

# Rights Recognition and Attitudes Toward Immigrants: Multicultural Inclusivity Revisited\*

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*This study sheds light on the public apprehension of the cultural and civic rights for immigrants as an important factor that shapes “multicultural inclusivity”—the inclusive attitudes toward immigrants. Focusing on the notion of rights recognition for immigrants, the present study proposes the hypothesis that a greater acknowledgment of the importance of safeguarding cultural and civic rights for immigrants is positively associated with a higher level of multicultural inclusivity among the native population. To examine this hypothesis in the context of Korea, data from the 2021 National Multiculturalism Acceptance Survey were analyzed. The results were in accordance with the hypothesis. That is, individuals’ recognition of cultural and civic rights for immigrants strongly predicted their attitudes in terms of a range of measures of multicultural inclusivity. This pattern provides valuable insights into identifying strategies to foster a more inclusive multiculturalism. It appears that policy interventions that prioritize rights recognition are a fundamental aspect of fostering an inclusive multicultural society.*

**Keywords:** attitudes toward immigrants, multiculturalism, rights recognition, civic rights, cultural rights

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## Introduction

South Korea is currently undergoing a rapid transition toward becoming a multicultural society, characterized by a substantial influx of immigrants. This demographic shift has led to increased diversity in the composition of the Korean population, with immigrants accounting for approximately 4.6% of the total population as of 2023 (National Statistic Office 2023). However, given the nation's limited historical exposure and familiarity with immigration phenomena, challenges emerge in relation to multiculturalist attitudes—usually referred to as “multicultural inclusivity”<sup>1</sup>—among native residents (Jeon 2014; Kim 2019; Kim, Hwang and Song 2019; *Newsmaker*, August 14, 2023; Yang and Shin 2020; Yoon 2010). A recent report published by the Ministry of Gender Equality and Family (2022b) elucidates a discernible decline in multicultural inclusivity among indigenous residents, with a sustained downward trajectory evident in recent years. The government's acknowledgment of this predicament has catapulted it to the forefront of the national policy agenda, underscoring its heightened importance and prioritization. Such recognition denotes the government's cognizance that effecting a paradigmatic shift in the perceptions and attitudes of native residents is indispensable for cultivating social integration within the context of a multicultural society (Yang and Shin 2020).

In its pursuit of fostering multicultural inclusivity, South Korea has primarily focused its efforts on the cultivation of cultural awareness (Hwang 2010; Jeon 2014; Lim et al. 2020). The notion of “cultural awareness” underscores the significance of understanding and being sensitive to the traditions and lifestyles of individuals from diverse cultures (Kim 2019). This concept has garnered considerable scholarly and policy attention as it provides a key insight for enhancing multicultural inclusivity. The government has implemented a range of initiatives aimed at enhancing cultural awareness and understanding among the populace (Kim et al. 2023; Ministry of Gender Equality and Family 2022a). These endeavors aim to bridge the divides between native residents and immigrant communities by promoting mutual understanding and appreciation of diverse cultures. However, the present study postulates that cultural awareness, on its own, may have limitations in effectively fostering multicultural inclusivity. While

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1 Multicultural inclusivity in this study refers to the attitudes of native residents toward foreign immigrants and their level of openness to multicultural interactions.

cultural awareness remains intrinsic to discussions on multicultural inclusivity, this study emphasizes that what truly matters is the acknowledgment of universal human rights irrespective of immigrant background. That is, the notion of “rights recognition” deserves scholarly attention as a crucial factor in cultivating an inclusive society that upholds cultural diversity while ensuring inclusivity for all individuals.

This study aims to build upon existing research by directing attention toward the recognition of rights for immigrants, which has often been overlooked or underexplored in previous policy discourse. By challenging the prevailing culture-based approach that attributes native residents’ attitudes solely to cultural awareness, the study seeks to broaden our understanding of the topic. The study postulates that a greater recognition among native residents of the importance of safeguarding both the cultural and civic rights of immigrants is positively associated with a higher level of multicultural inclusivity among the native population. By contributing to the existing body of literature on multicultural inclusivity in the South Korean context, the findings of this study are expected to provide information to policymakers, community leaders, and other stakeholders in their efforts to promote inclusive social integration.

