Article

Analyzing the Typology of Korean Citizens' Perspectives on the Admission and Settlement of Asylum Seekers and Refugees

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An unprecedented number of Yemeni asylum seekers flowing into the Republic of Korea has engendered an onslaught of acutely polarizing perceptions, with a state-centered nationalist rhetoric on one side and a human-centered, world-without-borders rhetoric on the other. Given the common trajectory of the modern state-building process in the world, such perceptive dichotomy is not an unforeseen phenomenon, particularly for a state built through forging internal homogeneity against foreign intervention in the past. Thus, formulating a policy to address the issue demands a thorough investigation into the theoretical foundations of such perceptive polarization, empirical understanding of costs and benefits, as well as detailed rationale for existing perceptions. To this end, this paper utilizes Q-methodology, and its result shows four major perception groups present in the Korean society. This article attempts to explain these perception groups in terms of two theoretical foundations: nationalism and transnationalism. Lastly, by analyzing the typology of perceptions on the admission and settlement of asylum seekers, this paper contributes to future policy development, without getting bogged down in a war of rhetoric.

Keywords: refugee, perception, nationalism, transnationalism, and Q-methodology

Introduction

In 2018, a total of 561 Yemeni people entered the territory of the Republic of Korea via Jeju Island, and 549 of them filed an application for obtaining refugee status. Out of these applicants, 484 have gone through the actual screening process, among which 412 received humanitarian residence permits, and two received refugee status (Ministry of Justice 2020). Due to this unprecedented magnitude of asylum seekers within a single year, refugee admission and settlement quickly became one of the most contentious issues in Korea. Around 710,000 Korean citizens immediately reacted to this influx by signing an online petition to the President, requesting the repeal of the Refugee Act and its related policies that allow entry-without-visa and due-process of application for refugee status. Its related surveys, conducted by several polling companies including Realmeter and Hankook Research, also provided evidence that a simple majority of the Korean population opposes the admission of asylum seekers (Realmeter 2018; Chung 2018). As a result, though the law stayed intact, the visa waiver for Yemen has been repealed, and the overall screening process of asylum seekers has become more stringent.

By the end of 2019, just when widespread fear and hatred on asylum seekers seemed to finally be subsiding, the outbreak of COVID-19 once again ignited Korean citizens' discontent over the continued entry of foreigners. Although people of a certain race or religion were not targeted as with the case of Yemeni asylum seekers, this isolated incident seems to share similar premises—ethnocentric nationalist ideology as a source of hatred, scare-mongering, xenophobia—which this paper aims to explore. To do so, the paper dives further into the pre-existing survey results which tend to only highlight two opinion groups, namely "agree" and "disagree" regarding the issue of refugee admissions. Such results, however, cannot fully capture the diverse perceptions Korean citizens have, nor do they provide analysts with hints to understand the rationale behind citizens' opinions. Thus, this paper intends to fill the gap by providing a detailed context behind diverse opinion groups, and suggest that policy targets should not be confined to two groups but multiple groups representing different rationales.

If we take a look into the official statistics on refugees in Korea, only six percent of all asylum seekers have thus far obtained refugee status since the Refugee Law was introduced in 2004. In 2019 alone, out of all asylum seekers, only 0.5 percent of them were able to obtain refugee status (NANCEN 2020).

Therefore, the number of admitted refugees alone does not seem to correspond to the level of existential threat Korean citizens generally perceive. The legal system of Korea also suggests that the present institution already demands stringent requirements for asylum seekers. For instance, the Korean government continues to put limitations on broader readings of the legal language that defines the eligibility of refugee status (Shin 2016). Moreover, the Supreme Court requires asylum seekers to bear the burden of providing exhaustive evidence to prove the grounds for fleeing their country of origin, despite their lack of financial means to obtain proper legal and language assistance. The court also obligates already understaffed refugee status determination officers to conduct extensive background checks and examine the validity of every piece of submitted evidence (Oh 2012). As a result, processing asylum seekers' application for refugee status requires, on average, five to six years. Considering the above facts, widespread fear of a refugee influx in Korea is less likely to be rooted in the actual number of refugees or the leniency of legal procedures but rather in a path-dependent national ethos developed over time throughout the state-building process.

In this regard, the current study first reviews the evolution of nationalism as a starting point of global division between civilized and uncivilized statehood followed by ethnocentrism, racism, and xenophobia. Subsequently, the article illustrates, through literature review, how the Korean society has become fixated on the ideology of one-state-one-nation, and how this path-dependent ethos has impacted Korean citizens' psyche over the generations. To suggest that such national ethos continues to hamper general citizens from thinking beyond state-centered approach in dealing with non-Korean aliens, this article conducts an in-depth survey. In particular, the article utilizes Q-methodology that allows for typologizing Korean citizens' perceptions into diverse opinion groups representing dissimilar contextual foundations. With this strength of Q-methodology, the survey does not simply single out one statistically significant causal factor, but rather shows how each respondent group responds to the given statements differently from other respondent groups. Using such results, this article provides a complex context for Korean citizens' diverse perceptions of refugee admissions, and informs policy makers about the factors that need to be addressed to alleviate social conflicts. The article also contributes to the existing literature in terms of providing historical and socio-cultural context for popular perceptions of asylum seekers and refugees in Korea, which is given considerably less attention than that regarding female migrants and migrant workers.

Literature Review

Evolution of Nationalism and Ethnocentrism

Historically speaking, the emergence of refugees was never an isolated phenomenon that could be addressed without referring to other intersectional subject groups including migrant workers, marriage migrants, and displaced persons (Son 2019). Even before the term *refugee* was conceptualized in the international field, the migration of people has undoubtedly been driven by a number of factors such as political persecution, identity-based oppression, civil war, natural disaster, and poverty. Given such push factors, refugees have often been referred to as forced migrants. However, drawing a clear distinction between forced displacement and voluntary migration tends to be far more challenging than it appears. For instance, migrant workers who leave their country of origin in pursuit of economic opportunities could end up becoming victims in a country of transit or experiencing civil war back home, which blurs the distinction among migrants, displaced persons, and refugees (Shin et al. 2012). Particularly, in the state-building process, the state authorities held fast to conservative legal terminology to determine the motive of cross-border migration, and prescribed the distinctions of admissible *us* and troubling *others*. Due to this arbitrary nature of the identity of migrants and refugees, any analysis of refugees is bound to be closely intertwined with, or even inseparable from, the theoretical work on migration and forced displacement. As a corollary, the theoretical framework of the nation-state, a central actor that dictates the inflow of migrants, cannot be detached from the discourse on refugees.

The very notion of the nation-state is built on the premise that the boundaries of the *nation*, a communal polity with shared culture, language, and identity, completely overlaps with the boundaries of those who live in a specific *state*, a confined sovereign territory (Calhoun 1997; McCrone, 1998; Smith, 1998). However, no nation truly represents a singular, naturally formed ethnicity. All states, in the process of constructing the nation-state, face challenges of political, religious, ethnic, and racial heterogeneity within their territorial boundaries. During the nineteenth century, European countries including Germany and France focused primarily on reconstructing the collective memory and history of diverse subject bodies in an effort to create a unified national identity (Hong 2017). The lived

experience of France from the outbreak of revolution through the nineteenth century, in particular, suggests that the nation and the state have never been congruent entities. In fact, the nation "emerged not from, or together with the state, but in fact, in opposition to it, as a counter-discourse of struggle that attempts to challenge the sovereignty of royal power [or state] by writing its counter-history" (Foucault 2003). These struggles in Europe gave birth to the far-reaching norms that a state ought to be represented and legitimized by the nation to which it belongs (Gellner 1983; Czajka 2014). As a corollary, nation-wide efforts were made, with violence at times, to fortify homogeneity between nation and state.

Migration and displacement played an essential role in this regard. As social formations were nationalized, state subjects became divided, stratified, and ethnicized accordingly, constructing the identity of nation that represents a homogeneous community with a shared sense of origin, culture, and interests (Balibar 1991). Hence, it would be naïve and even inaccurate to claim that each nation is formed naturally through a communal sense of belonging. People, as citizens, have been historically educated and guided to imagine their communion with fellow others. This notion resonates with the concept of "imagined political community"—a constructed fraternity, with artificially added cultural and biological values, to be united as one regardless of inequality and exploitation that occur within (Anderson 2006). This fictive ethnic community engendered a national ethos of unification between blood and soil, developing so-called ethnonationalism within the bounded territory (Faist, Fauser, and Kivisto 2011; Brubaker 2015; Keating 2018). Therefore, the duty of the state has become only bound to the inhabiting nationals, and thus creating the pathological dichotomization of nationals and aliens, *us* against *them* (Schiller 2009). Given this development, the population that does not belong to the dominant in-group often faced state violence and manipulation riddled with cross-border population exchanges, transfers, and expulsions. For instance, compulsory transfer and exchange of ethnic minorities took place all across Europe between Greek and Turkish states, Hungary and Romania, and Greece and Bulgaria, among others (Peterson 2015). Similarly, the state of Israel built itself through a long process of mobilizing hundreds of thousands of Jews to return to the "motherland" and expanding their settlements across the territory, displacing nearly one million Palestinians (Shafir 1996; Morris 2004).

To sum up, the construction of a nation-state did become a potent political tool for self-determination and socio-political integration in Europe and later across the world (Falk 2002); however, ethnocentric social

stratification has further marginalized and stigmatized social groups that were identified as risky *others*. The presence of these *others*, containing elements of ethno-cultural difference, was gradually regarded as a potential threat to the socio-symbolic order and control erected by the dominant group (Douglas and Wildavsky 1983). Against this backdrop of tension, European countries "shared" the burden among themselves by relocating asylum seekers to each other for better ethno-cultural assimilation. When the refugee crisis became further escalated in the heart of Europe around World War I, European countries established an international refugee regime and conveniently justified their act of refugee resettlement and repatriation. Thus, only those successfully assimilated into the local ethno-cultural identity were able to acquire a residential right to the region. Nonetheless, such forced movement and exclusion were not yet rooted in xenophobia or racism. It was only long after the experience of new wars against non-state actors like terrorists that these European countries developed a fear of refugees.

