, but rather to the lack of provocations in 2011 and 2012. When there was a further provocation in 2013, South Korean public opinion turned sharply against North Korea.

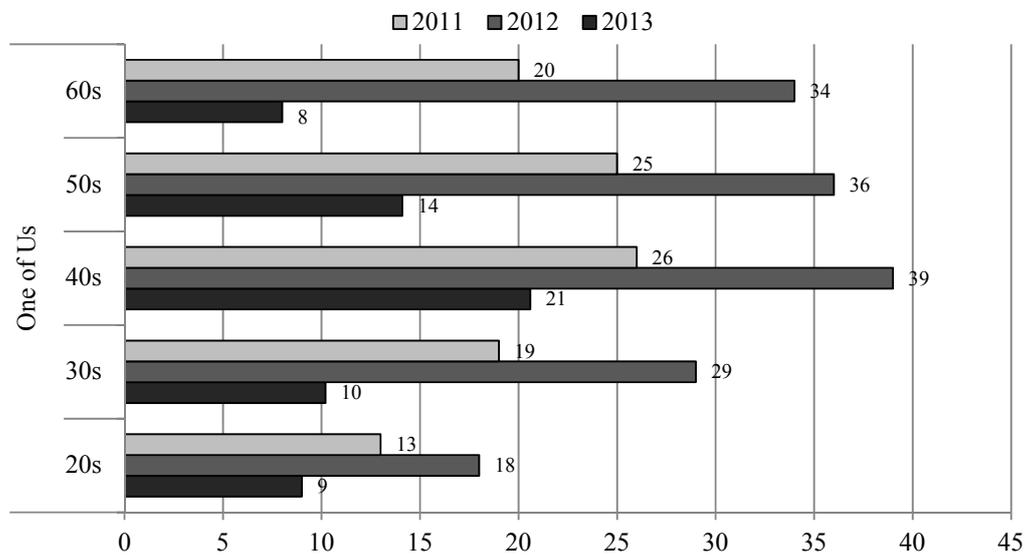
Thus, perceptions of North Korea in South Korea did not fluctuate according to the policy of the South Korean government (during the period under investigation), but to the actions of North Korea itself. That is, attitudes toward the North are a response to its behavior and the broader political environment, not whether the North Koreans are part of the same “blood;” this is a significant point and one that lends support to the post-material hypothesis that values reflect socioeconomic conditions.<sup>13</sup> North Korea has done little to suggest that it is able or willing to abstain from such actions that would cause a long-term improvement in South Korean perceptions. It continues to threaten the South, test long-range missiles, fire rockets into the East Sea, and develop its nuclear weapons program.

While a sample of the total population indicates changes in the way the South Korean population thinks about North Korea, the value of results for the entire population are limited. Age cohort analysis shows that it is the youngest cohort (those in their 20s) that demonstrates significantly different political attitudes from almost everyone else in society.

*Attitudes Towards North Korea by Age Cohort*

Figure 3 shows South Koreans that view North Korea as “one of us” (*uri*; 우리) by age cohort from 2011 to 2013. The most obvious observation is that in 2012, the high-water mark for the data, slightly less than one-third of all South Koreans viewed North Koreans as “one of us.” This hardly seems like a large enough slice of the population to support the claim of reunification by choice being inevitable. Moreover, in 2012 South Koreans were equally likely to cite North Korea simply as a neighbor, and 19% identified it as an enemy. Further, the data from 2013 makes it clear that the South Korean public judges North Korea on its actions, with public opinion turning sharply against North Korea following the tensions in early 2013. Of course, if North Korea can become a responsible neighbor, attitudes would certainly improve. The question is if the North can achieve this before the youngest South Koreans decide that they, and their country, are simply better off as just South Korea. In 2012, while 11% of those in their 60s expressed no interest in reunification, 23% of those in their 20s stated the same.

**Figure 3: South Korean Perceptions of North Korea**



Source: The Asan Institute for Policy Studies

Perhaps the most important point to note is just how differently South Koreans in their 20s view North Korea from those in their 30s and 40s. In 2011 and 2012 those in their 20s were the cohort least likely to cite North Korea as being “one of us.” In fact, in 2012 this cohort was more likely to cite North Korea as an enemy (24%)—and this was at the high point for the data. Following the heightened inter-Korean tensions in the first quarter of 2013 the “one of us” response decreased by 9pp.