### Cultural awareness as a panacea: The dominant approach uncritiqued

In the realm of multicultural inclusivity, the prevailing approach within Korean integration policy has primarily focused on a superficial and limited form of cultural awareness. Rather than acknowledging and recognizing the cultural and legal rights of individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds, the policy has predominantly relied on a simplistic method that involves listing cultural elements such as cuisine, attire, and traditional performances from immigrants’ countries of origin (Hwang 2010; Lee 2016). This approach, characterized by its surface-level emphasis on trivial cultural aspects, fails to address the intricate challenges associated with genuine multicultural inclusivity.

For instance, the Ministry of Education has implemented various programs aimed at promoting the cultural awareness of native residents. These programs, often facilitated by immigrant instructors, serve the purpose of presenting and transmitting their respective native cultures. Additionally, cultural festivals and segmented initiatives have been organized to showcase

the cultural richness of immigrant communities and introduce the cultural heritage of immigrants' countries of origin (Hwang 2010). While these initiatives have undeniable value in highlighting the outward expressions of culture, they often overlook the fundamental rights and needs of individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds. Scholars have criticized multicultural policies and programs in South Korea, referring to them as multiculturalism of words only (Kim 2020; Ryoo 2021; Yang and Roh 2020; Yoon 2008).

A more nuanced and comprehensive approach is required to address the multifaceted nature of multicultural inclusivity. The current study postulates that such an approach should prioritize the promotion of substantive equality, the recognition of cultural rights, and the acknowledgment of civic rights. By dismantling systemic barriers that hinder the full participation and integration of immigrants into Korean society, this approach would effectively address the underlying complexities of multicultural inclusivity. A crucial aspect of this approach involves examining native residents' attitudes toward the recognition and protection of the rights of individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds. These attitudes play a pivotal role in determining the extent of recognition and support extended to immigrants, highlighting the importance of rights afforded to them (Hwang 2010). By exploring the relationship between native residents' attitudes toward rights and multicultural inclusivity, the present study can provide valuable insights into the underlying dynamics and identify strategies to foster a more inclusive environment.

## Rights recognition: An alternative approach

The present investigation posits that the cultural awareness approach may have constraints in deepening our understanding of how to nurture multicultural inclusivity. While cultural awareness inherently holds importance in fostering multicultural inclusivity, this study emphasizes the significance of the "rights recognition" approach. The notion of rights recognition in this study is grounded in the theoretical perspectives on multiculturalism articulated by Taylor (1994) and Fraser (2000). Although these two prominent scholars advocate for different versions of multiculturalism—Taylor for a communitarian approach and Fraser for a critical one—they both underscore the importance of recognizing rights for all as a pivotal factor in cultivating an inclusive society that not only acknowledges cultural diversity but also ensures equality regardless of

background.

On the one hand, Charles Taylor's cultural recognition perspective emphasizes the importance of honoring and preserving cultural diversity (Taylor 1994). It highlights the need to recognize and respect the cultural rights of individuals from diverse backgrounds, promoting a sense of belonging and cultural expression. Taylor (1994) argues that cultural recognition involves granting equal status and value to different cultural identities, allowing individuals to maintain their cultural distinctiveness while participating fully in society. By recognizing and accommodating diverse cultural expressions, societies can create an inclusive environment that celebrates and appreciates cultural diversity. Taylor's perspective aligns with the notion that cultural rights are crucial elements in promoting multicultural inclusivity. Recognizing and protecting cultural rights not only acknowledges the intrinsic value of cultural differences but also enables individuals to exercise their rights to language, religion, customs, and traditions (Benhabib 2002; Castles and Davidson 2000). It fosters a sense of belonging and identity, allowing individuals to fully participate in social, political, and economic spheres without facing discrimination or marginalization based on their cultural backgrounds (Kymlicka 1995).

On the other hand, Fraser's framework draws attention to the civic rights dimension and the need to address structural inequalities that intersect with cultural differences (Fraser 1995; Fraser 1997; Fraser 2000; Ham et al. 2022, May and Sleeter 2010; McLaren 1997). She emphasizes that mere cultural recognition without addressing underlying social and economic disparities can lead to persistent inequalities and marginalization. Fraser (2000) argues for substantive equality, which goes beyond symbolic gestures and requires tangible actions to dismantle systemic barriers and promote equal opportunities for all individuals, regardless of their cultural backgrounds. According to Fraser (2000), achieving substantive equality requires tangible actions that dismantle these systemic barriers and ensure equal opportunities for individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds. By focusing on status recognition, Fraser's approach highlights the importance of equal rights and opportunities in achieving true equality and justice within a multicultural society.

