

Transnational Practices and Nationalism of Korean Americans in Korea: How They Make Meaning of Korean Government's Effort to Strengthen Transnational Korean Identity

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| Abstract |

Korean government's policy on overseas Koreans has primarily focused on education. While initial program was geared on instilling anti-North Korea (or anti-socialism) ideology, latter educational programs have centered on instilling nationalism. Focus on nationalism is primarily due to the government's recognition of overseas Koreans as human capital that would contribute in advancing the nation. Hence, Korea has focused on developing nationalism programs to encourage migrant remittances, investments and loyalties of the dispersed diaspora so to bring them back to the motherland. By conducting in-depth interviews with 12 Korean Americans living in Korea, the current study investigates how effective

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Korea has been in implementing programs to instill nationalism discourse, and how transnational activities in conjunction with nationalism education has strengthened their Korean identity. The findings offers ways to make the transnational discourse more effective for young generations of Korean Americans and suggests areas for future studies.

▪ Key words: Transnationalism, Korean Americans in Korea, *Jaemi Kyopo*, Nationalism, Identity

I. Introduction

Korean government's policy on overseas Koreans has primarily focused on education. While initial program focused on instilling anti-North Korea (or anti-socialism) ideology, mostly for Koreans in Japan, recent educational programs have centered on instilling nationalism. Focus on nationalism is primarily due to the government's recognition of overseas Koreans as human capital that could potentially contribute in advancing the homeland. Such a purpose could be understood in the context of transnationalism discourse. The current discourse on transnationalism does not see nation-state and transnational practices as mutually exclusive, rather, mutually constitutive. As a result, nation-state uses transnationalism as political project to bring back the immigrated; such a phenomenon is especially so for countries that have experienced much out-migration. Korea as one of those nations, has focused on developing programs to encourage migrant remittances, investments and loyalties of the dispersed diaspora so to bring them back to the motherland. The current study investigates ways in which Korea has developed programs to bring back transnationalized migrants, namely 2nd generation Korean Americans.

The Korean American population in Korea is growing. More and more Korean Americans are coming to Korea for various purposes including work, study and travel. As a technologically advanced nation, Korea has become more of an attractive site to build career and expand business ventures for young professional Korean Americans. Korean Americans have their advantage because they understand both Korean and American languages and cultures; hence, their bilingual and bicultural backgrounds work to their advantage therefore, many chose to come to Korea rather than elsewhere, when thinking about going abroad to build experiences.

Many Korean Americans in America grow up attending Korean schools and learn Korean language and culture at home from their parents as well as the Korean communities in which they are embedded. The current study seeks to examine how these Korean schools instilled a sense of nationalism towards the motherland to Korean Americans. Most of the Korean schools have been funded by Korean government for the purpose of instilling nationalism to overseas Korean diaspora, specifically on Korean descendants. The government has funded Korean schools in America for decades. Since the initial stage, type of programs and the focus have altered over the years, nevertheless, the primarily goal remains as securing a sense of belonging towards the motherland. However, to current, as to how effective these practices have been have not been examined in-depth. The researcher sees the need to conduct an evaluation of the current funding and programs to offer suggestions of future direction and practices.

The current juncture is important because the trend of Korean Americans coming to Korea is changing. More and more Korean Americans are increasing their transnational practices by going back and forth Korea and America. Different from the 1990s where Korean

Americans have only visited their motherland to address their identity crisis during vacation or through short exchange programs in college, the current population is coming as young professionals in their field, to advance their career and extend and expand upon their business ventures. It could be implied that those who intent to stay connected to the motherland are networking and reaching out to Korea for their long-term professional career and life-long connections. It also implies that those who are staying connected have positive attitude towards the motherland and already have somewhat of fondness or identification towards Korea. Therefore, it is critical to investigate the transnational practices of Korean Americans to understand how, up to now, the Korean government's educational program has been effective and whether or not there is connection, or if the current transitional practices are as result of something else other than nationalism education implemented by the government.

Therefore, specifically, the goal of the current study seeks to examine the relation between transnational practices of Korean Americans and nationalism education program of the Korean government. Second, the current study seeks to better understand how Korean Americans understand the transnational discourse of the Korean government (if they know anything about it at all) to see whether Korean government's strategy to transnational migrants to ultimately encourage migrant remittance, investment and loyalty among others have been functional and effective.

While discussion on transnationalism activities of the Korean Chinese has been growing there have been limited attention paid to transnationalism practices of Korean Americans. Primarily because the body of Korean Americans are comparatively smaller, and them being in Korea for a short-term as opposed to Korean Chinese who come to Korea for a long-term stay has also been a factor that invited less

attention from policy makers and scholars. Yet, given their educational background, socio-economic status achieved by second generation Korean Americans in America, their emotional attachment towards the motherland, as well as their potential in contributing to the Korean society as human capitals cannot be disregarded. For the aforementioned purposes of the study, the current research employs qualitative methodology to provide texture and rich description of participants' perception. In-depth interviews were conducted with 12 Korean Americans living in Korea to understand how they understand ways in which Korea has used educational program for 2nd generation Korean Americans to imbued nationalism discourse.

II. Literature Review

1. Transnationalism

Today, 244 million persons, or 3.3% of the world's population, are living in a country other than where they were born (Migration Policy Institute 2015).¹⁾ One of the terms that have emerged to describe the current migration trend is transnationalism. The term is used to refer to “transnational social relations as “anchored in” while transcending one or more nation-states” (Smith 2003, 4).

The term transnationalism is different from globalization in that while the latter term often find national borders, boundaries and identities insignificant, the formal insist on significance of borders,

1) Migration Policy Institute (2015), “Tabulation of Data From the United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Trends in International Migrant Stock: Migrants by Destination and Origin,” <http://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/migration/data/estimates2/estimates15.shtml>. (accessed on March 1, 2017)

national identities and state policies even as these are often transgressed by transnational communication circuits and social practices (Smith 2003, 4). In other words, there is a clear conceptual distinction between globalization and transnationalism. While discourse on globalization assumes globalization and the nation-state as mutually exclusive, discourse on transnationalism assumes transnational practices and nation-state as mutually constitutive (Basch et al. 1994; Schein 1998; Smith 1994). Schein argues that nation-state and transnational practices as “interlocked, enmeshed, mutually constituting” (Smith 2003, 4). Appadurai (1996) further takes the discourse on transnationalism to argue that “we are now moving in to a “post-national” phase of the global cultural economy” (Smith 2003, 5). Appadurai (1996) succinctly argues that existing states use nationalism as political project for transnational political diaspora and ethnic formation. Furthermore, theorists on transnationalism argue that states that have experienced substantial out-migration in recent decades go great lengths to develop discourses designed to hone in transnationalized meaning of nationhood – to bring migrant remittances, investments and loyalties back to the state (Appadurai 1996; Schiller & Fouron 1999; Guarnizo 1998; Mahler 1998; Smith 2003).