This history of state responses to migrant and refugee inflows in Europe and the Western hemisphere was distinctively different from that in the East (Peterson 2015). Eastern states developed hostility and fear of the inflow of asylum seekers and migrants almost immediately and concurrently with the state-building process. The stark difference suggests that the development of an *us*-against-*them* mentality and xenophobia cannot be simply understood as a byproduct or result of the nation-state building process (Anghie 2005). In order to fully understand its complexity, a further discussion must be preceded with regard to a transition from the rhetoric of development to security, and from the rhetoric of cultural divergence to that of racial, religious, and identity-based disparity. This paradigm shift has deeply impacted the state response to migrants and asylum seekers.

From the Rhetoric of Development to Security

After World War I, the dismantling of the multi-ethnic and multi-religious empires in Europe, such as the Habsburg, Hohenzollen, Ottoman, and Romanov empires, displaced nearly 20 million people in the region. The sheer scale of these displaced persons spread across Europe heightened inter-state tensions and threatened regional security. At this time of crisis, the fate of various refugee groups took strikingly different paths (Loescher and Milner 2005). Selective refugee groups were perceived as assets for national development, while others were identified as liabilities or risks. Such different experiences of ethnic or religious refugee groups were actually rooted in ways

in which the colonial West stood at the forefront of self-determination and human rights while sustaining their human exploitation and resource extraction in colonized states. This strategic expansion of colonial powers eventually exerted a lasting impact on how the international regime was shaped over time, and solidified a statist approach to deal with migrants and refugees (Smith 1995; Waldinger and Fitzgerald 2004).

The popular notions of the nation-state and the sovereignty doctrine in Europe were in fact contradictory to on-going colonial projects that asserted dominance over non-European people (Anghie 2005). Rather than formally imposing sovereign power over the colonized polities, the European powers enforced their imperial expansion through creating networks of corridors and enclaves. Born out of such history was a pattern of legal pluralism (Benton 2002). The colonial powers learned to reap economic advantages most effectively by ruling through, alongside, and in-between local legal systems and practices, instead of imposing the Western model of governance. This so-called legal pluralism, however, is founded upon the recognition of differences in culture, customs, and norms (Jaworsky 2013)—ones in need of a complete structural overhaul and the others well-equipped with political economic foundation if the Western model were to be transplanted into their society. The approach as such has allowed the colonial powers to define the inner circles of *us* against *them*.

Towards the twentieth century, as the imperial empires started crumbling down, the colonial powers gave rise to global governance and international regime. Reflected upon the structure of international regime was the hierarchical understanding of culture which became fused with the notion of a standard of civilization (Gong 1984). As a result, a major paradigm shift took place, transitioning from the colonial hierarchy of statehood to the cultural stratification of nation-states—positing a gap between the civilized and the uncivilized (McKeown 2008). This notion of binary categories of civilized and uncivilized nations became the basis of international order, legitimizing the Europeans to take on their "white burdens" to bridge the gap by civilizing the uncivilized (Anghie 2005). The launching of the High Commissioner for Refugees in 1921 was widely celebrated as an introduction of a modern international regime to protect refugees. However, the function of international organizations as such was set out not merely to provide humanitarian aid for refugees, but more importantly to "produce, stabilize, and empower contingent images, identities, subjectivities, relations, and institutions of sovereign statehood, and ultimately to restore the normal hierarchy of citizen/nation/state" within

the Western hemisphere (Soguk 1999). The international regime thus has remained Eurocentric, excluding non-European countries from an equal family of sovereign nations and perpetuating the image of European nation-states saving uncivilized and underdeveloped statehood through global governance. In this way, a large number of migrants and asylum seekers from "civilized states" were able to be integrated into European society as a labor source for development, while "uncivilized" subjects faced a reality of discrimination and displacement as part of humanitarian resettlement efforts.

The culturalist approach to development discourse, however, has started losing its ground since the mid-1990s up to the present day as a consequence of new wars in the global arena. New wars, fought and financed by networks of state and non-state actors, blurred the line between combatant and noncombatant, legitimate violence and criminality, and self-determination and outright aggression against the international regime. These types of modern warfare deteriorated the "natural" form of the nation-state, and constructed new sectarian identities that would undermine the notion of a territorially bounded community (Kaldor 2007). Particularly, ever since the monumental incident of September 11 and the subsequent wars on terrorism, forms of migration that do not fit the customary standard of the nation-state, including asylum seekers, undocumented migrants, and displaced persons, have become topics of debate in terms of security threats. Thus, admitting asylum seekers or migrants was no longer an issue of whether they could contribute to local development, but of whether their presence could be detrimental to national and societal security. Moreover, the increase in cross-border sectarian actions against the constructed identities of the nation-state sharpened the association between asylum seekers and transnational crime, like terrorism, shaping the image of asylum seekers as racialized or identity-based polities (Isyar 2007). As such, the emerging discourse of security, fused with an increasing tendency to perceive these polities as uncivilized and radical, forever transformed the political stance of both Western and Eastern states towards asylum seekers and refugees.

As witnessed in recent years, developed countries, particularly European countries, have gradually deterred the influx of asylum seekers and regarded them as liabilities and economic burdens (Hammerstad 2000). Also witnessed was the subsequent growth of racist and xenophobic right-wing parties with anti-immigration policies garnering a vast number of votes (Bade 2003). This political phenomenon around the world has asserted that migrants and refugees were no longer regarded as a resource for development

but as security threats. Conveniently, their racial profiles corresponded quite precisely with low socio-economic status, as a vestige of their long experience of being colonized. Throughout history, people of color, displaced voluntarily or forcibly in the past, moved rather frequently around the circuits of European empires to supply cheap and captive labor for extractive economies (Northrup 1995). These workers ended up getting trapped in certain sectors of production that suffer from labor shortages, such as the textile and metal manufacturing industries. As native workers moved away from these sectors of industry, migrants, including asylum seekers and refugees, filled "a particular position in production—manifested in the form of manual labor, low wages and unfavorable working conditions" (Shin 2016). As a corollary, these migrants representing the proletariat or working class embodied "uncivilized" culture. Situated in this distinct position of political, social, and economic structure, these migrants ended up constituting a class of racialized fractions in society.

Born out of the discursive transition from a cultural to a racial approach to migrants is the conception of human security. The term "human security" insinuates a shift from national security to people's security, from border security to food, employment, and environmental security, from conventional arms race to human development (Edwards and Ferstman 2010). The growing recognition of human security, by bringing the necessity of emergency relief to the forefront, has made room for humanitarian interventions under the slogan of responsibility to protect (Owen 2008). Such interventions were built on the underlying agenda of empowering uncivilized individuals and building the capacity of inferior racial or sectarian groups. Hence, the very notion of human security not only contributed to the stratification of nation-states in the global arena but also reinforced a state-centered engagement with human development. Precisely due to this state hierarchy, asylum seekers and refugees from developing countries became considered as threats to human security and the rights of citizens that make up the dominant majority in developed countries (Isotalo 2009). In this sense, the notion of human security advanced by West-dominant international organizations was not a coincidence. Under this slogan of human security, the international refugee regime was able to enforce "universally compulsory standards of select[ing]" admissible asylum seekers (Mukerjee 1936). Given this, only preferential asylum seekers were admitted and integrated into the host society, while the rest faced fates of confinement, repatriation, and resettlement in accordance with the economic needs of superpowers. In the case of the European Union, asylum seekers were

actively transferred to neighboring states for resettlement under the mutually agreed treaty of shared responsibility; however, this was another effort to return *nation-* or identity-based groups to the territory to which they belong, perpetuating the integrity of the nation-state.

Transnationalism: Cause or Solution?

As elaborated above, the emergence of international organizations and the notion of human security have not in effect lessened the emphasis on borders. The international regime on refugees has rather empowered the role of state and reinforced methodological nationalism—"state and society are held to be coterminous and territorially identical" (Faist, Fauer, and Reisenauer 2013). Hence, the increasing number of so-called mixed migrants, groups of people fleeing their home for multiple factors and seeking refuge or improvements in their lives (Van Hear 2011), has directly challenged the efficacy of international laws on refugees. These migrants, facing vulnerable living conditions, maintain emotional, family, financial, moral ties in many countries as a strategy of survival (Hunter, Lepley, and Nichels 2010). By engaging in networks of two or more national communities, they become a central element of transnationalism in the economic, cultural, and social fields (Levitt and Schiller 2004; Vertovec 2009). This framework of understanding, as an antithesis to the international or, more accurately, inter-state approach, begs the question of how transnationalism ought to be interpreted and how one country or international society in general should engage with refugee issues.

The term "transnational" applies to multiple associations and interactions that connect people across the borders of nation-states (Schiller, Basch, and Szanton-Blanc 1992). Therefore, transnationalism refers to states as "bounded political entities whose borders are crossed by flows of people, money or information and are spanned by social networks, organizations or fields" (Bauböck 2003). According to such conceptualization, the nation-state is no longer a stagnant entity that can be sustained by artificially retaining the "native" majorities and excluding "aliens," but rather a fluid polity that can be represented by diverse agents located in different spaces. In this sense, transnationalism sets itself apart from the concept of *inter*-nationalism. The latter, as the prefix *inter-* implies, is centered around the relations between government representatives who constitute primary and sole decision makers in the global arena (Vertovec and Cohen 1999). Its conception, therefore, remains within the boundaries of methodological nationalism—perceiving

the state as a spatial actor that holds the assimilated values, norms, customs, and institutions. In contrast, the former directly challenges the idea that physical, social, and political space completely overlaps with the territorial space of the nation-state (Kearney 1995). Thus, if internationalism refers to movement from one state to another, transnationalism refers rather to a web of multi-directional movement of individuals or groups.

Trans-migrants lead dual lives, establishing homes in both receiving and sending countries and pursuing their economic, political, and cultural interests in both places (Portes 1996). In this framework of understanding, transmigrants need not to be confined to a particular root nor do they need to discard their national cultures, traditions, and customs inculcated through their living experiences (Nielsen 1999). In this sense, transmigration does not enforce all-encompassing or universal norms and values, but instead resonates with the concept of glocalization (Yoon 2017). Hence, rather than grafting certain knowledge or practices of one nation-state onto another, the lived practices of transmigration, by a parallel linkage of people and institutions across national borders, could make significant impacts on the political economic fabric of both receiving and sending countries simultaneously (Vertobec and Cohen 1999; Ostergaard 2006). In this respect, transmigrants become central actors that contribute to mutual development in multiple nodes through cross-border economic and political remittances. These migrants, however, by nature also embody a risk of perpetuating local conflicts and wars abroad, and thus engaging in a sort of long-distance nationalism (European Union Police 2009). The phenomenon as such has been a driving force for great powers, namely the United Kingdom and the United States, to move further towards iron-clad closure of their borders and disengagement from transnationalism.