These two perspectives together provide a comprehensive understanding of rights recognition and its impact on multicultural inclusivity. Although Taylor's perspective primarily focuses on cultural rights and Fraser's framework emphasizes civic rights, both perspectives share a common goal of advocating for the rights of immigrants. They recognize the significance of

granting equal status, opportunities, and recognition to individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds. The amalgamation of these perspectives results in a more comprehensive understanding of rights recognition and its implications for multicultural societies. It highlights the interconnectedness of cultural and civic rights, underscoring that both are indispensable in creating a truly inclusive and equitable environment for all residents.

The attitudes surrounding the extent to which cultural and civic rights are granted to immigrants significantly shape native residents' multicultural inclusivity. When individuals embrace an attitude characterized by respect and recognition of immigrants' rights, it engenders an environment conducive to equal opportunities for individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds to exercise their rights and experience inclusive societal participation. To date, however, there has been a noticeable absence of policy discourse that adopts a rights recognition perspective in addressing the imperative of fostering multicultural inclusivity among native Korean residents. By considering both the cultural and civic rights for immigrants, this study aims to provide insights into how individuals' recognition of these rights influences their willingness to embrace cultural diversity.

## Hypotheses

This study examines the predictors of multicultural inclusivity through the lenses of both cultural rights and civic rights recognition. The theoretical underpinning of the hypotheses is rooted in the understanding that the recognition of these rights constitutes a fundamental aspect of intergroup dynamics and social integration, thereby shaping the perceptions, beliefs, and behaviors of individuals from the native population. The hypotheses are as follows:

*Hypothesis 1:* Individuals exhibiting a heightened level of cultural rights recognition for immigrants tend to display a greater degree of multicultural inclusivity.

*Hypothesis 2:* Individuals exhibiting a heightened level of civic rights recognition for immigrants tend to display a greater degree of multicultural inclusivity.

The degree of multicultural inclusivity among native residents may vary

based on their acknowledgment of immigrants' rights. Hypothesis 1 expects that native Korean residents with a heightened recognition of the significance of safeguarding immigrants' cultural rights are more likely to demonstrate greater inclusivity of cultural diversity. Hypothesis 2 centers on the recognition of immigrants' civic rights, proposing that native Korean residents who are more cognizant of the importance of protecting immigrants' civic rights will exhibit elevated multicultural inclusivity.

## Data and Method

This study utilized data derived from the National Survey on Multicultural Acceptance, which was conducted in 2021 by the Ministry of Gender Equality and Family in collaboration with the Korean Women's Development Institute. This survey has been conducted periodically since 2012 and serves as an important tool for assessing the level of multicultural inclusivity in Korean society. The survey aims to gather empirical insights that inform policy formulation and implementation. The survey sample consisted of adult native Korean men and women aged 19 to 74 who resided in 17 metropolitan cities and provinces across South Korea. The survey instrument comprised a comprehensive set of items designed to capture various aspects of multicultural inclusivity, including respondents' attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors. Additionally, participants were asked to provide demographic information such as age, gender, and education level, allowing for the examination of potential associations between these characteristics and levels of multicultural inclusivity. The robustness and credibility of the survey data underpin the validity of the study's findings while enhancing the generalizability of the results to the wider population.

In this study, logistic regression analysis was performed with multicultural inclusivity as the dependent variable and cultural and civic rights recognition as independent variables, along with several control variables. The dependent variable was created by dichotomizing five variables within the dataset that capture the concept of multicultural inclusivity. Thus, a total of five logistic regression models were analyzed. Prior to conducting logistic regression analysis, principal component analysis was conducted to construct the main independent variables that represent the concepts of cultural and civic rights recognition. The specific method used to process variables is outlined in the following section.

*Independent variables: Rights recognition*

The primary independent variables examined in this study were cultural rights recognition (Cultural RR) and civic rights recognition (Civic RR). These variables were standardized factor scores derived from factor analysis with a mean of 0.000 and a standard deviation of 1.000. These standardized factor scores served as representative measures of the underlying constructs of cultural and civic rights recognition. For the creation of the two independent variables, a careful selection of seven survey items was made from the dataset to adequately capture the notion of cultural and civic rights recognition.<sup>2</sup> The specific survey items, reflecting the content of each right, are presented in Table 1.