2. Korea as an out-migration nation

Korea has long experienced out-migration since the turn of the centennial. As of today, Korean diaspora are living in 181 countries with 7,184,842 in total number.²⁾ The largest group of Koreans living abroad are in China with 2,585,993 in number (35.99%), followed closely

2) Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2017), “Current Overseas Koreans,” http://www.mofa.go.kr/www/brd/m_3454/view.do?seq=356334&srchFr=&srchTo=&srchWord=&srchTp=&multi_itm_seq=0&itm_seq_1=0&itm_seq_2=0&company_cd=&company_nm=&page=1. (accessed on March 28, 2017)

by Korean Americans with 2,238,989 (31.16%). In Japan, there are 855,725 of them (11.91%), and in Europe, Korean diaspora totals 627,089 (8.73%).³⁾ Majority of Korean diaspora could be said to be living in China, America, and Japan (number of Korean diaspora in these three countries combined account for 79.06% of the total number of Koreans living abroad). The immigration history of Korean diaspora in China, Japan, and America vary from one another.

As for Korean Chinese, also often referred to as *Joseonjok*,⁴⁾ began immigrating to China since the mid-, late-19th century as result of varying social and natural reasons including domestic political situations, natural disasters, and Japanese invasions (Kim C-K et al. 2014, 110). Joseonjok in China today is the 13th largest ethnic minority group in China and most of them live in Northeast China, specifically in the Yanbian Autonomous Prefecture. Since the establishment of Korea - China diplomatic relations in 1992, the influx of Joseonjok in to Korea increased drastically. As of today, there are approximately 650,000 of them living in Korea (Overseas Koreans Foundation 2016).⁵⁾ As Korea's economic status grew, more came to fulfil their 'Korean dream', marriage and recovery of Korean citizenship (Oh et al. 2007, 84; Jang & Kang 2018).

Koreans in America consist mostly of those who went to the States in the late 1960s and 1970s as result of change in immigration law in America. The Immigration and Naturalization Act of 1965 abolished earlier quota system that limited immigrants based on national origin.⁶⁾

3) Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2013), "Current Overseas Koreans," http://www.mofa.go.kr/travel/overseascitizen/index.jsp?menu=m_10_40. (accessed on March 30, 2017)

4) Joseonjok is the term used in China to refer to Chinese of Korean descent.

5) Since there are about 130,000 Joseonjok who have either become naturalized citizens or otherwise recovered their Korean citizenship, the number is closer to 800,000 (Overseas Koreans Foundation 2016).

6) Cohn, D'Vera (2015), "How US Immigration Laws and Rules have Changed Through History," <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2015/09/30/how-u-s-im>

As result of the change in immigration policy, many Koreans immigrated to the US for a better life in America. Those who went to the US during this time, varied in terms of social economic status and their occupation ranged from international students, politicians, to businessmen. Yet, compared to Koreans who immigrated to China, those who immigrated to the States during this time could be said to have been of relatively higher socioeconomic standing (for more discussions on the settlement process see Choi 2005; KAFGW 2009; Min 1995; Min & Bozorgmehr 2000). Recently, similar to Joseonjok, descendent of Korean Americans, namely, 2nd generation Korean Americans have been returning to Korea.

As more and more descendants of Korean diaspora began coming back to Korea, the Korean government established Overseas Korean Act.⁷⁾ According to the Overseas Korean Act, Overseas Koreans are defined as those who are currently living abroad, regardless of their current citizenship status, as well as those who are descendants of Koreans. Article II of the Act states that these individuals are either those who have had Korean citizenship before or those are direct descendants of those who have had Korean citizenship (at least one of the parents or grand parents must have had Korean citizenship). Per this definition, by default many were excluded because Republic of Korea was founded in 1948 and Korean Chinese immigrated to China prior to this year. Therefore, there was a heated debate as to whether

migration-laws-and-rules-have-changed-through-history/. (accessed on July 17, 2017)

7) The Overseas Korean Act originally did not include Korean Chinese as individuals of Korean descent. It was not until February 2004 when the government revised the Overseas Korean Act to include Korean Chinese as people of Korean descent. Also in July of that same year, the policy on issuing F-1 visas was also revised to allow Korean Chinese to bring their families and children from China to live together with them in Korea. One of the biggest changes came in 2007, when Korean Chinese became eligible for H-2 visas (the visit-employment visa); allowing them to work and visit Korea flexibly for 5 years (Park 2008, 118-119).

Korean Chinese ought to be included in this definition of who constitutes Overseas Koreans. A decision was made by the Constitutional Court of Korea in November 29, 2001, ruling that excluding overseas Koreans who moved to China, Japan and the former Soviet Union (what is now CIS) before 1948 and their descendants from receiving legal benefits is unconstitutional and that provision will remain effective only through 2003.⁸⁾ Because of the Overseas Korean Act, many returning Korean Chinese experienced great socioeconomic hardships until the legal issues were settled.

On the other hand, Korean Americans were at an advantage. Because most of Korean Americans immigrated to the United States after 1948, hence, Korean Americans were entitled to legal and social benefits granted by the Overseas Korean Act. Moreover, because Koreans were found to have openness toward Western culture and Caucasians, Korean Americans were more readily accepted by Koreans compared to Korean diaspora from other continents (Lee 2002; 2003; 2010; Kim J-Y et al. 2014).⁹⁾

3. Policy on overseas Koreans

It is widely accepted that talks of policy on overseas Koreans officially began during Kim Young-sam (1993-1998) Administration by the Globalization Committee (Lee 2002). However, the actual policy was established during the Kim Dae-jung (1998-2003) Administration. Since then, the framework has largely remained as is while revisions were

8) Constitutional Court of Korea (2001), "Constitutional Court of Korea, Full Bench [Immigration and Legal Status of Overseas Korean Act, Article 2, issue 2]," <http://www.ccount.go.kr/search.s.html>. (accessed on July 2, 2017)

9) Examination of how Korean government has addressed/treated returning Korean diaspora from China, Japan, USA, and former Soviet Union (CIS) is beyond the scope of this study, the current study specifically focuses on the case of America.

made during Roh Moo-hyun (2003-2008) Administration (Lee 2010).