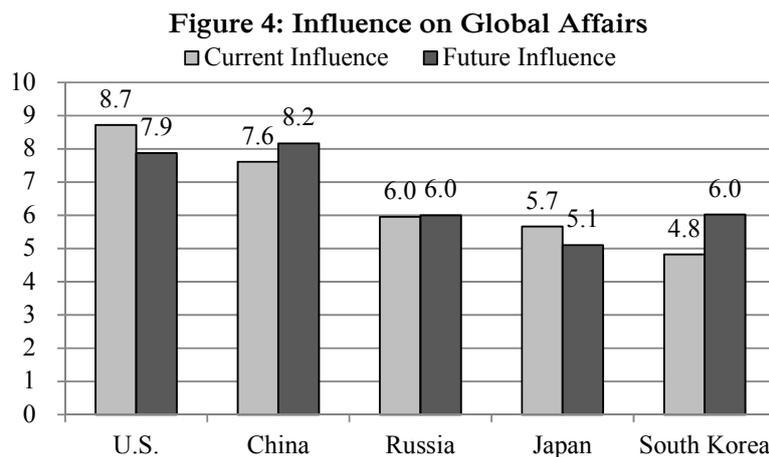
This data helps to highlight a larger trend—when it comes to issues of national security *the young think like the old*. Survey data has consistently found that Koreans in their 20s identify as security conservative, and usually find themselves in agreement with those in their 60s and older when it comes to issues related to North Korea.<sup>14</sup> But they likely arrive at these positions for very different reasons. While those in their 60s still show an interest in reunification, yet deplore North Korea’s treatment of its citizens, the youngest Koreans see South Korea as a strong, prosperous country and are far less interested in reunifying with North Korea.

The youngest South Koreans know no other Korea than an affluent one. Japan has been in decline so long that those in their 20s only know rumors of its former economic might. There is no other strong regional power as there was when their grandparents and parents came of age. China is certainly a growing power, but is not thought to be as advanced as Korea. Thus, Korea is entering into a vacuum of sorts, and the youngest Koreans believe Korea is assuming its rightful place. This is the fundamental shift that has taken place in the identity of Korea, and it is influencing how Korean's see themselves and the region.

### *In Korea We Believe?*

Korea is a country that has depended upon others for the security of its territorial borders for a better part of its pre-modern and modern history. Although still true to some extent, South Koreans no longer see themselves, or their country, as a “shrimp among whales.” The era of development has been definitively closed. Even if Koreans continue to debate whether they have become an advanced country (*seonjinkuk*; 선진국), there is now little debate about South Korea being a powerful and influential actor in the international community. The South Korean public agrees, with confidence about South Korea’s place in the world of the future permeating the country.

In Figure 4, which measure influence on global affairs both now and in the future (measured in 2013), the immediate observation is that South Koreans expect the influence of the United States to wane in the next ten years as China’s influence grows, with China eventually becoming the most influential among the countries included in the survey. But the more interesting finding is just how confident South Koreans are in South Korea. While Koreans rank their country as the least influential among the countries currently, in ten years time they expect South Korea’s influence to surpass that of Japan and even to rival that of Russia.<sup>15</sup>



**Source:** The Asan Institute for Policy Studies

This growing confidence has already had two very clear outcomes. The most obvious outcrop was the discussion in South Korea of a domestic nuclear weapons program. For the first time, this discussion was not held in private room among friends, but instead

burst into the mainstream, catching the attention of almost everyone who observes East Asia. Newspapers discussed it. Television discussed it. And more importantly, the people discussed it.<sup>16</sup> Second, Korea is increasingly unwilling to tolerate what it sees as Japanese belligerence on historical issues. With increasing confidence comes increasing willingness to express that confidence. Koreans see the next ten years bringing a fundamental reorganization of East Asia, and they expect such a reorganization to give Korea a more prominent role. The Korean government will increasingly act on that expectation – and that includes military parades, among other things. A strong and prosperous South Korea is starting to think and act as such.

Aside from more assertive political attitudes and a security conservative youth, opinions on what it means to be “Korean” have also changed. Similar to attitudes towards the North, the youngest cohort shows the greatest relative change.

### III. National Identity

A 2014 paper on South Korean nationalism, authored by Dr. Kim Jiyeon, corroborates the claims derived from the measure of political attitudes above.<sup>17</sup> The paper, a follow up on identity studies conducted by others in 2005 and 2010 using data collected in 2013, finds meaningful variation over time in the “preconditions for Koreanness” – i.e., national identity. The preconditions are divided into two components: a civic component (1) and ethnic component (2). The civic component defines “Koreanness” as being able to speak and write in Korean, abiding by the Korean political and legal system, and understanding Korean traditions. The ethnic component defines “Koreanness” as being born in Korea, having the Korean bloodline, and living most of one’s life in Korea. Data for 2005, 2010, and 2013 are shown below (Table 2).