However, transnationalism, as contrary to the general misconceptions constantly reiterated by right-wing parties, is not a tool to disintegrate state borders or promote open door policies. As explained above, transnationalism is a useful reference to offer a non-state approach to the refugee crisis that *inter*-national or state-centered policies have failed to address in the past. Since WWII, the international regime has attempted to reconcile the identity of resident aliens with the sanctity of state sovereignty by stipulating legal categories for forced migrants and implementing integration and resettlement programs; however, these state-led efforts ended up mostly serving nation-state primacy, while intensifying xenophobia or racism, and turning blind eyes to the multi-layered identities of migrants. Asylum-seeking individuals in recent years do not quite fit the profile spelled out in

the UN Conventions Relating to the Status of Refugees, representing a nexus of complex reality—ranging from failed international interventions to climate- or disease-induced displacement, civil conflicts, regional collapse, and other widespread threats to life, particularly in the Middle East and North Africa (Held 2016). Such migrants, otherwise referred to as "mixed migrants," "trans-migrants," or the "migration-asylum-nexus" (Van Hear 2011), are individuals who flee to other states as a result of deprivation of their human rights, often caused by fragile states; unfortunately, this rights violation is perpetuated due to the rhetoric of security, in developed and developing countries alike, which frames transmigrants as symbolic carriers of division and transborder crime (Lorenz 2017). However, given the nature of transmigrants, forcibly removing and assigning them to a particular state or region does not put an end to the crisis, but rather amplifies their engagement in violence via cross-border community bonding.

The continuing failure of state protection further pushes transmigrants and refugees to survive by sharing welfare, knowledge, and resources via cross-border networks and community building. This particular power of networks allows migrants and refugees to bring about changes in multiple directions, not necessarily at the expense of other states or nations (Salehyan 2007). In this sense, establishment of homes (or settlement) in multiple nodes across the global arena induces multi-directional cross-border intervention by diverse polities at various levels, and creates constant change (Goldenziel 2016). This very worldview, therefore, directly challenges the core principle of the traditional nation-state, and denounces state-led assimilation and imagined homogeneity. In this respect, transnationalism refocuses the analysis from a state level to an individual level, deviating from the rhetoric of state development and security while delivering a rights-based remedy for the exponentially growing number of displaced persons across the world.

The Imagined Community of Korea and Refugee Regime

In the midst of highly controversial discourse on nationalism and transnationalism, Korea has become one of the few remaining states that continue to adhere to the myth of a single, united nation. This entrenched notion of ethnic homogeneity and one-nation-one-state was in fact developed over the course of long history dating back to the Joseon Dynasty in the 1880s. Following the Military Mutiny of 1882 (*Imo gunran*) in Korea, a tug of war between Japan and China (or Qing Dynasty) led to the mass migration of Chinese to the Korean peninsula. With this support base, the

Qing Dynasty expanded its sphere of influence by elevating its degree of intervention in the internal affairs of Korea, which amounted to economic exploitation practiced by imperialism or colonialism (Lee 2015). The sheer amount of wealth and leverage the Chinese had over the native majority in Korea was enough to induce resistance and antagonism from Korea's leadership and Korean citizens alike (Song 2010). The fast growth of Chinese influence, however, was soon put to a halt as Japan mobilized its forces to invade China and engage in wars to conquer colonies in the Eastern continent. Primed with the already-prevalent animosity against Chinese migrants, the emergence of Japan as a colonial power led to severe persecution and marginalization of Chinese migrants residing in Korean territory.

Following Japan's victories in the Sino-Japanese War and the Russo-Japanese War, Japan fully committed itself to an expansionist project, and joined the ranks of the global powers. Japan, under the slogan of *Naeseon Ilche* or "Joseon and Japan as one entity," turned Korea into a war supply base by re-constructing the identity of the Korean people, who would become loyal subjects to the Japanese emperor (Bang 2003). As Japan became more deeply implicated in international warfare, it needed solid economic support and manpower. This changing worldview of Japan further tightened its control over Korea, enforcing a complete reformation of Korea's political, economic, and cultural structure in its best effort to mobilize all obtainable resources for supporting its wars (Jeon 2011). Japan's dominance over the identity of Korea, which extended to the level of requiring Koreans to adopt a Japanese-style surname and first name, built a breeding ground for a myth of ethnic homogeneity and a pure blood nation for standing against the Japanese occupation (Shin 2009). This myth was able to offer a framework for creating an identity that would unite the ethnic nation of Korea, and filling the void left by the Japanese occupation.

Even after achieving independence, Korea experienced a major civil war and continued foreign interference from neighboring states, which kept ethnic nationalism afloat as a key ingredient for national reconciliation and reunification (Ha 2018). In this process of concocting a sense of community represented by a single language, culture, and history, ethnic nationalism in Korea naturally embraced a mechanism of discrimination and exclusion that delineates a divide between *us* and *them* (Ha 2012). The socio-political foundation of ethnic nationalism, ergo, became a convenient political tool for safeguarding the regime and executing a modernization agenda, as Korea developed into a full-fledged independent state. During the Syngman Rhee

administration, the rhetoric of *ilmin jueui* or the "one-people principle" was employed as a political strategy to eradicate the vestiges of Japanese colonialism and block off Communist forces. After Park Chung-hee ascended to power, the government upheld the legacy of ethnic nationalism by introducing the rhetoric of *joguk geundaehwa*, or national modernization (Park 2015). This inculcated notion of ethnic nationalism, which has survived and been actively utilized by Korean leadership for generations, has imparted a sense of cultural and ethnic superiority, and idealized the value of ethnic integration over other universal values, such as human rights, peace, and freedom (Han and Han 2007). The very exclusive nature of ethnic nationalism, even prior to the state-building process, caused Korea to address migrant and refugee issues differently from the way in which most European and North American states have.

The rhetoric of development woven into the state-building agenda in Korea left little room for migrants' integration into society. It is particularly important to note that many European countries initially allowed the local integration of forced migrants, solely for the purpose of fulfilling labor needs and building a cohesive nation-state. Only those migrants who possessed features and qualities entirely incongruent to the native majority were relegated to an uncivilized group to be saved by white men. Full-fledged racial profiling and fearmongering has not taken shape until recent years. Korea, on the other hand, living through the desperate efforts to unite the nation up against multiple foreign and domestic adversaries has developed ethnic and racial exclusivism from the initial stage of the state-building process (Ha 2012). The Korean government has indeed enforced multicultural policies over the decades; however, this seemingly affirmative action, targeted mostly towards marriage migrants and migrant workers, turned out to be another attempt to place non-Korean aliens under state control and separation. Under such policies, migrants are required to embrace what is premised as "ours" for legal eligibility, and yet separate legal clauses and terms with a tag of "multicultural" are applied to them in terms of education, employment, and basic livelihood grants. This act of creating a dominant cultural value and forcing its adoption can only be read as an effort in pushing for an assimilation ideology (McLaren 1994). Hence, the intended purpose of multicultural policies is lost in legal implementation.

Against this backdrop of the pathological notion of ethnic nationalism, the fact that a dominant majority of Korea's migrant population, either forced or voluntary, were unskilled and uneducated individuals, further reinforced the prevalent bias against racial and ethnic minorities. In fact, most of these

migrants, particularly darker-skinned individuals, took up 3D (dirty, dangerous, and difficult) jobs, creating a race-based division woven with class fractions (Shin 2016). Hence, a long history of ethnic homogeneity and one-nation-one-state rhetoric, layered with occupational hierarchy, engendered two-fold prejudice against non-Korean subjects (Gray 2004; Yoon 2008; Kwon 2018). This exact development has instilled a prevailing attitude that non-Korean subjects, particularly dark-skinned, low-educated, uncivilized, displaced foreign subjects, could form an existential threat to the national identity, blood-tied ethnic purity, and socio-cultural order (Han 2010). Thus far, this immortal ethno-nationalist ideology in Korea, like a meme—"a unit of cultural transmission, propagat[ing] itself by leaping from brain to brain" (Dawkins 1976)—has been mindlessly replicated and transmitted across generations as an absolute principle of governance and public administration.

In recent years, the rise of non-state actors, like the Islamic State (IS), heightened security concerns and further pushed Korea towards ethnocentrism and nationalism. Given this history, aggressive vetting and regulations for separating individuals worthy of citizenship and legal residence from those deemed unacceptable became legitimized and further strengthened. In the eyes of majority-composing nationals, these foreign subjects not only disintegrate the national identity, but also lead to security threats and economic shocks by exploiting national welfare programs (Honig 2003). Despite this widespread negativity, an increasing number of scholars in Korea have warned against jumping on the isolationist bandwagon and urged investment in transnationalism as a potential solution to refugee issues (Shin 2014; Kim 2018). To engage in this highly contested debate, further research on Korean citizens' perceptions of the refugee and migrant issues is very much necessary for identifying where Korea currently stands in terms of addressing the issue and what policy options the Korean state could consider.

Macro-economic Impact of Refugees on Xenophobia and Racism

Built upon the historical analysis of Korea's ethnic nationalism and structural discrimination against asylum seekers, a series of policy options could be proposed to address the concerns raised by general citizens apropos refugee admissions. In this regard, a fair discussion of economic practicality ought to take place so as to accurately represent citizens' perceptions of refugees. Hence, prior to discussing the empirical study itself, this article dives into a short literature review on the economic impact of refugees based on technical calculations and statistical evaluation. Thus far, a large volume of academic

studies have been conducted in order to analyze the impact. The challenge, however, is the elasticity, or high variance, of the result contingent on the minor change in the setup of independent variables. These variables include, but are not limited to, variant profiles of asylum seekers or refugees, the timeframe of their entry, interruption of unexpected economic shocks, and the levels of the political economic fabric of both sending and receiving states. This clouding factor and the resultant inability to accurately control for core variables obfuscate the confirmation of quantitative impact, not to mention economic predictions. Bearing such limitations in mind, this article presents the following quantitative analyses conducted in the past to calculate the impact of refugee influx.