The policy and organizations were established in December of 1999 to oversee Koreans living abroad. As for the policy, Immigration and Legal Status of Overseas Korean Act and Immigration and Legal Status of Overseas Korean Code were established, and Overseas Koreans Foundation (hereafter OKF) was established under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 1997 (then Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade) to manage works involved with overseas Koreans. Moreover, the control room of the Prime Minister along with 4 government ministries became in charge of overseeing works involved with overseas Koreans (namely, Ministry of Foreign Affairs; Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism; Ministry of Justice; and Ministry of Education).

Specifically, the policy on overseas Koreans during the Kim Dae-jung (1998-2003) administration were focused on 1) supporting overseas Koreans to have stable living and become respectable members in the host country, 2) them maintaining *Han* (Korean) ethnic identity and strengthening ties with the home country, 3) utilizing capacity of overseas Koreans for national development. To achieve these goals the policy has been set on 1) supporting them in advancement of the mainstream society in the host country, in their protection of rights, improvement of legal and social status, and self-help efforts, 2) support Korean language school, arts and cultural events as well as dispatch arts groups to strengthen ethnic pride and self-esteem of overseas Koreans, 3) encourage economic activities in Korea to provide opportunities for overseas Koreans to contribute to the development of the nation, and 4) in addition to improving domestic law and system, improvement of system to use the brains of overseas Koreans were set as projects in priority (Lee 1999).

As can be assumed from above, education became one important

component in overseas Korean policy. While the overseas Korean education was initially primarily focused on ideology to prevent anti-government acts or pro-North Korean activities of the Korean Japanese, upon the turn of the 21st century, education programs for overseas Koreans primarily came to be focused on nationalism. This is because the Korean government recognized Overseas Koreans as limitless and creative human capital that could contribute to advancing the nation (Kim 2008, 208).

Thus, the Ministry of Education has been the primary division in charge of the educational program for overseas Koreans. According to Basic Education Act (Article 29, Issue 2) and Regulation on Education of Overseas Nationals (partly revised in Jan. 29, 2001), Overseas Koreans came to be entitled to receiving education sponsored by Korean government. Basic Education Act states that “The government has to make necessary policy for dongpo¹⁰⁾ living abroad to provide them with necessary schooling or social education.” Therefore, the Ministry of Education has established and managed schools abroad as well as selected and sent teachers to teach in these schools abroad (Kim 2008). As of 2006, there are 26 Korea Schools in 14 countries, 2,072 Korean schools in 106 countries, and 35 Korean Education Institutes in 14 countries.¹¹⁾

As of today, the two organization mainly in charge of nationalism education business for overseas Koreans are National Institute for International Education (hereafter NIIIE) under the Ministry of Education and Overseas Koreans Foundation (hereafter OKF) under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. These two play central role in educating overseas Koreans. While these two differ in terms of specific projects and its scope (NIIIE work include recruiting international students in

10) Korean descendants living abroad.

11) Overseas Korean Foundation (2017), <http://www.korean.net>. (accessed on May 20, 2017)

Korea, managing Koreans students studying abroad with government funding, and collaborating international education exchanges; OKF work involves economic, education and exchange programs for the purpose of securing rights of overseas Koreans), when it comes to education on nationalism there are many similarities (Kim 2008).

4. Nationalism Education for Korean Americans in America

In America, nationalism education have been primarily carried out through unofficial Korean language schools. Korean language schools in America were first established during the Japanese occupation. One of the primary purpose was to raise children as “Koreans,” while fostering them to become interpreters for their parents and ultimately let them become symbol of independence movement. Therefore, during the initial period, nationalism was strong in character because its focus was on educating children to learn Korean culture and instilling Korean pride and identity. However, since, 1970, education become more focused on achieving practical purposes (Choi 1998).

Most of the Korean language schools are founded by Koreans living in America and often run on Saturdays and Sundays. Often times, Korean churches or local school buildings are used to hold classes on weekends. The Korean government fund part of maintenance fees and or provided Korean textbooks (used in public schools) or books made for overseas Koreans free of charge. As the number of schools increased National Association for Korean Schools (NAKS) and Korean School Association of America (KSAA) were established in 1981 and 1982, consecutively, to exchange information, strengthen educational programs for Koreans in America.¹²⁾

12) Korean School Association of America (KSAA) (2017), <https://www.facebook.com/ksaaca/about?lst=5735902%3A1310563352%3A1498620339>. (accessed on June 6, 2017); National Association for Korean Schools (NAKS) (2017), <https://www.naks>.

While there are close to 1000 Korean language schools all over America, Kim (2008) suggests 4 major problems of Korean educational programs, namely, 1) lack of motivation on nationalism education, 2) limited support from the Korean government, 3) limited professionalism of the teachers and environment not conducive for effective education, and 4) lack of adequate textbooks (Kim 2008). More specifically, Kim argues that while the younger generation does not recognize importance of ethnic education, what is more problematic is lack of Korean American parents' motivation in teaching their children about nationalism thereby instilling identity as Korean. The parents are more keen on teaching their children to speak better English and assimilate into the mainstream. Second, Kim argues that support from the Korean government is lacking. Specifically, while the government has continued to support education, it was not proactive in providing practical ways in which demands could increase. Specific ways in which Korean Americans would be motivated to learn about Korea needs to be thought out. Third, because majority of Korean language schools are founded and run by Korean Americans themselves or Korean churches, not only are the facilities poor but there is lack of professionalism in its curriculum and teachers. Most of the teachers are volunteers who have not had proper training in teaching about Korean language and culture (Kim & Go 2004). Therefore, when evaluating the effectiveness of the nationalism education or the support of the Korean government in installing Korean ethnic identity to descendants of Korean Americans, these limitation need to be taken into consideration.