**TABLE 1**  
**SURVEY ITEMS ON RIGHTS RECOGNITION FOR IMMIGRANTS**

Item 1	Foreign residents in Korea should be encouraged to assimilate into Korean culture by letting go of their own cultural practices.*
Item 2	Embracing diverse ethnicities as citizens will weaken the cohesion of the nation.*
Item 3	Immigrant women married to Koreans should prioritize and adhere to the customs and etiquette of their Korean in-laws.*
Item 4	I am hesitant to embrace immigrants as Koreans if they lack an understanding of traditional Korean cuisine.*
Item 5	I am against prioritizing domestic employment even during times of job scarcity.
Item 6	Our country should extend equal humanitarian benefits, including medical insurance and social security, to both recognized refugees and those in the process of applying for refugee status.
Item 7	It is crucial to provide non-discriminatory access to disaster relief funds, even for long-term foreign residents during situations like the Covid pandemic.

*Note:* Items with an asterisk are the reverse-coding items.

<sup>2</sup> Cultural awareness primarily involves the surface-level acknowledgment of diverse cultures, while cultural rights recognition entails promoting and safeguarding various cultural rights, illustrating a commitment to protecting immigrants' cultural rights. Unlike cultural awareness, cultural rights recognition embodies a principled stance that, from a rights perspective, advocates for the respect of diverse cultures.

The latent factors representing cultural and civic rights recognition were identified through principal component analysis (PCA), a statistical technique that linearly transforms the data by mapping it onto an axis where the variance is maximized in the first coordinate axis, and the second-largest variance is placed in the second coordinate axis. The resulting factor scores obtained from the PCA served as the variables for further analysis. To measure the selected survey items, a common response scale was employed, ranging from 1 = not at all to 5 = very much. Higher scores were indicative of a greater level of rights recognition.

The existence of communalities among the six variables used in the analysis was statistically significant. The Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy, which indicates the suitability of factor analysis for the variables, was reported as 0.623. Generally, a KMO value above 0.5 is considered acceptable, suggesting that factor analysis is appropriate for the variables under investigation. Additionally, the chi-squared value obtained from the analysis was 4,620.691, and with a significance level of 0.000, the null hypothesis was rejected, further supporting the appropriateness of factor analysis and the presence of communalities among the variables (see Table 2).

**TABLE 2**  
**KAISER-MEYER-OLKIN (KMO) AND BARTLETT'S TESTS**

KMO measure of sampling adequacy		0.623
Bartlett's test of sphericity	Approximate chi-square	4620.691
	Degree of freedom	21
	Significance level	<0.001

Two factors were extracted based on the criterion of eigenvalues greater than 1.0. Table 3 illustrates the rotated results obtained through the varimax method, displaying the factor loading component matrix for the items related to multicultural inclusivity. The results indicate that the seven variables have been extracted into two distinct factors. Factor 1 is highly correlated with Items 3, 1, 4 and 2, which can be interpreted as variables associated with the recognition of cultural rights. Factor 2 is highly correlated with Items 5, 7 and 6, representing variables related to the recognition of civic rights (see Table 3).

**TABLE 3**  
**PRINCIPAL COMPONENT ANALYSIS OF RIGHTS RECOGNITION FOR IMMIGRANTS**

	Factor loadings for rights recognition (RR)	
	Cultural RR	Civic RR
Item 3	0.818	
Item 1	0.813	
Item 4	0.537	
Item 2	0.419	
Item 5		0.838
Item 7		0.822
Item 6		0.412

*Note:* Varimax rotation with Kaiser normalization was applied. Items were sorted by the magnitude of factor loadings. Factor loadings greater than 0.4 were reported.

*Dependent variable: Multicultural inclusivity*

The dependent variable in this study is conceptualized as multicultural inclusivity, which is measured through a set of five survey items. These items directly assess the attitudes of native residents toward foreign immigrants and their level of openness to multicultural interactions. Specifically, the items gauge individuals' willingness to accept an immigrant as a workplace colleague (*Attitude\_a*), accept an immigrant as a workplace supervisor (*Attitude\_b*), befriend a foreign resident (*Attitude\_c*), have a student with an immigrant background in the same classroom as my child (*Attitude\_d*), and let my child befriend someone with an immigrant background (*Attitude\_e*). By incorporating these items, the study aims to capture and analyze the extent to which native residents demonstrate multicultural inclusivity toward immigrants in diverse social contexts. For all items, the positive responses were coded as 1 for high multicultural inclusivity, while the negative responses were coded as 0 for low multicultural inclusivity.