A recent academic study on the impact of refugees on the host economies identified the presence of both positive and negative effects (Shellito 2016). The positive effects include stimulation of long-term investment, a hike in consumption and production, increase of labor supply, and expansion of trade between host and origin countries. Meanwhile, some negative effects involve an increase of public and private charges, overcrowding, and an increase in conflicts within the community. In like manner, several studies have been conducted on individual countries at a micro-level. For instance, an empirical study on Uganda executed by Kreibaum (2016) revealed that the inflow of refugees led to a positive externality on local communities living in proximity to the refugees, in terms of consumption and public services. Gomez et al. (2010) also conducted a similar quantitative study on Kenya. Their study disclosed that the annual benefits collected from operating refugee camps amounted to 82 million dollars in 2009 and 100 million dollars in 2010. Both studies have reinforced the conclusion that the presence of refugees can stimulate growth and development if they are given access to labor and goods market.

In addition to such micro-level analyses, a few macro-level studies have also been conducted in recent years. In 2015, the European Commission conducted a quantitative analysis on the impact of refugee influx on the macro-economy. The analysis was conducted on the basis of two types of predictions: 1) labor skills of refugees are equivalent to those of national workers; and 2) labor skills of refugees are lower than those of national workers. The analysis also set several preconditions, such as the expected refugee influx over the next two years, and the rate of granting refugee status (set as an average of 50%). With these predictions and pre-conditions, the analysis suggested that the refugee influx could increase the GDP of 28 EU member states by 0.14~0.21% in 2016, and by 0.18~0.26% in 2017 (EC 2015).

As another example, CNRS, Clermont-Auvergne University, and Paris-Nanterre University have jointly conducted an analysis of the economic impact of refugees in 15 Western European countries during the period from 1985 to 2015 (d'Albis, Boubtane, and Colibaly 2018). The results show that three to five years after asylum seekers obtain their refugee status, they can become actors that positively impact the GDP per capita, and contribute to reducing the unemployment rate and balancing out public finances.

However, some conflicting results have been reported as well. An empirical study (Kouni 2018) using the Generalized Method of Moments (GMM) on a macro-set data of 21 countries illustrated that refugees can stimulate positive and significant effects in high and low-middle income countries, in terms of labor force and R&D. Nonetheless, a significant increase in the refugee population could inverse the effect. In the meantime, the presence of refugees in low and upper-middle income countries has failed to bring about positive effects, regardless of the size of the refugee population. This result is in line with the fact that the developed countries like Australia or Canada benefit largely from attracting high-skilled workers from developing countries through a stringent vetting process (Li 2008). Meanwhile, a high proportion of low-skilled and uneducated refugees flow directly to or resettle into less-developed countries where local resistance to their integration runs high as a result of security concerns and limited economic resources (Jacobsen 2001). Considering all the aforementioned analyses, the economic impact of refugee inflow cannot be confirmed with strong confidence. In fact, a large volume of research is too sensitive to the selection of the dataset for their analysis, and involves a fair amount of unforeseen predictions and uncontrolled omitted variables (Kim 2016; Park 2018).

Lastly, defining the elements that represent costs and benefits is another daunting challenge. A vast majority of the quantitative studies, if not all, evaluate the amount imposed upon the state. Hence, statistical calculations are done in terms of "brain drain" and "brain gain" from the standpoint of host or origin countries, instead of "brain circulation" (Park and Cho 2018). Problems with this approach, however, are negligence of potential indirect externalities and relegation of refugees to a mere tool for state development or security. For instance, in an attempt to highlight the positive impact of migrants, the existing studies fall into a trap of putting an excessive emphasis on the contribution of "global talent," which ironically reifies the state-centered approach to vetting refugees and begets a group of undesirable entities (Schiller 2009). Given this, policy formation ought to be substantiated

by more comprehensive data including direct and indirect externalities. To do so, the impact of asylum seekers or refugees must be examined not just at state level, but also at regional and local/community levels. Due to all of these aforementioned challenges, landing a successful quantitative research on the economic impact of refugees remains a daunting task. In this regard, this study delves into how Korean citizens perceive the economic impact of refugees based on their limited understanding and sets groundwork for future policy formation.

Data and Methodology

Q-Methodology

This paper utilizes Q-methodology to conduct an analysis on Korean citizens' perception of the admission and settlement of asylum seekers in the Korean territory. Q-methodology is a qualitative but statistical research technique that combines the strengths of both qualitative and quantitative dimensions. It is particularly specialized in conducting studies on human subjectivity, perceptions, and attitude (Davis and Michelle 2011). If conducted correctly, it could generate "conceptually unbiased, complex yet transparent and replicable, descriptions of subjective worldviews" (Andersen, Schulze, and Seppel 2017). The methodology helps illustrate a variety of discourses on which Korean citizens base their opinions regarding refugee admissions, which can facilitate the development of streamlined and tailored policy options. It is also an exploratory methodology whose primary purpose is not to test hypotheses, nor does it provide a single statistically significant result (p-value of 0.05). Instead, it portrays the typologies of viewpoints that could allude potential answers to highly contested societal issues (Watts and Stenner 2005).

In essence, Q-methodology starts out with a set of statements (Q-set) that reflect a full range of theoretical and empirical studies reviewed for the topic of debate (Karim 2001). A set of purposively selected respondents (P-set), representing a diverse group of age, gender, occupation, and educational backgrounds, are then asked to rank the order (Q-sort) of statements on a quasi-normal forced-form sorting matrix (see Appendix 1). By Q-sorting, respondents are able to provide their subjective meaning to each statement in relation to the position of other statements. The ordered placement of statements is subsequently correlated through a factor analysis,

giving information about similarities and differences on a particular topic (Barry and Proops 1999). If significant clusters of correlations exist, they could be factorized and described as common views or typologies (McKeon and Thomas 1988). Finally, these typologies are utilized as referential frameworks for further subjective analysis and interpretation to draft a policy proposal.

Study Design

(1) Q-set
A Q-set is a collection of statements provided to respondents for ranking their order. This study adopts a carefully curated set of 34 statements (see Table 3) that are drawn from an extensive amount of academic literature. Specifically, these statements are drawn up in close connection with the following theoretical and empirical elements: i) development-based approach to nationalism; ii) security-based approach to nationalism; iii) cultural framework of defining nation-state; iv) racial/ethnic framework of defining nation-state; v) transnational approach to perceiving nation-state and migration; and vi) macro-economic impact analysis on migration. All of these elements, as covered in the literature review, have exerted a considerable impact upon the formation of general citizens' perceptions of non-Korean aliens, particularly asylum seekers and refugees.

The number of statements is streamlined and reduced to 34 in total, since the methodology only requires a sample size of somewhere between 30 and 40 statements for successfully conducting the intended analysis (Kim 2016). Moreover, the statements are drafted in ways in which they are not necessarily mutually exclusive, nor are they exhaustive of all possible theoretical and empirical studies. It is imperative to note that the aim of Q-analysis is to construct a typology of how respondents identify their viewpoints in relation to others, given their limited knowledge. Since the statements are administered to respondents with a wide range of educational backgrounds and prior knowledge, the language of the statements is free of convoluted legal terms or concepts. In addition, the contents and wordings of the statements are reviewed and revised multiple times with the help of peers and professors at Seoul National University.

(2) P-set
A P-set is a collective set of respondents who participate in a survey process. This paper intentionally selected 34 respondents to match the number of

statements in the Q-set, which is sufficient for conducting Q-analysis. The methodology does not require a large number of samples because its intended outcome is to identify the similarities and differences of patterns across individuals. The Q-analysis operates on the assumption of finite diversity (Cools et. al. 2009). Furthermore, it also does not require a principle of random sampling because the intended analysis is not to discover the viewpoints that can represent the entire population of Korea, but to construct a typology (Rajé 2007). The premise is that a well-constructed typology would stay intact even if the entire P-set is replaced with another; however, it does not insinuate that the proportion of typologies are indicative of how the perception of the population is distributed in general.

The P-set represents a set of carefully selected samples that capture a diverse population group. In this paper, the selected samples include individuals of diverse age brackets (18-65), sex (male, female), employment status (student, researcher, hairdresser, etc.), and level of prior knowledge (information on refugee, policy analysis, Q-methodology, etc.). In particular, almost half of the respondents are intentionally selected from the Graduate School of Public Administration at Seoul National University, since they hold a fair amount of prior knowledge in the topic and the analytic tools and technique used in this research. The other half was randomly solicited through the author's in-person visits, thus representing dissimilar occupation and age (see Table 1 for detailed information on each individual). By and large, this paper is very much invested in observing how a mix of population with and without prior knowledge is correlated and grouped into similar or different typologies.

(3) Q-sorting and survey procedure

The survey was conducted from March 2019, and its data results were finalized for computation in May 2019. In terms of survey procedures (Q-sorting), the 34 statements are distributed to the respondents in a form of random-numbered index cards. The random placement of statements is essential for producing unbiased results, since a bundle of similarly conceptualized statements juxtaposed with each other could reveal the underlying intention of the author. Prior to ranking the statements, all respondents are given a chance of receiving a short presentation on the topic and its related legal terms and frameworks. First, they are asked to order the statements into three piles: agree, disagree, and neutral. Then, they are asked to place each statement on each box of quasi-normal forced-form sorting matrix with a scale from -4 (most disagree) to +4 (most agree) (see Appendix

1). This forced-form normal distribution dictates the number of statements that can be placed on each ranking position, which can make the respondents deliberate on the topic and formulate a coherent viewpoint of their own along the way.

This study utilizes the PQMethod software package to analyze the Q-sorts. When all the Q-sorts are entered into the program, it correlates each Q-sort with every other Q-sort. Then, a factor analysis is conducted on this inter-correlation matrix by using the centroid procedure. The resultant factors are subsequently rotated using a varimax rotation. This particular rotation method is imperative to the essence of Q-analysis which is intended to reveal the range of discourses in the participant group (Watts and Stenner 2005). A solution acquired through rotating the selected factors maximizes the amount of variance explained by the extracted factors. Lastly, only factors with an eigenvalue greater than one are extracted. Among them, only the ones that display clear divergence from the others are extracted for explaining the variance. For this Q-analysis, in particular, a total of three factors are selected, explaining 54% of the variance.