5. Korean Americans in Korea

In its 2014 annual report there are over 45,000 Korean Americans

[org/jml/aboutus-purpose](http://www.kci.go.kr/org/jml/aboutus-purpose). (accessed on Jan. 10, 2018)

(ethnic Koreans with US citizenship) living in Korea.¹³⁾ More than 4,000 Korean Americans have been coming to Korea every year over the last four years in search of work, their roots and even marriage. (Korean Statistical Information Service, International migration Statistics) However, many Korean Americans are not accounted for because the above 45,000 only accounts for those who come with F-4 (Overseas Korean visa) therefore, those who come through work visas, teaching visas or US government affiliates (e.g., US embassy, US military, Fulbright etc.) are not accounted for. Therefore the actual number of ethnic Koreans with US citizenship could be much larger.

Korean Americans in Korea come to reside in Korea for a number of different reasons and one of the main reasons is work, mainly in English after-schools or *hakwons* (Danico 2005). As result of English craze fueled by focus on English education in Korean society today, English after-school industry has blossomed since the 1990s. And many of these English after-schools or *hakwons* hire native English speakers such as Korean Americans (Lee 2013; Park & Abelmann 2004).

Empirical evidence indicate that 2nd generation Korean Americans in Korea have made significant socio-economic advancement in American society today. Studies show that close to 60% of Korean Americans have bachelor's degree (national average of American adults with bachelor's degree is 31%) (Pew Research Center 2013), with average income of \$60K, earning 30% higher than Caucasians on average partially due to high educational attainment (Kim 2013; Pew Research Center 2013-2015). Korean Americans are the 3rd highest income earners among Asian ethnic groups in America (Kim 2013). However, despite their socio-economic status or success in American society

13) Korean Statistical Information Service (KSIS) (2014), "International Migration Statistics," http://kosis.kr/eng/statisticsList/statisticsList_01List.jsp?vwcd=MT_ETITLE&parmTabId=M_01_01. (accessed on June 2, 2016)

today, studies show that young Korean Americans have struggled in terms of their identity (Park 2001; Pyke & Dang 2003). Studies indicate that while young Korean Americans can shift their identities situationally because they know the culture and language of both Korea and America, yet, they have been referred to as Twinkies¹⁴⁾ or white-washed (for being too assimilated) well as other derogatory names in America (Jang & Kim 2013; Park 2001; Pyke & Dang 2003).

Therefore, despite the visible success 2nd generation Korean Americans have achieved, there have been much struggles in terms of ethnic and cultural identity. Hence, many 2nd generation Korean Americans visit their motherland during or after their college years in order to experience and explore their root. Studies show that Korean Americans visit Korea for short term to find answers to their identity struggles. While earlier studies have shown that Korean Americans visit Korea for a short-term during college years (that is, during their early or mid-twenties) recent study indicates that Korean Americans are coming as professionals (Jang ND). Yet, while the number of Korean Americans is growing there is no visible community in Korea. Danico (2005) suggests this is because they have the ability to blend in with other Koreans. It is only when they began to speak their difference becomes unknown. Because of the lack of visibility less attention has been paid to them academically and because of lack of researches on them, there is limited understanding or mis-understanding of Korean Americans living in Korea.

Therefore, the current study seeks to examine how Korean Americans in Korea make meaning of nationalism. Investigation of

14) Twinkie and whitewash are terms used to refer to an Asian person who dresses, acts, and speaks like Caucasians. Twinkie is a yellow cake with creamy white filling—therefore, it is used as a derogatory term to refer to someone who is yellow on the outside and white on the inside (Pyke & Dang 2003).

their nationalism at this juncture would be important as their perception of their own nationalism would reflect the nationalism education they have received growing up. The findings of the study would also be layered and multifaceted as their perception would have been complicated by their newly acquired experiences via recent stay in Korea. The current study also seeks to investigate how their transnational practices to examine whether there is any relations between their activities and the nationalism education, more specifically whether the educational program have had any influence over remittance, investment and loyalties. By examining these aspects the findings could shed light on previously under examined yet important aspect of transnationalism discourse of the Korean government. The findings would contribute significantly to the literature on transnationalism, nationalism, and multiculturalism discourses in Korean society today.

RQ1: How has the Korean government's nationalism discourse practiced via Korean schools in America influence Korean Americans growing up?

RQ2: What are the transnational practices of Korean Americans living in Korea?

RQ3: How do Korean Americans make meaning of Korean government's nationalism discourse in terms of migrant remittances, investments and loyalties?

III. Methods

Given the exploratory nature of the study in examining previously under-explored areas and also given the purpose of the research

questions, the study employed qualitative research methods. Qualitative research methods are appropriate for researchers who are “intrigued with the complexity of social interactions as expressed in daily life and with the meanings participants themselves attribute to these interaction” (Marshall & Rossman 1995, 2). In the process of obtaining these complexity embedded in the participants’ daily lives, the researchers are able to gather “detailed description of situations, events, people, interactions, and observe behaviors” (Patton 1980, 22).

This study used in-depth interviewing method. In-depth interviewing method is appropriate as its goal is to obtain in-depth and open-ended narrative rather than trying to fit participants’ experiences into certain categories (Patton 1987). Therefore, although the interviewer may guide the conversation, the interviewer still “respects how the participant frames and structures the responses” (Marshall & Rossman 1995, 82). Hence, the greatest advantage of the interview method is its ability to understand the participants’ experiences in greater depth and breadth.

1. Sample

The study employed purposive and convenient sampling to recruit participants. Twelve interviews were conducted on individuals who were either born in America or immigrated to the US before the age of 12 (see appendix for demographic information). Eight of the participants were females, the length of stay in Korea ranged from 3-10 years, their age range were from 25-48, and they were from various parts of America. All of them identified their mother language as English and identified themselves as Korean Americans. The data recruiting process started with personal and professional contacts to recruit participants as well as snowball methods to gather participants.

The participants varied in terms of occupation, age, reason for stay

in Korea, and visa status so that diverse perspectives could be gathered. By having participants who come from different backgrounds, multiple perspectives can be emerged through discussions and in-depth interviews. Rubin and Rubin (2005) stressed that when a researcher provides a “variety of perspectives” which offers “different vantage points” (67), the study’s credibility increases as result. The in-depth interviews took about 90–180 minutes on average and 3 of the participants were interviewed twice for gather more in-depth perspectives. The in-depth interviews were led by open-ended questions that were semi-structured. All the participants were asked to give consent to be audio tapes. Audio taping interviews helped the researcher recall the material accurately. The interviews were conducted in English and once the interviews were audio taped, the researcher began the transcribing process.