*Control variables*

The study included several variables as control variables: age, male, region of residence, marital status, education level, frequency of contact with foreigners, and monthly income level. Descriptive statistics for both the

**TABLE 4**  
**DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS FOR VARIABLES**

	Mean	SD	Min.	Max.
<i>Dependent variables</i>				
Attitude_a	0.754	...	0.000	1.000
Attitude_b	0.544	...	0.000	1.000
Attitude_c	0.767	...	0.000	1.000
Attitude_d	0.818	...	0.000	1.000
Attitude_e	0.793	...	0.000	1.000
<i>Independent variables</i>				
Cultural RR	0.000	1.000	-3.125	3.412
Civic RR	0.000	1.000	-2.623	3.362
Age	51.179	13.790	19.000	74.000
Male	0.582	...	0.000	1.000
Region				
Region1	0.429	...	0.000	1.000
Region2	0.364	...	0.000	1.000
Region3	0.207	...	0.000	1.000
Marriage				
Marriage1	0.157	...	0.000	1.000
Marriage2	0.770	...	0.000	1.000
Marriage3	0.073	...	0.000	1.000
Education	4.091	0.923		
Contact	3.120	0.607	3.000	12.000
Income				
Income1	0.323	...	0.000	1.000
Income2	0.444	...	0.000	1.000
Income3	0.233	...	0.000	1.000

control variables and independent variables used in the logistic regression analysis are presented in Table 4.

Regarding age, the respondents' ages ranged from 19 to 74 years, with an average age of 51.179 years. The variable for male was coded as 1 for male and 0 for female. The variable representing the native residential area was included as a dummy variable, with large cities (*Region1*) as the reference category and small (*Region2*) and medium-sized cities (*Region3*) as the other

categories. Marital status was also represented as a dummy variable, with unmarried as the reference category (*Marriage1*) and married (*Marriage2*) or other (*Marriage3*) as the other categories. Education level was measured using a variable indicating the highest level of education achieved, ranging from 1 for completion of elementary school to 6 for completion of graduate school (*Education*). In addition, a combined score variable was created by summing three variables that assessed the frequency of participation in activities involving foreign immigrants: multicultural events, volunteer activities, and hobby/cultural/sports clubs (*Contact*). This variable ranged from 3 to 12. This variable provided a measure of overall engagement in activities involving foreign immigrants. The monthly average total household income was also considered, with the reference category set as households with an income below 3 million KRW (*Income1*), compared to households with an income ranging from 3 to 4 million KRW (*Income2*) and households with an income of 5 million KRW or higher (*Income3*).

## Results

The patterns from the data suggest that rights recognition is positively associated with multicultural inclusivity. Specifically, the study found that higher recognition of cultural rights is associated with a higher likelihood of positive multicultural inclusivity. This pattern was consistently observed across all five dependent variables (see Table 5). There was a positive relationship observed between native Koreans' endorsement of recognizing immigrants' cultural rights and their favorable attitudes toward various forms of social integration. In Model 1, a higher level of recognition in granting cultural rights to immigrants was associated with a more positive inclination toward accepting them as workplace colleagues. Similarly, in Model 2, an increased consciousness of the recognition of cultural rights was linked to a positive attitude toward immigrants assuming the position of a workplace supervisor. In Model 3, a heightened recognition of cultural rights corresponded to a greater willingness to befriend immigrants.

In addition, Models 4 and 5 explored attitudes toward students with an immigrant background becoming friends with one's own children and being assigned to the same classroom as one's own children, respectively. These models also revealed a positive association between endorsing the recognition of cultural rights and favorable attitudes toward social integration. The recognition of civic rights had a similar effect in all five