Research Findings

Normalized factor scores are computed for each statement, and these values are converted into ideal factor arrays for each factor based on the Q-sort distribution. The given factor arrays represent a parabolic function of significance. In other words, the higher the absolute factor score, the more salient a statement is for the factor. The use of indicator (x) shows how each respondent is sorted into different factors. The result indicates that 33 out of 34 respondents are successfully placed into the corresponding factors, and a total of three factors are able to explain 54% of the variance which is generally a trusted range to be counted as a valid result. The respondents in this P-set are characterized by gender (32% male and 68% female), age (50% in the 10s to 30s and 50% in the 40s to 60s), prior knowledge in the refugee issue (21% yes and 79% no), prior experience in policy analysis and methodology (44% yes and 56% no), and occupation (44% in academia, 47% in public and private sector, and 9% unemployed).

In Table 1, one particular result that requires careful attention is the factor loadings given to Factor 1. As shown below, Factor 1 includes both negative and positive values, which generally indicates that the said factor is a bipolar factor. Simply put, a group with negative values represents a complete

opposite set of viewpoints compared with a group with positive values within the same factor. Hence, one factor generates two different sub-factors, namely F1-A and F1-B. Given this result of factor loadings and total coverage, the paper predicts that a set of Q-statements in Factor 1 represent the most controversial and polarizing issues at hand, and thus, careful reading is much needed for interpretation.

TABLE 1
P-SET DEMOGRAPHICS AND FACTOR LOADINGS

No.	Gender	Age	Occupation	Prior Info on Refugee Issue	Prior Policy Experience	Factor 1 (F1)	Factor 2 (F2)	Factor 3 (F3)
1	Male	40	Graduate Student	No	Yes	-0.1830	0.6303^X	-0.1214
2	Female	58	Teacher	Yes	No	-0.7063^X	0.4326	-0.1920
3	Female	32	Graduate Student	No	Yes	0.1568	0.6706^X	0.0490
4	Male	30	Office Worker	No	No	-0.1480	0.7181^X	0.1147
5	Female	35	Office Worker	No	No	0.1587	0.1753	0.6660^X
6	Male	29	Graduate Student	Yes	Yes	0.0109	0.6743^X	0.2936
7	Female	29	Teacher	No	Yes	0.0925	0.4697^X	0.0443
8	Female	18	Student	No	No	-0.0256	0.5430^X	0.0467
9	Female	61	Unemployed	No	No	0.6221^X	0.1435	-0.4489
10	Female	34	Graduate Student	No	Yes	-0.3341	0.4662^X	-0.1542
11	Male	44	Office Worker	No	No	0.0226	0.5177^X	0.2591
12	Male	32	Medical Doctor	No	No	0.8360^X	-0.1255	0.0495
13	Female	33	Researcher	No	Yes	0.6367^X	0.0191	-0.1499
14	Female	30	Graduate Student	No	Yes	0.4155	0.3980	-0.5356
15	Male	60	Business Owner	No	No	-0.3273	0.4830^X	0.2363
16	Female	40	Publisher	No	Yes	0.7848^X	0.0243	0.0556
17	Male	45	Office Worker	No	No	0.0742	0.7238^X	0.2816
18	Female	49	Public Official	No	Yes	-0.3266	0.3845^X	-0.0344

19	Female	35	Office Worker	No	No	0.7142^X	-0.0344	0.1792
20	Female	65	Unemployed	No	No	0.8942^X	0.0562	0.0063
21	Female	47	Translator	Yes	Yes	-0.6868^X	0.5080	-0.2242
22	Female	47	Freelancer	No	No	-0.2723	0.5785^X	0.2917
23	Female	30	Office Worker	No	No	0.8051^X	0.1189	0.1030
24	Male	55	Office Worker	No	No	0.1604	0.3216	0.5985^X
25	Male	26	Graduate Student	No	Yes	0.7567^X	-0.0111	0.3128
26	Female	57	Hair Designer	No	No	0.5704^X	-0.0882	-0.0731
27	Female	47	Teacher	Yes	No	-0.8271^X	0.4358	0.1045
28	Female	51	Teacher	No	No	-0.1300	0.2598	0.7284^X
29	Male	54	Business Owner	No	No	0.4761^X	0.4477	0.1232
30	Female	43	Nurse	No	No	0.2943	0.3611	0.5357^X
31	Male	33	Office Worker	Yes	Yes	-0.2027	0.7578^X	0.1896
32	Female	31	Unemployed	Yes	Yes	0.5498^X	0.4790	0.0088
33	Female	31	Graduate Student	Yes	Yes	-0.6699^X	0.4058	0.1223
34	Female	28	Graduate Student	No	Yes	0.7431^X	-0.0740	-0.0467
	Number of defining sorts					16	13	4
	% of variance explained (%)					27	19	8

The table of correlations (Table 2) between three factor scores indicates that three factors are different from each other by a reasonable degree. Since this factor analysis, as part of the Q-methodology, is to find dissimilar groups with polarizing perceptions, the correlation level ought not to be higher than 0.5.

TABLE 2
CORRELATIONS BETWEEN FACTOR SCORES

	1	2	3
1	1.0000	-0.2119	0.0843
2	**-0.2119**	1.0000	0.4491
3	**0.0843**	**0.4491**	1.0000

The factor analysis, as described above, generates three factors with eigenvalue greater than one. Among them, Factor 1, consisting of negative and positive factor loadings, represents a bipolar factor which is read as two different factors. Therefore, a total of four factors are extracted for analysis. The interpretation of these factors is carried out through conducting a post-survey dialogue with the respondents and referring the interpreted results back to the literature review. The resultant portrayal of each factor is shared with the respondents, in order to ensure the validity of the author's interpretation. The table below exhibits the numerical values that each factor group assigned to each statement. The factors are interpreted and described as the following: (F1-A) *asylum seekers undermine the development of nation-state*; (F1-B) *asylum seekers facilitate transnational development*; (F2) *refugee admission is a state responsibility under international law*; and (F3) an *influx of asylum seekers and refugees exacerbates security risks*.

TABLE 3
FACTOR Q-SORT VALUES FOR STATEMENTS

No	Q Statement	F1	F2	F3
1	As a ratifying state to the 1951 Refugee Convention, the Government of the Republic of Korea has the international obligation and responsibility to protect and provide necessary assistance to refugees.	-2	4	4
2	Due to the possible erosion of nation-state, the issue of admitting and protecting asylum seekers must be handled with caution.	4	3	2
3	Asylum seekers' or refugees' successful establishment of a second home away from home may not only be a socio-economic contribution to the host country, but also be a catalyst for building democracy and human rights in the country of origin.	-3	3	-2
4	Mutually-beneficial relations with other countries built through admitting refugees can increase diplomatic leverage of our country.	-2	2	0
5	Asylum seekers must undergo a more rigorous screening process, so as to prevent them from exploiting economic opportunities and security given by the host state.	4	2	0
6	Due to the increasing ambiguity of boundaries between aliens and nationals with blood or cultural ties, refugee protection becomes a shared responsibility of ours as equal human beings.	-4	1	1

7	Muslim asylum seekers must be vetted with more rigorous standards as Muslims and their racial groups are directly related to dangerous elements, such as terrorism and sexual crime against women.	3	0	2
8	Protection or settlement of refugees is not an obligation of our government as it has a state responsibility to respond to the demands of national economy, politics, society and culture.	0	1	0
9	In spite of public expenses from admitting refugees, compliance with the Refugee Convention can actively contribute to transnational public goods such as global stability and security.	-1	2	0
10	As a result of refugee influx, the government takes on an excessive burden of public expenses needed for providing emergency necessities, medical services, housing, and administrative services.	3	-2	1
11	As most refugees are low-skilled labors, they can provide a solution to the shortage of low-skilled, low-paid labor force in Korea.	0	-1	-2
12	The Korean government does not need to actively comply with international norms, given that most developed countries are leaning towards state-centered policies with the recent wave of economic downturns.	3	-4	-1
13	An influx of Muslim refugees with radically different cultural, religious and political backgrounds may intensify hatred in our society as Korea has been maintaining the national identity of ethnic homogeneity.	2	-3	-2
14	In order for fast settlement and social integration of asylum seekers, necessary assistance must be provided, such as linguistic education, vocational training, minimum living expenses, housing expenses, and medical expenses.	-3	-2	-3
15	A large influx of low-paid refugees may replace the jobs of national citizens and increase an unemployment rate.	2	-2	-4
16	Dispute resolution process and system must be established in advance, in order to prevent severe conflicts between existing religious groups in Korea and refugees with different religious identities.	1	0	1
17	An influx of refugees might reduce health benefits for national citizens as economically vulnerable refugees have strong tendencies to rely on health services provided by the Korean government.	2	-1	0

18	Given the fast transition of Korea to a multi-cultural and multi-racial society, discriminatory policies against refugees may obstruct social integration.	-4	0	0
19	The Korean government has a sovereign power to adopt policies concerning the living conditions of asylum seekers and refugees	0	1	-1
20	The Refugee Law in Korea must be amended or scaled down because the utmost priority of government is to protect national citizens.	2	-3	-1
21	More civic education is needed since negative perceptions on refugees are based on a lack of information and racial, ethnic, and territorial exclusivism.	-1	2	2
22	An influx of refugees can increase real GDP by increasing national demand and employees.	-2	-1	-1
23	For asylum seekers not eligible for refugee status, *i.e. fleeing from civil wars*, the Korean government sufficiently fulfills its international responsibility by granting them humanitarian residence permit (*a year-long permit*).	1	-1	-2
24	Refugee protection may further increase social instability due to a rise of vulnerable citizens' public discontent over potential reverse discrimination.	1	-2	-1
25	Eligibility for refugee status codified in the Refugee Law must be expanded to include reasons of environmental crisis and internal conflicts.	-1	0	-3
26	Refugee admissions may negatively influence national security due to the difficulty of differentiating between actual asylum seekers and terrorists.	1	1	3
27	The refugee issue must be approached from the perspective of human security, instead of national security.	-2	0	2
28	An influx of low-skilled, low-paid, and low-educated refugees may generate slum areas and aggravate national security.	1	0	3
29	An influx of refugees with different backgrounds may decrease unfounded hatred as a result of declining uncertainty over foreign cultures and religions.	-1	-3	-3
30	Consistent rules and regulations on refugee protection and responsibility sharing for asylum seekers must be established through active cooperation with neighbor countries.	0	4	1
31	In order for more accurate screening of asylum seekers, the number of professional screening personnel, translators, and lawyers must be increased.	0	3	3