**Table 2: Preconditions for “Koreanness”**

	Year	Important	Not important
<b>Ethnic component</b>			
Being born in Korea	2005	<b>81.9</b>	<b>17.7</b>
	2010	87.7	12.2
	2013	<b>69</b>	<b>27.9</b>
Having the Korean bloodline	2005	<b>80.9</b>	<b>18.3</b>
	2010	84.1	15.4
	2013	<b>65.8</b>	<b>30.4</b>
Living in Korea for most of one’s life	2005	64.6	34.7
	2010	78.2	21.5
	2013	66.1	30.2
<b>Civic component</b>			

Maintaining Korean nationality	2005	<b>88.2</b>	<b>11.1</b>
	2010	89.4	10.5
	2013	<b>88.4</b>	<b>9.1</b>
Being able to speak and write in Korea	2005	<b>87</b>	<b>12.6</b>
	2010	87.8	12.2
	2013	<b>91.7</b>	<b>6.7</b>
Abiding by the Korean political and legal system	2005	<b>77.5</b>	<b>20.6</b>
	2010	87.3	12.4
	2013	<b>93.4</b>	<b>4.2</b>
Understanding Korean traditions	2005	<b>80.9</b>	<b>18.3</b>
	2010	85.9	14
	2013	<b>91.5</b>	<b>6.1</b>

Source: Kim Jiyoung, "National Identity Under Transformation: New Challenges to South Korea."

Survey results for the entire population indicate that, as suggested above, South Korean nationalism is changing. Like attitudes, identity are also undergoing patterned change. The ethnic component is giving way to the civic component.

### *Ethnic Identity by Cohort*

If 2013 is isolated and the ethnic component is broken down by age cohort, the results are more telling. For each age cohort, approximately 90 percent cited each of the civic components as an important precondition for being Korean. Those in their 20s were as likely as those in their 60s or older to state as such. But the same is not true for the ethnic components included in the survey (Table 3). For each ethnic component, approximately 81.5 percent of those 60 and older cited "Having the Korean bloodline" as important. For those in their 20s, on the contrary, only 55.5 percent identified bloodline as important.

**Table 3: Ethnic Identity On the Decline**

		<b>Important</b>	<b>Not important</b>
<b>Ethnic component</b>			
Being born in Korea	20s (N = 186)	55.4	43.4
	30s (206)	63.3	35.1
	40s (221)	65.7	30.7

	50s (188)	78.4	19.1
	60 or over (199)	82.4	11
Having the Korean bloodline	<b>20s (186)</b>	<b>55.5</b>	<b>42.4</b>
	30s (206)	62.6	34.5
	40s (221)	58.2	38.3
	50s (188)	71.9	24.4
	<b>60 or over (199)</b>	<b>81.5</b>	<b>11.7</b>
	Living in Korea for most of one's life	20s (186)	59.4
30s (206)		59.6	37
40s (221)		65.6	32
50s (188)		72	24.6
60 or over (199)		74.1	19.8

**Source:** Kim Jiyeon, "National Identity Under Transformation: New Challenges to South Korea."

## CONCLUDING REMARKS

The data presented above illustrates a particularly strong decline in ethno-nationalism among South Korea's youngest cohort and indicates that a new nationalism, built on the idea of Korea as a "strong and prosperous" country, is on the rise. The data for those in their 20s suggests not only a significantly reduced connection to North Korea, but much less volatility in these attitudes. The repeated provocations of an impoverished nation may have "spoiled the well" among young Koreans who no longer see why their economically prosperous, politically democratic country should tolerate deviant behavior from North Korea. This is fitting for South Koreans today. In a 2012 conversation between the author and South Korean public opinion analyst Karl Friedhoff, the following observation about how young South Koreans see themselves and South Korea's place in the region:

For the [20s age cohort], they know no other strong regional power in the way their parents and grandparents did, other than Korea itself. Growing up in the age of Japan's lost decade, the concept of a strong Japan is lost on them, and China, though certainly an economic power, is not perceived to be as industrially and technologically advanced as Korea. Their perception of what Korea is and represents is much different from that of previous generations. Events like the 2002 World Cup, wherein the Koreans had a strong showing, are some of the earliest memories for younger Koreans. They have this new perception, which... is reshaping the way Koreans view themselves and, as such, is redefining Korean identity....<sup>18</sup>

New political attitudes regarding North-South relations and South Korea itself and a nascent but emerging civic identity suggest a new type of post-industrial society: a security-conscious post-developmental state.