2. Data Analysis

Grounded theory approach was employed to analyze the data for this study. A grounded theory approach, developed by Glaser and Strauss (1967), seek to explain and theorize about a phenomenon from the data. This approach takes upon a systematic and constant comparison approach to collecting, analyzing and interpreting the data. Corbin and Strauss (2008), Strauss and Corbin (1990) and Glaser and Strauss (1967) suggest open coding, axial coding and selective coding processes to data collection and analysis processes. These coding processes enable researchers to achieve systematic and constant comparison approach during the data collection and analysis process. By identifying the topics or key terms that emerged consistently thought the data collection process, the emerging themes or patterns were identified.

IV. Results

1. RQ1: How has the Korean government's nationalism discourse practice via Korean schools in America influence Korean Americans growing up?

- (1) Lack of awareness of the government's support

Interviews revealed that the participants were not aware of the support Korean government had been providing Korean schools in America. Participants had thought that the Korean churches, where most of the Korean language classes were held were responsible for sponsoring the classes and the teachers. Though it is difficult to tell whether the churches that hosted Korean language classes were funded and to what extent, some of the participants were curious and surprised to learn about the system. A couple of the participants ask, "why?" and most of them simply said, "I didn't know that." Another interviewee said, "I doubt any of my Korean Americans friends know about that." Most of the participants were unaware of the Korean government's effort to teach the younger generations of Korean Americans about the culture and the language so to strengthen their ethnic identity.

Moreover, when explained about the purpose of support, participants found that approach to be "propaganda-istic"—and discussed how the government should find more indirect way to instill Korean identities to young Korean Americans. One of the participants mentioned using soft power, that is, using culture to influence the younger generation, letting them be influence by the culture by exposure and not from directly teaching them about the traditional Korean culture. Regardless,

while most of the participants had attended Korean school, none were aware of the government's support.

In discussing about how they thought the Korean government was treating Korean diaspora in general and Korean Americans in specific, the issue of visa came up. Most of the participants were satisfied of the legal rights as F-4 status. Yet, one of the participants was concerned about the changes occurring with F-4 starting 2018,¹⁵⁾ which makes men to serve in the Korean military to maintain F-4 visas. Because the change is to be implemented soon, she was concerned about Korean American males' prospect in Korea.

While talking about visa status, the difference of visa status for Korean Americans and Korean Chinese was brought up. While most of the participants were not aware of the difficulties Korean Chinese had experienced in acquiring F-4 visas in Korea, they had thought the process and requirements in acquiring F-4 would be the same for all descendants of Korean diaspora. Upon hearing about the challenges Korean Chinese had faced one of them said, "We are nothing special, we should all be treated equally as any others." Interviews revealed that the participants do not have any specific needs or expectations from the Korean government just because they are from America and just because they are of Korean descents. Some even thought that they should not be treated any differently than other foreigners just because they were of 2nd generation Korean Americans. While some felt that they were under-appreciated in Korea, these complaints were only made in passing.

(2) Factors that instilled Korean identity in the US

Interview revealed that a number of factors influenced them in

15) Only one of the participants mentioned this point.

instilling them with Korean identity. One of them was the role their parents played in teaching them the importance of learning the language and culture. One interviewee said, “my parents said, “wherever you go, you’ll always be Korean,” so she put emphasis in learning the language and culture, staying connected with my root.” Her parents wanted her children to embrace their Korean heritage. Others discussed importance of having Korean or Asian friends growing up. One participant discussed how she was raised in a neighborhood with not a lot of Asians. Because her race stood out so much, she grew up very aware of her difference. She discussed how she wanted to “blend in” with others while growing up. Her ‘wanting to blend in with other’ resonated with other participants and some had gone far to reject their Koreanness to blend in better in their schools and American society as a whole. One participant mentioned how she has a friend whose childhood trauma is the friend’ mother packing gimbap¹⁶⁾ for lunch. When she opened up her lunchbox she was made fun of and that made her reject her ethnic background.”

Interviewees also discussed about the role of Korean churches played growing up. One participant said, “[our family] went to church not because we were good Christians but because my parents wanted to stay connected with Korea by meeting other Koreans. It was like having home and family away from home.” Others also discussed how their relationships with church deacons, elders and other members helped them understand and practice Korean manners growing up. However, the extend of importance church or Korean community played in their lives in instilling Korean identity were not very emphasized. Also because it was important for the participants’ families to adjust to America quickly, some of their parents did not want them

16) A Korean dish made from cooked rice and other ingredients rolled in dried sheet of laver seaweed.

to learn Korean language and culture.

(3) Factors that increase sense of Korean pride in Korea

Interviews revealed that the participants have some sense of Korean pride. While all of them identified themselves as Korean Americans and not as Korean, after years of living in Korea, they have come to better understand and like Korean culture and the society more than they had prior to coming to Korea. This was especially true for those who lived in predominately Anglo-Saxon neighborhood growing up where their ethnicity stood out. One of the interviewees talked about how comforting it was to be surrounded by those who looked the same, ethnically. Others also discussed how meeting relatives in Korea that they have never met before and meeting their grandparents instilled them with sense of belonging. Because many of the participants had relatives in Korea, seeing them for the first time provided comfort that they had not felt back in America—connection with the relatives also helped them realized their roots in Korea.

Others also discussed how understanding of cultural practices and social cues made them appreciate the culture more, which led them to have more Korean pride. One of the participants said, “when I go back home (to America) and see my friends, I notice things that I didn’t before, I’m like, in my mind, “oh you shouldn’t say things like that, oh you are not supposed to do it that way.” Because I know more about the culture than most of my friends I find myself judging them. And some times that surprises me. I think I’ve changed. But in a good way. I’ve come to appreciate and understand history and meaning behind social cues so yeah, I want to teach that to my friends.” As such, more understanding not only gave more appreciation of the culture, but also sense of pride.

Participants also discussed how the culture becoming 'cool' is giving them a sense of pride. One participant who came to Korea in early 2010s discussed how K-pop, Kangnam style and Korean food going global have made the culture itself very "cool". She said, "it wasn't like that growing up but now it's cool for white people to say, "I love kimchi,¹⁷⁾ or I love pajeon."¹⁸⁾ Others also further discussed how the culture itself coming to be associated as something 'positive,' 'trendy,' and 'cool' have made Korean Americans have more Korean pride, here and in America.