32	With the increasing level of successful settlement and social integration, the influx of refugees will have positive mid- and long-term economic impacts across the borders.	-1	1	1
33	Investment in the institution, system, and personnel necessary for successful settlement and integration of refugees is more important than making the screening process more rigorous.	-3	-1	-4
34	An influx of refugees may weaken social cohesion and diminish the cultural identity of national citizens in the long term.	0	-4	3

Type 1-A: Asylum Seekers Undermine the Development of Nation-State

The group of respondents who are assigned to Factor 1 strongly oppose the admission of asylum seekers and refugees as a result of the inculcated tenets of the nation-state. In this respect, their perceptions resonate closely with the dominant political stance in the early phase of the international regime. Their general viewpoint upholds that the admission of aliens ought to be tied in with the economic demands of the state. They argue that granting refugee status to more asylum seekers would inevitably put the government under an excessive burden of welfare expenses (s10: +3), which can aggravate economic stagnation. Hence, the rate of return to the refugee influx would likely be miniscule, in host countries and their countries of origin alike (s3: -3). This phenomenon is becoming increasingly notable in that the number of dirty, dangerous, and demeaning jobs—historically, occupational options for most asylum seekers and refugees—has shrunk considerably as it has largely been replaced by new technology in Korea.

In recent years, even the great powers, namely the United States and the United Kingdom, have been leaning towards state-centered exclusivist policies to offset the recent wave of economic downturns. Given this, the Korean government does not have a legal obligation to actively comply with international norms and duties (s12: +3), or to assume a responsibility to protect (s6: -4). From the respondents' standpoint, the utmost concern of the nation-state is to facilitate development and provide amicable living conditions for its nationals, not foreign subjects. Therefore, increasing public expenditures on settlement and integration programs—involving linguistic education, vocational training, minimum living expenses, housing expenses, and medical expenses—can be detrimental to the national economy (s14: -3). In this sense, a reasonable level of discriminatory policies against asylum

seekers and refugees can be justified and would not obstruct social integration (s18: -4).

This group also shares a view that a sense of unity built by a single language, culture, ethnicity, and history has been a major driving force behind the successful development and modernization of Korea. Following such a logic, a person with cultural, religious, and racial profiles that are at odds with the national identity must be screened rigorously before granting any type of residential permits (s7: +3). In particular, given that the state of Korea is built on a long history of ethnic homogeneity, they believe that the unrestricted admission of asylum seekers and refugees could potentially damage the core identity of majority nationals and hamper societal integration (s2: +4). It is imperative to note that the motivation of migration can be mercurial at times, and job-seeking incentives are often blended into multiple push factors that cause one's cross-border movement. For the sake of national interest, the government must prevent such asylum seekers from exploiting economic interests and protection (s5: +4). To do so, the respondent group suggests that the Korean government must invest more in strengthening the screening and vetting process (s2: +4; s7: +3), instead of focusing on settlement or integration of refugees in the society (s14: -3; s33: -3).

Type 1-B: Asylum Seekers Facilitate Transnational Development

The group of respondents who are assigned to Factor 1-B keenly capture the major traits of transnationalism. They acknowledge the current juncture at which nations can no longer be delineated in accordance with the territorial borders. So-called transmigrants, who establish multiple homes in more than one territorially bounded state, continue to frustrate the state efforts to inculcate a divide between pure *us* and impure *them*. Furthermore, a recent wave of asylum seekers driven by motives that are rarely clear-cut and often malleable during the migratory phase, further complicates the vetting process. Given this ambiguity, however, the respondents do not necessarily suggest an unrestricted open-door policy. They simply shed light on the fact that the state-centered or inter-state approach has failed to address the refugee crisis thus far. In fact, they do concur with the necessity of a fair and professional institution for screening asylum seekers. A point of departure from the state approach is that this respondent group focuses primarily on assuring the rights and security of asylum seekers as equal human individuals, irrespective of state demands (s6: +4). Hence, emphasized is a sense of communal responsibility borne horizontally by state institutions,

cross-border communities, and professional individuals alike. With the absence of such concerted efforts, seamless integration and settlement of asylum seekers and refugees would look bleak in Korea. (s33: +3).

This respondent group highlights a positive role of transmigrants, including asylum seekers, in terms of mutual growth and progress across the world. In their viewpoint, peaceful settlement of refugees in the local society may not only make economic contributions to Korea, but also foster development, democracy and human rights in their country of origin (s3: +3). Granted that the influx of refugees would put the government under various welfare burdens, the accumulated long-term benefits could outweigh the costs borne by the state. Moreover, such burdens are not necessarily the sole responsibility of the state. The respondent group suggests that there has been a myriad of good practices performed by trans-border refugee groups that provided practical assistance to each other through close-knit networks and diaspora communities (s14: +3). To their knowledge, this positive role can be further amplified if transmigrants are given the opportunities to sustain their fluid identity—well-adaptable in multiple nodes across borders. In consideration of this long-term value, jumping on the bandwagon of civil discontent over short-term welfare costs would seem myopic (s10: -3). In this respect, this respondent group argues that the Korean government should not completely forsake universal norms or values (s12: -3). The group argues that state laws and regulations should be sufficiently flexible to enforce more inclusive and broader assessment of various factors in terms of determining refugee status.

From the standpoint of this respondent group, a more fluid presence of foreign subjects would rather diminish unfounded fear as they blend well with the majority nationals. In this sense, any discriminatory policy against refugees would rather obstruct social integration and security (s18: +4). Hence, Muslim asylum seekers and refugees must not be singled out as subjects that need to be vetted with more rigorous standards than others (s7: -3). Settling down in a foreign country does not necessarily imply direct replacement of one's socio-cultural foundations with foreign customs and cultural identities. Asylum seekers and refugees may sustain their *homes* in multiple territorial spaces while living symbiotically with local inhabitants. Therefore, the respondent group suggests that the government should not treat the influx of refugees as a catalyst for erosion of the nation-state, but should rather give them sufficient means to be integrated seamlessly into the society (s2: -4; s5: -4).

TABLE 4
SIGNIFICANT STATEMENTS FOR FACTOR 1-A

No.	Q Statements	Z-Score	Factor Value
5	Asylum seekers must undergo a more rigorous screening process, so as to prevent them from exploiting economic opportunities and security given by the host state.	1.735	+4
2	Due to the possible erosion of nation-state, the issue of admitting and protecting asylum seekers must be handled with caution.	1.699	+4
12	The Korean government does not need to actively comply with international norms, given that most developed countries are leaning towards state-centered policies with the recent wave of economic downturns.	1.437	+3
7	Muslim asylum seekers must be vetted with more rigorous standards as Muslims and their racial groups are directly related to dangerous elements, such as terrorism and sexual crime against women.	1.423	+3
10	As a result of the refugee influx, the government takes on an excessive burden of public expenses needed for providing emergency necessities, medical services, housing, and administrative services.	1.256	+3
33	Investment in the institution, system, and personnel necessary for successful settlement and integration of refugees is more important than making the screening process more rigorous.	-1.119	-3
3	Asylum seekers' or refugees' successful establishment of a second home away from home may not only be a socio-economic contribution to the host country, but also be a catalyst for building democracy and human rights in the country of origin.	-1.148	-3
14	In order for fast settlement and social integration of asylum seekers, necessary assistance must be provided, such as linguistic education, vocational training, minimum living expenses, housing expenses, and medical expenses.	-1.196	-3
18	Given the fast transition of Korea to a multi-cultural and multi-racial society, discriminatory policies against refugees may obstruct social integration.	-1.421	-4
6	Due to the increasing ambiguity of boundaries between aliens and nationals with blood or cultural ties, refugee protection becomes a shared responsibility of ours as equal human beings.	-1.538	-4

Type 2: Refugee Admission is a State Responsibility under International Law

The viewpoint of this particular respondent group well-represents the nature of how the international regime is set up in the post-WWII era. Upon the resolution of the war, a global surge in displaced and stateless people galvanized the international community to introduce the UN Conventions Relating to the Status of Refugees for ensuring their rights. To partake in the cause, the Korean government ratified the Conventions in 1992, and introduced a law on refugee status determination and treatment of refugees in 2011. Thus, the respondent group argues that the Korean government has a legal obligation and responsibility to protect and provide necessary assistance to refugees (s1: +4), irrespective of the economic situation (s12: -4). As a corollary, the group holds the opinion that amending the national law to scale down the state responsibility of refugee protection cannot be justified (s20: -3). The underlying basis of their argument, therefore, suggests that the survival and protection of asylum seekers and refugees relies solely on the willful action of the state agency, constituting a hierarchical agency-client relations.

The respondent group, however, does acknowledge the possibility that the increasing presence of refugees could put downward pressure on the national economy, and create societal anxiety. The advocates of transnationalism, namely F1-B, base their argument around the premise that the so-called salad bowl societal structure can diminish racism and xenophobia as a result of reduced uncertainty and unfounded fear against foreign individuals. This group regards such viewpoint as rather a naïve approach. They argue that the growing influx of people with distant identities cannot automatically abate the prevalent racism and xenophobia against asylum seekers who are often regarded as security threats (s29: -3). The particular condition as such might have close relevance to the path in which Korea has developed into a full-fledged, independent nation-state. Surviving through numerous instances of foreign intervention, Korea inculcated a notion of ethnic nationalism and homogeneity in the public psyche throughout its history. This unique mission of the Korean leadership to assimilate national subjects under a single language, culture, and history might have led to the general concern that unskilled people of color could dismantle the identity of Korean nation-state.