Although tenuous, there is a link between a new nationalism and the broader value changes shown by the World Values Survey (WVS) data. As shown in section one, South Korea has yet to make a complete post-material shift, like other countries did during their post-industrial periods. Given the timing of South Korea's industrialization, the means by which it industrialized, and the conditions under which it industrialized, seem to have affected value change in a way different vis-à-vis others. The most telling data point here is the low number of post-materialists among those in their 20s. As the survey data from 2011-2013 indicates, this might be due to the rise of a security-conscious youth. While this youth cohort is more inclusive (viz. identifies itself by civicness, not ethnicity), they are aware and wary of the existential threat to the north. If the shortcomings of South Korea's welfare policies (unexplored here) are taken into account, the reason for South Korea's partial post-material shift seems quite clear. Alas, this is mere conjecture. Further work is necessary.

Although preliminary, the data and analysis presented here suggests that research into South Korean political culture with the objective of theorizing about the relationship between socioeconomic development and changes in nationalism is both necessary and feasible.

## Endnotes

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<sup>1</sup> See: Ronald Inglehart, *Cultural Shift in Advanced Industrial Society* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008); and Ronald Inglehart and Christian Welzel, *Modernization and Cultural Change and Democracy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

<sup>2</sup> See: Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 1983).

<sup>3</sup> Inglehart, *Cultural Shift in Advanced Industrial Society*.

<sup>4</sup> See WVS website at: <http://www.worldvaluessurvey.org/wvs.jsp>.

<sup>5</sup> Find information for the sixth wave at:

<http://www.worldvaluessurvey.org/WVSDocumentationWV6.jsp>.

<sup>6</sup> Conducted in 2010, it is possible that the two North Korean provocations that took place then did, in some way, affect the results. However, given that there are not any drastic changes in a materialist direction, the effect, if any at all, is minor.

<sup>7</sup> Brian Myers, "South Korea: The Unloved Republic," speech at the Asia Society: Korea, September 14, 2010. Summary available at: <http://asiasociety.org/korea/south-korea-unloved-republic>.

<sup>8</sup> Brian Myers, "Inside the Authoritarian State: North Korea's State-Loyalty Advantage." *Columbia Journal of International Affairs* 62, no. 1 (2011): 127.

<sup>9</sup> It should be emphasized, however, that the literature covering the modern phenomena of the state, the nation, and nationalism attributes some (though often not much) significance to race and ethnicity in the formation of nationalism, i.e. a nation's love for the state. For one example see: Etienne Balibar, "The Nation Form: History and Ideology," in *Becoming National: A Reader*, Geoff Eley and Ronald Grigor Suny, eds. (Oxford University Press, 1996), 132-150. Balibar, who identifies language and ethnicity as the two primary variables, would fall into the "much significance" group.

<sup>10</sup> For the methodology of the surveys cited in this paper, please see the Appendix.

<sup>11</sup> Data and prose for the sections on political attitudes and national identity has been taken from the following source: Steven Denney and Karl Friedhoff, "South Korea and a New Nationalism in an Era of Strength and Prosperity," CSIS PackNet #75, October 7, 2013, <http://csis.org/publication/pacnet-75-south-korea-and-new-nationalism-era-strength-and-prosperity>. Some modifications have been made.

<sup>12</sup> See, among other sources: Peter Foster, "South Korea cuts off trade with North over sinking of warship," *The Telegraph*, May 24, 2010.

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<sup>13</sup> This is often called the “scarcity hypothesis” and is derived from psychological needs theory. See: Ronald Inglehart, “Post-Materialists in an Environment of Insecurity,” *American Political Science Review* 75 (1981): 881.

<sup>14</sup> Kim Jiyeon et al, “The Fallout: South Korean Public Opinion Following North Korea’s Third Nuclear Test,” Public Opinion Brief, The Asan Institute for Policy Studies, February 12, 2013, <http://en.asaninst.org/contents/issue-brief-no-46-the-fallout-south-korean-public-opinion-following-north-koreas-third-nuclear-test/>.

<sup>15</sup> Aside from the data provided in the table, see also: Kim, Jiyeon and Karl Friedhoff. “South Korea in a Changing World: Foreign Affairs,” The Asan Institute for Policy Studies, 2013.

<sup>16</sup> Kim Jiyeon et al, “The Fallout: South Korean Public Opinion Following North Korea’s Third Nuclear Test.”

<sup>17</sup> Kim Jiyeon. “National Identity under Transformation: New Challenges to South Korea,” The Asan Forum, January 25, 2014.

<sup>18</sup> Steven Denney, “Gust of Popular Feeling: South Korean Presidential Race and North Korea,” interview with Karl Friedhoff, published at *Sino-NK.com*, October 7, 2013, <http://sinonk.com/2012/10/07/gusts-of-popular-feeling-south-korean-presidential-race-and-north-korea-an-interview/>.