Korea’s Challenges In Multiculturalism Policy: A Perspective from Singapore

GEETHA GOVINDASAMY
Senior Lecturer
PARK CHANG KYO
Visiting Professor
Department of East Asian Studies
University of Malaya
Malaysia

and

ER-WIN TAN
Visiting Senior Lecturer
Department of International and Strategic Studies
University of Malaya
Malaysia

Introduction

The emergence of the Republic of Korea (ROK) as a leading industrial and economic power poses a growing challenge to Seoul in addressing the increasingly multicultural nature of South Korean society. Historically accustomed to viewing themselves as an ethnically homogenous Korean nation spanning the Korean peninsula, the majority of ROK citizens have had few opportunities for extensive interaction with the growing numbers of foreign nationals working and living in South Korea. This poses significant concerns for Koreans’ desire to enjoy the cake of economic globalization whilst wanting to preserve a distinctly Korean national identity. The diverse nature of the ROK’s manufacturing and service sectors mean that there is no turning back the process of economic globalization; yet, the prospect of a multi-ethnic Korea has already led to more than a few Koreans calling for restrictions in immigration (The Epoch Times, June 19, 2011).

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