Given this, what sets the unique tone of this perception group is the absence of path dependency. They believe that a careful state-led approach to

the refugee crisis could avoid unwanted consequences, such as social disintegration, a loss of national identity (s34: -4), and intensified fear and hatred (s13: -3). In fact, the group upholds that with institutional readiness for successful settlement of asylum seekers, their entry can economically and socially contribute to the Korean society, and foster democracy and human rights in their country of origin (s3: +3). Hence, the notions of ethnic homogeneity and nationalism cannot be vilified as the sole causes of social discontent over refugee admissions. In this respect, the respondent group argues that the Korean government must, first and foremost, address the institutional flaws that fail to strategically absorb refugees. Prior to granting refugee status to the ever-increasing number of asylum seekers, the government must establish consistent rules and regulations on the admission, protection, and resettlement of refugees through active cooperation with neighboring countries and regional partners (s30: +4). Moreover, the government should increase the number of professional screening personnel, translators, and lawyers who have expertise and experience in refugee issues, in order to ensure that the screening of asylum seekers is executed with a careful and accurate manner (s31: +3). With such institutional readiness, the group suggests that successful settlement and integration of refugees might be possible, while allowing an added economic value to Korea.

TABLE 5
SIGNIFICANT STATEMENTS FOR FACTOR 2

No.	Q Statements	Z-Score	Factor Value
1	As a ratifying state to the 1951 Refugee Convention, the Government of the Republic of Korea has the international obligation and responsibility to protect and provide necessary assistance to refugees.	2.066	+4
30	Consistent rules and regulations on refugee protection and responsibility sharing for asylum seekers must be established through active cooperation with neighbor countries.	1.540	+4
2	Due to the possible erosion of nation-state, the issue of admitting and protecting asylum seekers must be handled with caution.	1.365	+3
31	In order for more accurate screening of asylum seekers, the number of professional screening personnel, translators, and lawyers must be increased.	1.348	+3

3	Asylum seekers' or refugees' successful establishment of a second home away from home may not only be a socio-economic contribution to the host country, but also be a catalyst for building democracy and human rights in the country of origin.	1.210	+3
20	The Refugee Law in Korea must be amended or scaled down because the utmost priority of government is to protect national citizens.	-1.061	-3
13	An influx of Muslim refugees with radically different cultural, religious and political backgrounds may intensify hatred in our society as Korea has been maintaining the national identity of ethnic homogeneity.	-1.148	-3
29	An influx of refugees with different backgrounds may decrease unfounded hatred as a result of declining uncertainty over foreign cultures and religions.	-1.175	-3
12	The Korean government does not need to actively comply with international norms, given that most developed countries are leaning towards state-centered policies with the recent wave of economic downturns.	-1.871	-4
34	An influx of refugees may weaken social cohesion and diminish the cultural identity of national citizens in the long term.	-1.922	-4

Type 3: An Influx of Asylum Seekers and Refugees Exacerbates Security Risks

The perception of this respondent group resonates closely with the discourse which the international community has been grappling with in recent years. The rise of new wars, fought and financed by state and non-state actors alike, significantly altered the way asylum seekers are perceived globally. Particularly, in the post-9/11 era, asylum seekers came to be increasingly associated with transnational crime and violence. The nature of such violence is, in turn, tied in with particular racial, religious, and cultural profiles, along with inferior economic and education status. As a result, asylum seekers are portrayed as global security threats that intimidate both state and human security. Against this backdrop, the respondent group emphasizes that a large influx of refugees with distant identities may further intensify the general citizens' fear and xenophobia (s29: -3).

The group admits that the Korean government does have an international obligation to protect and provide necessary assistance to asylum seekers and refugees, due to its ratification to the UN Conventions (s1: +4).

However, such negative impacts as security threats and social disintegration beg the question of whether the Korean government ought to strictly abide by these non-binding international laws. Historically, people of color who have made their ways to Korea have been relegated to a body of uncivilized, impure *them*. With the exception of white Europeans or Americans, a majority of these forced migrants took up occupations that require dirty, dangerous, and demeaning labor. As Korea progressively rubbed its shoulders with other developed countries, a large portion of Korean nationals moved beyond manual labor and facilitated urbanization, while leaving 3D labor to migrant workers. In this respect, the respondent group expresses that the influx of low-skilled, low-paid, and low-educated refugees, though not replacing the jobs of national citizens or increasing an unemployment rate (s15: -4), may create slum areas and aggravate national security (s28: +3). On top of this, the group also identifies a practical challenge in accurately differentiating actual asylum seekers from potential terrorists and transborder criminals (s26: +3). Hence, an unchecked open-door policy to grant asylum seekers a refugee status without a rigorous screening process could intensify the security vulnerability.

In addition to security threats, the group also notes that the premature admission of refugees may weaken social cohesion and tarnish the identity of national citizens in the long run (s34: +3). Hence, eligible conditions that qualify for refugee status, as spelled out in the Refugee Act in Korea, cannot be further expanded to embrace a wider range of asylum seekers (s25: -3). The respondent group strongly believes that the utmost important duty of the government is to provide its nationals with security and stability. Particularly, in the presence of exogenous threats, the state ought to speak for its in-group interests, even if such an action is made at the expense of others. This particular viewpoint speaks volume of the widely held public perception towards the government action in dealing with the inflow of foreign subjects in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic. The majority opinion in Korea holds that the government should close its door to visitors from foreign countries, in order to preemptively block the spread of COVID-19. This nation-centric approach appears carbon-copied to the state-centered approach upheld by F3. This group suggests that the government should invest more in institutional improvement to strengthen the vetting process, such as building expertise and hiring experts in dealing with refugee issues (s31: +3). Meanwhile, they argue against the government taking on excessive burdens to assist settlement and integration of refugees (s33: -4; s14: -3). In this sense, the group holds the viewpoint that the government has its own

right to rigorously scrutinize asylum seekers, and preemptively ward off any subject with potential risks, albeit racially or religiously charged.

TABLE 6
SIGNIFICANT STATEMENTS FOR FACTOR 3

No.	Q Statements	Z-Score	Factor Value
1	As a ratifying state to the 1951 Refugee Convention, the Government of the Republic of Korea has the international obligation and responsibility to protect and provide necessary assistance to refugees.	2.073	+4
28	An influx of low-skilled, low-paid, and low-educated refugees may generate slum areas and aggravate national security.	1.797	+3
31	In order for more accurate screening of asylum seekers, the number of professional screening personnel, translators, and lawyers must be increased.	1.797	+3
26	Refugee admissions may negatively influence national security due to the difficulty of differentiating between actual asylum seekers and terrorists.	1.623	+3
34	An influx of refugees may weaken social cohesion and diminish the cultural identity of national citizens in the long term.	1.505	+3
25	Eligibility for refugee status codified in the Refugee Law must be expanded to include reasons of environmental crisis and internal conflicts.	-1.060	-3
29	An influx of refugees with different backgrounds may decrease unfounded hatred as a result of declining uncertainty over foreign cultures and religions.	-1.150	-3
14	In order for fast settlement and social integration of asylum seekers, necessary assistance must be provided, such as linguistic education, vocational training, minimum living expenses, housing expenses, and medical expenses.	-1.198	-3
15	A large influx of low-paid refugees may replace the jobs of national citizens and increase an unemployment rate.	-1.558	-4
33	Investment in the institution, system, and personnel necessary for successful settlement and integration of refugees is more important than making the screening process more rigorous.	-1.587	-4

Results and Conclusion

The COVID-19 pandemic will likely be the most heavily debated topic across the world in the year 2020 and beyond. Unlike other globally transmitted viruses like SARS and MERS, this particular pandemic has not only induced the behavioral change of the general population, but more importantly initiated serious conversations on thorny policy issues that have global impacts. Among many discussions, the most directly inter-linked issue has been the admission of asylum seekers who are now rendered as potential virus carriers, on top of the pre-existing stigma of being a security threat to the local society. The profiles of *trans*-migrating asylum seekers, in recent years, reveal an uncomfortable truth that their legal definition spelled out by the *inter*-national agreements speaks only for a bare minimum. The motives behind fleeing one's territory are often explained by a multitude of complex factors that undergo significant changes before, during, and after the migratory phase. This complex reality presents tremendous challenges for the government of host countries in regard to their conscious decision to grant refugee status to well-deserving asylum seekers and repatriating or re-settling unfit *others*. A pattern of making sensitive decisions as such provides a deeper look into the ways in which the nation-state has been built throughout history, along with a nuanced state choice of development and security structure.

The nation-state of Korea, unlike the U.S. or European countries, has not been built on the basis of migration. From the get-go, due to constant foreign invasions, Korea has resorted to inculcating the public with strong ethno-centric nationalism as a recipe for unifying and weaponizing the general public. The notion of unified community, represented by a single ethnicity, language, history, and culture, has been timelessly highlighted and reiterated by the Korean leadership over the past decades. Even prior to becoming a full-fledged independent and democratic state, Korean nationals already developed antagonism and resistance against foreign-born settlers. The avenue of entry for most of these asylum-seeking migrants was, thus, limited to either dirty, dangerous, and demeaning jobs or mail-order marriage in rural areas. Even after grand-scale development took off in Korea, these foreign migrants were locked in the inferior, "uncivilized" labor field. As a corollary, their fixed socio-economic status, reinforced by a lack of education and capacity, came to be associated with a particular race and skin color as well. This structural exclusion, occurred in the midst of the state-building

process, cemented a pathological dichotomization of nationals and aliens, *us* and *them*, charged with cultural and racial undertones. Hence, Korean nationals became increasingly attached to the ideal principle that the utmost important duty of the Korean government is to attend to the interests of its own nationals, even if it is carried out at the expense of other racial and cultural groups. As a result, the influx of asylum seekers has inevitably become construed as an existential threat to the very core of Korean society.

The Q-method analysis conducted in this paper is situated at the height of fear and economic instability experienced at the global level. For the past decade, following the Arab Spring in 2011, a series of armed conflicts in Syria, Iraq, Yemen, and Libya, among many others, have displaced tens of thousands of people. A massive spillover of these asylum seekers hit the limit of many developed countries in terms of their physical and economic capacity to accept and integrate these individuals seamlessly in their society. Therefore, as witnessed more frequently nowadays, developed countries began opting out from their international duties and blatantly leaning towards nation- and state-centered protectionism. Korea, with no exception, faced an unprecedented number of asylum seekers, particularly from Yemen. Given this global phenomenon, the Korean government has been called to immediate action to prevent Korea from becoming further embroiled in crises abroad. Hence, in an effort to develop effective policy options, decision-making bodies ought to understand how different circles of citizens perceive the refugee issue, and what rationale is utilized to shape their opinions. In this respect, typologizing Korean citizens' perspectives becomes a compelling groundwork, since it can highlight the points of divergence and convergence, as well as the underlying values and ideologies that can be deconstructed and reconciled.