Interviews revealed that having close relationship with Koreans in Korea have lead them to be more attached to Korea. One participant discussed how she keeps close contact with her past co-workers even when she has left the company years ago. It was the co-workers and her boss who helped her settle when she first came to Korea. Even though she had relatives in Korea, her immediate point-of-contact when she needed to find a place to stay, find ways around in Korea were her co-workers. She further discussed how her ties with Korean friends in Korea led her to have better understanding of Korea, have more positive feelings towards Korea, thus came to have more patience and understanding of some things that annoyed her initially. In such a way, she became more open-minded about Korea and ended up extending her stay after her exchange-student visa expired.

Not everyone had similar positive experience with their Korean colleagues but others did discuss how their good relationship with Korean friends gave them a sense of belonging. Even though they

17) A staple in Korean cuisine, a traditional side dish made of salted and fermented vegetable such as cabbage and radish. Trifood (2017), "Kim-chi: Fermented cabbage," <http://www.trifood.com/kimchi.asp>. (accessed on Aug. 23, 2017)

18) Korean pancake made with green onion and other ingredients. Usually served as appetizer or snack. Trifood (2017), "Pa-jeon: Korean-style pancake," <http://www.trifood.com/pajeon.asp>. (accessed on Aug. 23, 2017)

have some communication issues they enjoy having a night out or going out on a golf field with Korean friends or business partners; these outings function as business social but also give them a sense of belonging.

2. RQ2: What are the transnational practices of Korean Americans living in Korea?

(1) Traveling back and forth

Interviews reveal that most of the participants visited Korea since they were young. Majority of them had memories of them visiting Korea when they were little to visit their relatives. For most of the participants, these visits to Korea continued until their teenage years. When they were in college, they visited Korea as an exchange-students or fellowship via their university in the States which lasted anywhere from 3 months to a year. One of the participants said, “back then it was a trend, everybody was coming to Korea. So the summer after my freshmen year in college I also came to Korea and everyone from my school was also in Korea that summer, we all took Korean classes at Yonsei, it was a great fun.” Because she enjoyed the stay so much she came to Korea for an internship after she graduated from college. Since then she has been going back and forth between the States and Korea for work. Another participant who also came to Korea when she was in college, came back to Korea after a few year after graduation to work at a Korean law firm. After a few years in that firm, she went abroad to other countries and ended up coming back to Korea for work. Though different in frequency, most of the participants had similar experiences of coming to Korea since childhood. Interviews revealed that many had positive experiences in

Korea when they were young, and these positive experiences made them want to come back to Korea for work as adult.

Participants were also found to go back to America for frequent visits. Most of them were found to go back at least once a year if not several times a year for business trips and personal visits during holidays to see friends and family. Their socio-economic status allowed them to visit America frequently and while they were anchored in Korea they were still enjoying the transnational background and kept the transnational practices by going back and forth Korea and the US. But a few of the participants who have been living in Korea for more than 7 years discussed how they were getting homesick, missing the stability and less busy life they used to have back in America.

When asked when they plan on going back to America, only a couple of them had specific year in mind, one planned on going back within two years, another wanted to make the decision sometime this year, but all others did not have any specific plans of going back. While they were planning to go back at some point in time, they were not thinking about specific time frame. These interviews revealed that Korean Americans in Korea had almost nomadic lifestyle-free to move around the world as they please because there weren't specific boundaries in which they were confined to and their mind were not set on going back to America.

(2) Staying within their comfort zone-only identifying with those like themselves

The interviews revealed that participants also wanted themselves to become more fluent in Korean for convenience. One participant said, "I should really learn to speak Korean better" and such response resonated throughout the interview, but most of them discussed how

busy they were to take Korean language classes while they work full time. But one spoke how these reasons are only excuses, a little embarrassed, he confessed that he doesn't try hard enough to go out of his ways to make efforts to learn because he has close friends who speak English and he feels comfortable around English speakers who are like him. He further mentioned, "I think the reason why I hang out with English speaking friends is because I'm like them, I know where they are coming from...yeah, I do go out with my Korean co-workers and I speak Korean but other than the language I think there are also cultural things. So I feel more comfortable with my friends who speak English so I hang out with them."

Majority of the participants spoke about how their close friends in Korea are people like them, Korean Americans working/studying in Korea. While they recognized the need to speak Korean better and while they desire to speak more fluently, it wasn't because they wanted to strengthen their Korean ethnic identity, rather, it was to minimize inconvenience from not speaking the language.

Due to language and cultural barrier, majority of the participants were found to network amongst English community. Only a couple of the interviewees met with Korean friends occasionally; most of them were only close to English speaking members in Korea. Yet, interestingly enough when asked whom they would root for if a Korean sports team was against the US team, majority of the participants said Korean team. One of the participant discussed how because she feels *jeong*¹⁹⁾ towards Korean team she would root for the Korean team. Other said she would root for Korean team but if the athlete is Asian American, she would cheer for the Asian American. When asked why she said, "because they are more relatable. I would

19) "Feeling, love, sentiment, passion, human nature, sympathy, heart," attachment, bond, affection between individuals (Chung & Cho 2001).

root for whom I can relate with, who are most like me.” Because she identify herself as a Korean American, she felt closer to Asian American than Korean. Therefore, some of the participants sense of belong was influence not so much with the national identity (that is, citizenship) but more with cultural identity.

3. RQ3: How do Korean Americans make meaning of Korean government’s nationalism discourse in terms of migrant remittances, investments and loyalties?

(1) Difficulties in raising children halt from making investment

When asked about their intention to make investments in Korea, most of the participants discussed how they are more interested in buying real estate or stocks in America. One of the reasons was because they were unsure of the processes involved for foreigners making investments in Korea, without having Korean citizenship they figured it would be troublesome. Another barrier in making investment in Korea is their plan to eventually return to America. Especially those who were single, they wanted to settle down and raise family in America hence, they didn’t make any plans to buy real estate in Korea.

One of the reasons why participants wanted to raise kids in America was because they heard horrible stories of raising children in Korea. Some of the participants discussed their unfamiliarity and problems with educational system in Korea. Fearing for the worst and wanting to raise their children in more ethnically diverse environment, participants wanted to raise their children in American suburbs. They also wanted to raise kids in an environment that is more relaxed, less expensive, and less competitive. One of the participants said, “I had a really good childhood and I want my children to be able to have what

I had growing up”. What had made his childhood so great was him being able to play sports in the neighborhood, enjoying weekends, and relaxing with family and friends on weekday evenings and weekends. He doesn't think he could give these things to his children if he raise them in Korea. For these two major reasons participants were shy about making investments in Korea.