TABLE 7
TYPOLOGY OF KOREAN CITIZENS' PERSPECTIVES ON THE ADMISSION OF ASYLUM
SEEKERS

	Development / Cultural Discourse	Security / Racial Discourse
Nationalism	[F1-A]	[F2], [F3]
Transnationalism	[F1-B]	N/A

As explained previously, the Q-method survey is not targeted at revealing the proportion of each opinion group that represents the general population. Instead, it helps sort the public into meaningful types that

illustrate differing opinions. The result of this study shows that among four identified factors, three factors, namely Factor 1-A (F1-A), Factor 2 (F2), and Factor 3 (F3), provide responses from the standpoint of nationalism. Only Factor 1-B (F1-B) represents the viewpoint of transnationalism (see Table 7). Within the framework of nationalism and state-centered approach, the respondent groups can be further divided up into two dissimilar types, namely development and security discourses. While F1-A expects the state authority to act strictly in line with the economic interests of the nation, F2 and F3 demand the state to primarily focus on the providence of security and stability for the nation. Standing at the opposite end is F1-B, which recognizes the fluid identity of asylum seekers, and envisions mutual development through political and economic remittances. Despite such a positive role, F1-B is rather silent on the potential impact of trans-border radical groups that might bring civil unrest to numerous states abroad, tarnishing the image of asylum seeking migrants and threatening the overall human security. Considering that Korea witnesses the horror of transborder terrorism and criminal violence only through the lens of foreign media, the respondents, even from the viewpoint of transnationalism, might have lacked confidence in formulating a definitive opinion germane to the security dilemma.

The recognition of divergence among various opinion groups is vital for policy formation. Without the engagement of Q-Method, three opposition groups could have been rendered as a single group. The strength of this division helps prevent decision makers from implementing a slanted treatment that only serves the interests of one stakeholder group. For instance, a state action that addresses the concerns raised by F1-A ought to involve a certain level of measure to ensure benefits can outweigh the costs of issuing refugee status to asylum seekers. In order for this policy to earn wider public support (namely, F2 and F3), the state authority must also tighten its security measures through a rigorous screening and vetting process, as well as keeping tight control over the number of asylum seekers accepted each year. All these institutional measures can be programmed at a state level to alleviate unfounded fear and hatred, and to minimize the erosion of national identity. A lingering challenge, however, is the reconciliation of the diverging opinions between these groups and F1-B, which exactly highlights the functionality of Q-Method research. Close interpretation of contradictory factor groups can lay down a detailed groundwork for the readers, either scholars or state agents, to make reconcilable and inclusive policy decisions. The following are some core elements that deserve particular attention for

future policy making. Given this, however, the current study does not attempt to draft concrete policy options; instead, it helps build a foundation on which prospective policies can be based.

First, F1-A and F1-B constitute a bipolar factor branched out from F1, indicating that the two opinion groups are completely opposite to each other. Therefore, social disputes over the admission of asylum seekers in Korea tend to occur most intensely around the statements ranked atop by F1-A and F1-B. While the underlying premise of F1-A indicates the state authority as a sole decision-making actor, F1-B recognizes the agency of lower-level players, such as transborder refugee networks, diaspora communities, and transnational organizations. Hence, from the standpoint of F1-B, welfare costs and the resultant long-term benefits are not taken up solely by the state, but rather by numerous stakeholder parties. In this sense, providing assistance and protection to asylum seekers becomes a responsibility of us all as equal individuals. Following this logic, human development and human security, in the lens of F1-B, are applied to all individuals, irrespective of geographical space and governing regime to which they are subjected. On the contrary, a shared opinion of F1-A and F3 reads human development and security as the possession of majority nationals that can be infringed by culturally and racially distant *others*. Given all this, conflict resolution between these two opinion groups would require deconstruction of the value system each group holds, and start questioning their fundamental assumptions, such as the relevance of nation-state principles and the composition of stake-holding actors in the modern society, among others.

Second, the most sharply polarizing point between F1-A and F1-B is the differing perception of the economic impact of asylum seekers and refugees. There are two-fold challenges with regard to delivering a definitive conclusion that can quell the controversy. The most obvious problem is the lack of agreement on a quantitative formula or technique utilized for producing a statistically valid result. As explained in the previous section, a myriad of studies have been conducted in the past to explicate the economic impact of refugees. However, the study results exhibit high elasticity, heavily reliant on minor changes in the setup of independent variables. This can easily indicate that the study result is prone to be manipulated according to the author's biased stance. In addition to the methodological difficulty, another practical challenge is a dearth of raw data on asylum seekers and refugees. As compared to other developed countries facing a countless number of asylum seekers every year, the actual exposure to a refugee crisis is rather new and meager in Korea. Thus far, only six percent of asylum seekers

have been granted a refugee status, and in 2017 alone, a mere 0.5 percent received a refugee status. Hence, the size of datasets accumulated to date is still at a nascent stage to make a meaningful statistical conclusion. Lastly, defining variables adds a critical challenge to the research. F1-A, F2, and F3 calculate costs and benefits of refugee admissions by referring solely to the current account balance of the state. Meanwhile, F1-B takes such indirect externalities as regional security, community development, and political remittances into account for interpreting benefits. Such differences in defining explanatory variables require profound theoretical discussions and reconciliation to be preceded prior to conducting a statistical analysis.

Third, despite sharp discrepancies between F1-B and its opposite group F1-A, F2, and F3, a convergence of opinion can be identified from the pool of selected statements. At first glance, F1-A, F2, and F3 commonly share a view of making the vetting process more rigorous, while F1-B puts a higher priority on post-entry social integration and settlement. In doing so, however, all of the respondent groups concur with the importance of employing more professionals and building the capacity of bureaucrats specialized in refugee issues. This common opinion speaks volumes about the practical hurdle resulting from a shortage of refugee status determination officers—as of the end of 2018, a total of 39 officers deal with nearly 300 cases a year (NANCEN 2018). Due to the fast-changing social fabric of Korea, along with easier mobility of transmigrants, the respondents generally acknowledge the necessity of institutional readiness and transparency for better management of the rising number of asylum seekers. If accommodating the opinion of F1-B, the state authority could organically form a cooperative partnership with civil societies and refugee groups for identifying practical challenges in the field and collecting an accurate and comprehensive dataset. Moreover, the government could also provide various participatory channels, online and offline, for general citizens to freely convey their opinions to the government and receive feedback with regard to a wide range of administrative and legal concerns. In the aftermath of the sharply divided disputes over Yemeni asylum seekers, the government has, in fact, newly established a separate division specialized in refugee status assessment in 2020. The government has also pushed for employing more professionals and introducing a refugee status tribunal, independent from the Ministry of Justice, aimed to ensure fair and streamlined legal procedures, which, however, has yet to be accomplished.

Regardless of the relentless efforts of the state to reinforce the identity of ethnic, racial, linguistic, and cultural homogeneity, Korea has already entered

a phase of becoming a multi-racial and multi-cultural society. In recent years, a soaring number of individuals are crossing borders and seeking protection from afflictions that range from conventional political or religious persecution to civil wars, abject poverty, natural disaster, and pandemic disease. In this regard, the current study, through conducting a survey-based research, shows the absolute necessity of profound dialogue among the Korean public and of institutional readiness for mitigating social conflicts. If without preemptive measures and reforms, Korea may easily become embroiled in a dangerous scenario that has recently been encountered by several European countries. In the milieu of a global pandemic, economic downturns, and the resultant rising ethno-nationalism, the European Commission in 2020 has finally decided to abandon the mandatory quota for accepting refugees (Rankin 2020). This decision by the EU to finally jump on the bandwagon, along with the U.S. and the UK, has put Korea in a tougher position in regard to refugee admissions. The article, by no means, advocates for a particular position or suggests a concrete set of policy options, but does effectively highlight the important elements that are in dire need of attention in Korea. The typology of perceptions, analyzed through the Q-methodology, can be utilized not as a proportional representation of opinion groups in Korea, but as the groundwork to show the most polarizing types of existing opinions held by the public and to make room for state intervention to address the concerns raised by various opinion groups.

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Appendix

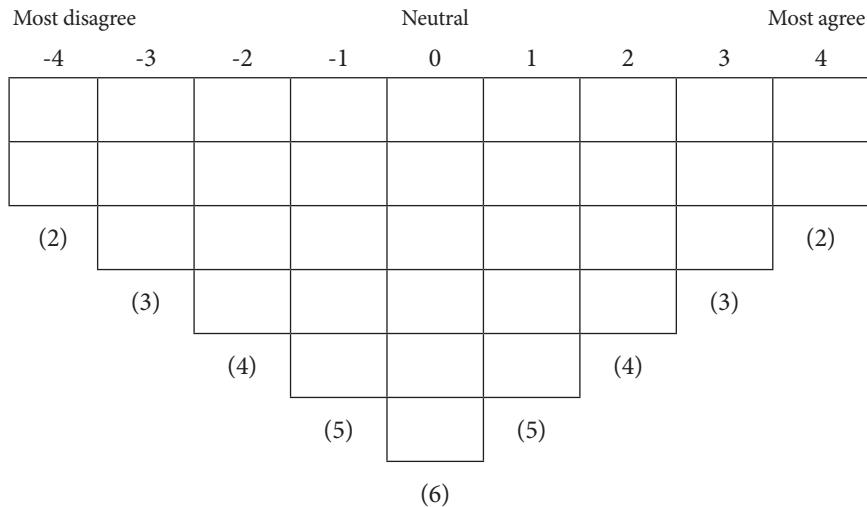Most disagree　　　　　　　　　　　　Neutral　　　　　　　　　　　Most agree

-4　　　-3　　　-2　　　-1　　　0　　　1　　　2　　　3　　　4

Fig. 1.—Quasi-normal Forced-Form Sorting Matrix