(2) Career opportunities and familiarity with the culture encourage remittance

The reason for the participants to come back to Korea in the first place was their familiarity with the culture and the language. Most of them were good in conversational Korean and had grown up speaking Korean at home with their parents. They were also familiar with the culture. One participant said, “my parents taught me everyday culture not Korean history- things like when you eat with the elders they are supposed to eat first. And growing up, I naturally picked up on those things by also observing others at church.” As such, many were familiar with Korean cultural cues and because of that they chose to come to Korea rather than elsewhere.

Second, perhaps more important reason for coming to Korea was the career opportunities available in Korea. One lawyer participant discussed, “yes, having a few years abroad can work towards my advantage when I go back to America.” While he was concerned that there may be less opportunities back in the States that have to do with Korea but still, he discussed how having had overseas experience would help then hurt his career. Others also had similar thoughts as to how their career experiences in Korea would help in the long run.

Participants also discussed how now a days, many Korean Americans want to come to Korea for work. One participant discussed

how she made a leap easily because she already had friends working in Korea. Also, she received a number of inquiries from strangers who contact her via LinkedIn asking how she was able to find a job in Korea. As the political climate in the US is making it difficult for foreigners to work in the US with work visa, many Americans who were abroad are going back to the US (because it has become easier to find jobs for Americans according to the participant), which naturally led to more job opportunities in Korea for candidates who speak English. Because lucrative job openings in Korea, Korean Americans want to come to Korea for to build their career.

Still when asked how Korean Americans would be more attracted to coming to Korea or contributing to the Korean society, a few discussed how providing more job opportunities to those who do not speak fluent Korean would help attract them to Korea. One discussed how she has friends who are interested in coming to Korea to learn about the culture yet are hesitant because they are not sure what they can do without having the language skills. Yet others discussed how more Korean Americans find Korea as an attractive location to work because of its job opportunities, especially those in the legal practice. However, as to how they could contribute to the Korean society were difficult to answer because it wasn't something they had thought about deeply previously.

(3) On loyalty: Thinking about passing down the language and culture

While most of the participants were single with no children, (while 4 of the participants were married only two had kids, one each), they spoke about wanting to teach their kids Korean language and culture when they have kids. One discussed, "if I end up marrying a Korean

guy then it would be more likely but if I don't end up marrying a Korean guy then it would be challenging to teach Korean because my first language isn't Korean." So while the likelihood may be slim, she still spoke about passing down Korean heritage to her children. One interviewee who was also married to a Korean American discussed how his mother-in-law is helping taking care of his young daughter. Others also discussed how later on, if they have kids how they want their parents to help them raise their kids so Korean language and culture could be passed down. Interviews revealed that sense of belonging in Korean society and sense of Korean pride led to the desire to teach their children about Korean language and culture.

A couple of the factors that led them to think about these issues were because they were able to take advantage of both cultures growing up because they could speak Korean. Therefore, they wanted their children to have more competitive edge by knowing both cultures and the languages. The participants thought that if their children grow up to be bicultural and bilingual, they would have more opportunities in the future. A second reason was, the participants wanted to instill their children with Korean identity because they now realize the importance of maintaining connection with their root.

V. Discussion

1. 4 Ways to strengthen Korean identity more effectively

According to the interviews, majority of them were unaware that the Korean government was funding Korean language schools in America or existence of NIIE or OKF and their works. Only one of the participants had participated in a program through OKF and had

attended one of the events they had for young leaders of Korea diaspora in Korea. So only one participant knew about the government's effort to maintain positive relations with the Korean Americans in Korea through Overseas Korea Foundation. However, all others had no knowledge of the information.

Despite much effort of the government, perhaps due to lack of publicity, recipients of government sponsorship were unaware of the support they have been receiving over the years. Therefore, it was challenging to understand effectiveness of such an effort. However, the participants' answers provide take-aways of the ways in which the government has been running the nationalism education. First, in today's day and age, it is perhaps more effective to use soft culture to strengthen nationalism to younger generations of Korean Americans. Rather than using education through Korean schools, using diverse medium to spread Korean culture abroad shows to be more effective. Popularity with the K-pop, Korean food and video game seems to be more effect way to reach out to Korean Americans. Second, rather than targeting Korean Americans directly to instill Korean identity, the findings indicate it may be more effective to increase status of Korea globally, be it culture, economy or food. Use of culture in strengthening identity has been also supported in other studies as well, for instance, Hallyu has been shown to play a role in constructing identity amongst immigrants (Sung 2012). The findings of the interview show that pride as Korean descendent, connection with the home country increases if and when the status of the nation or the home country heightens.

Third, interviews revealed that more knowledge and awareness of Korean culture help in strengthening Korean identity. Participants discussed how their newly acquired knowledge in Korea about Korean cultural cues, Korean history and culture gave them sense of Korean

pride. Fourth, interviews revealed that interpersonal relationships that they have acquired over the years in Korea increase their sense of belonging. Of course, some of them were relatives, but participants were found to rely more on their Korean friends rather than relatives when they needed help. Experiences of being helped, guided and *jeong* they felt over the years from Korean friends gave them sense of belonging, which translated into them becoming more Korean or have more appreciation towards their motherland.

2. Bounded Transnational activities and the need of sense of belonging

Findings show that for Korean Americans, friends already in Korea has been found to function as anchor, that is, rather than relatives, having friends in Korea increase motivation and willingness to also come to Korea for work. Therefore, investing in ways in which Korean Americans would be more attracted to coming to Korea would further increase in bringing young, talented, and skilled Korean Americans to Korea to work. In addition, providing more assistance in the process of them settling down would encourage more Korean Americans to come to Korea in the first place. Israel's policy, for instance, is focused on providing practical help to those who return to motherland. Moreover, their policy specifically encourages overseas Israelites to experience Israel through various short-, and long-term programs, especially when they are young to have positive experiences of Israel growing up. A part of this goal is to eventually help them become human capital of Israel who can help the motherland in the future (Lee et al. 2015).

In terms of investment, findings show that given the participants situations, that is, young-single and career oriented, they were not intended to make significant investment in Korea. Also, due to some of

the barriers in Korea, they were planning on going back to America to settle down and raise children. Therefore, the government should understand that Korean Americans perceive their stay in Korea to be transition between their mid-career to further build and strengthen their career, while extending their Korea network and enjoy what their motherland has to offer. Because most of their plan is to make monetary investment when they go back to the US, Korean government should find ways in which Korean Americans would be willing and able to invest their skills, abilities and other resources. Specific ways in which their resources should be invested in need more studies.

As for loyalty, the findings of the study revealed that Korean Americans, specifically those who have positive sentiments towards Korea, such as the participants in this study, have some loyalty towards their motherland. Though extent to which they are loyal to Korea is uncertain, findings indicate that their loyalty is shown through desire to teach Korean language and culture to their children. That is, because they consider their Korean heritage to be important, they wanted to pass down the culture to their children. However, as to how much they would stay loyal to Korea when they go back to America, remain uncertain, that is, in case of emergency, extent to which they would be willing to help and contribute to motherland was unclear. Rather than loyalty, feelings and sentiment important to Korean Americans seemed "sense of belonging," and this sense of belonging seemed to be influenced by interpersonal relationships they've experienced in Korea. Also, the more experiences, mostly, positive experiences they have in Korea seems to make a positive impact and strengthen their sense of belonging. Therefore, the government should also consider this factor in the formation of nationalism education for young generations of Korean diaspora abroad.

Interestingly, when it comes to transnational activities, interview findings indicate that Korean Americans' transnational activities are bounded within their own networks, in other words, despite the fact that Korean Americans travel back and forth between America and Korea, activities in Korea are within the boundaries of English community, Korean American network and their work network. While, their identification with other Koreans and Korea pride strengthens and grow as they naturally come to know more about Korea, build relationships with native Korea, their main activities lack interaction within the larger Korean society. Therefore, despite intention and strong support of the Korean government to increase loyalty of Korean diaspora, it remains relatively low. Therefore, this factor should be also considered in strengthening sense of belonging or loyalty for Korean Americans.

VI. Conclusion

More ways in which Korean Americans in Korea can contribute to the Korean society needs further discussion with policy makers. While some participants discussed how they would like to be cultural bridge between Korea and the US, as to specifically they could contribute were not clear. However, some discussed how their treatment as second class Americans and lack of recognition (because of the perception that they are living in Korea for a short-term) make them feel as if they are underutilized. Perhaps the government should recognize their cultural background, understanding of the Korean culture and language, their positive attitude toward Korean society, as well as emotional attachment as a motherland to maximize their potential as cultural capital.

Therefore the current study suggests the government to use more soft power, culture, and create opportunities for young Korean Americans to come to Korea to experience, learn, taste Korean food and culture and in the process build relationships with Koreans. These personal experiences as well as exposure to Korean soft power seems to be effective in instilling Korean identity and strengthen positive sentiments towards Korea.

The study is not without limitation. Though the researcher tried to recruit as many participants as possible whose background vary, because the career opportunities in the legal sector is better than others, many lawyers were recruited more than any other occupation. In similar vein, most of the participants were highly educated with relatively high socio-economic status, therefore, their stories many not be applicable in understanding experiences of all Korean Americans in Korea. However, in order to bring more varying aspect, the participants tried bring more variation in terms of age and years of residency in Korea. However, more studies are needed to better understand such under-examined group.

The study shed light on how the Korean government has been sponsoring young Korean diasporas overseas through transnational discourse and nationalism education. Study shows that for various reasons the motherland remains important for the descendants of Koreans. However the government should recognize changes occurring to Korean descendants abroad as Korea's stance in the global arena increases, and use soft power to advantage to bring more positive sentiments towards the motherland.

| Appendix |

Demographic information of the participants

NO	Name	Gender	Age	Number of years in Korea	Occupation	Marital status
1	Rosemary	F	40	5	Author	Single
2	Sam	M	38	10	Media personnel	Single
3	Hailey	F	34	5	Lawyer	Single
4	Joseph	M	36	3	Lawyer	Married
5	Jackie	F	48	7	Architect	Married
6	Susan	F	25	3	Researcher	Single
7	Halle	F	44	3	Lawyer	Single
8	Anna	F	33	10	Media personnel	Married
9	Landon	M	40	5	Restaurateur	Single
10	Charles	M	45	7	Lawyer	Single
11	Amber	F	33	10	entrepreneur	Single
12	Hannah	F	32	6	Lawyer	Single

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| 논문투고일 : 2018년 05월 23일 |

| 논문심사일 : 2018년 06월 01일 |

| 게재확정일 : 2018년 06월 19일 |

국문초록

아태연구 제25권 3호 (2018)

한국 정부의 재외동포 교육정책:

국내 거주 재미교포들의 경험 중심으로

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오늘날 한인들은 다양한 이주 배경과 사회적 원인에 의해 전 세계적으로 흩어져 거주하고 있다. 해외에 거주하고 있는 우리 동포를 대상으로 한국 정부는 90년대부터 지속적으로 재외동포정책을 펼쳐왔다. 정책을 수립한 원인 중 하나는 재외동포를 한국 정부가 인적 자본으로 인식하여 해외에 거주하고 있지만 대한민국의 발전에 기여를 할 수 있을 것이라고 여겼기 때문이다. 많은 이주국가들이 해외에 거주하고 있는 자민국 동포들의 모국으로의 귀환, 투자, 충성심 제고를 위하여 재외동포정책을 펼친다. 이에 본 연구에서는 한국 정부가 미국에서 거주하고 있는 재미교포를 대상으로 실시하는 프로그램이 모국으로서의 귀환, 투자, 충성심 제고에 있어 어떤 효율성이 있는지 살펴보고자 하였다. 따라서 현재 국내에서 거주하고 있는 12명의 재미교포들을 대상으로 심층 인터뷰를 진행하여 그들의 초국가적인 거주행태를 고려하여 이들의 초국가적 생활 양상, 한국 정부 지원 교육 경험과 한국인으로서의 정체성 형성이 서로 어떠한 영향을 미쳤는지 탐색하였다. 본 연구는 연구 결과를 바탕으로 앞으로의 정부 지원 교육의 방향성 제시 및 후속 연구 주제를 제안하고자 한다.

- 주제어: 초국가적 생활 양상, 국내 거주 재미한인, 재미교포, 애국심, 정체성