**TABLE 5**  
**LOGISTIC REGRESSIONS EXPLAINING MULTICULTURAL INCLUSIVITY ATTITUDES**

	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3	
	Coef	(SE)	Coef	(SE)	Coef	(SE)
Constant	1.633	(0.036)***	0.030	(0.009)	0.409	(0.409)*
Cultural RR	0.298	(0.035)***	0.336	(0.031)***	0.282	(0.037)***
Civic RR	0.387	(0.004)***	0.434	(0.031)***	0.457	(0.036)***
Age	-0.010	(0.070)*	-0.006	(0.003)	-0.011	(0.004)**
Male	0.003	(0.077)	-0.018	(0.061)	0.058	(0.072)
Region2	-0.560	(0.095)***	-0.058	(0.067)	-0.171	(0.078)*
Region3	-0.280	(0.131)**	0.097	(0.083)	0.200	(0.099)*
Marriage2	-0.011	(0.180)	-0.097	(0.109)	0.055	(0.133)
Marriage3	0.015	(0.048)	-0.100	(0.158)	-0.182	(0.181)
Education	0.012	(0.087)	0.053	(0.042)	0.073	(0.049)
Contact	0.055	(0.379)***	0.116	(0.058)*	0.146	(0.082)
Income2	0.136	(0.106)	-0.057	(0.077)	0.012	(0.089)
Income3	0.249	(0.067)*	0.031	(0.091)	0.153	(0.108)
Pseudo R <sup>2</sup>	0.090		0.100		0.090	
<i>n</i>	4,995		4,995		4,995	

\*p<0.05, \*\*p<0.01, \*\*\*p<0.001.

(Cont'd)

	Model 4		Model 5	
	Coef	(SE)	Coef	(SE)
Constant	1.269	(0.406)**	0.955	(0.400)*
Cultural RR	0.239	(0.039)***	0.232	(0.038)***
Civic RR	0.421	(0.038)***	0.574	(0.038)***
Age	-0.006	(0.004)	-0.003	(0.004)
Male	0.073	(0.078)	0.209	(0.075)**
Region2	-0.019	(0.084)	-0.152	(0.082)
Region3	0.220	(0.106)*	0.027	(0.101)
Marriage2	0.034	(0.144)	-0.098	(0.139)
Marriage3	0.141	(0.201)	-0.024	(0.194)
Education	0.148	(0.052)**	0.145	(0.051)**
Contact	-0.034	(0.067)	0.014	(0.069)
Income2	0.006	(0.097)	0.026	(0.094)
Income3	0.060	(0.117)	0.070	(0.113)
Pseudo R <sup>2</sup>	0.090		0.100	
<i>n</i>	4,995		4,995	

models. A greater acknowledgment of civic rights was associated with a more positive disposition toward immigrants. All these results suggest that the acknowledgment of rights for immigrants plays a significant role in shaping native Koreans' multicultural inclusivity and behaviors related to social integration. The findings highlight the importance of recognizing and respecting immigrants' cultural and civic rights as a means to foster positive attitudes and interactions in diverse social settings, including the workplace, friendships, and educational environments.

Regarding the control variables, age was found to be statistically significant only in Models 1 and 3, with older individuals expressing more negative attitudes toward students with an immigrant background becoming friends with their children. The study found that the size of the city of residence significantly influenced attitudes toward various social interactions with immigrants. In Model 1, individuals residing in medium-sized cities (*Region2*) displayed more negative attitudes toward foreign immigrant coworkers compared to their counterparts living in large cities. Similarly, in Model 3, individuals residing in medium-sized cities exhibited more negative attitudes toward befriending immigrants compared to those in large cities. Factors such as limited exposure to immigrants, lower levels of multicultural interaction, and the preservation of traditional norms and values in medium-sized city settings may contribute to the observed differences in attitudes.

The effects of residing in small cities yielded mixed results (*Region3*). In Model 1, individuals residing in small cities displayed more negative attitudes toward immigrants becoming workplace colleagues compared to those in large cities. However, in Model 3 and Model 4, individuals residing in small cities were more likely to exhibit positive attitudes toward immigrants becoming friends and being assigned to the same classroom as their own children, respectively, compared to those in large cities. These findings emphasize the importance of considering the geographical context and local dynamics when examining attitudes toward foreign immigrant coworkers, as they can vary significantly based on the size and characteristics of the residential area.

In terms of other significant control variables, the frequency of contact with foreigners (*Contact*) showed statistical significance in Models 1 and 2, with higher frequency of participation in activities involving foreign immigrants associated with more favorable attitudes toward accepting immigrants as workplace colleagues and supervisors. Education level emerged as a positive and significant variable in both Model 4 and Model 5, indicating that a higher education level was associated with more positive

attitudes toward having students with an immigrant background assigned to the same classroom as their children and becoming friends with their children.

## Discussion and conclusion

The findings of the current study provide valuable insights into the importance of rights recognition for promoting multicultural inclusivity. The positive relationship observed between rights recognition and attitudes toward immigrants underscores the need for societal and policy-level interventions that prioritize rights recognition as a fundamental aspect of fostering an inclusive and harmonious multicultural society. The unique contribution of this study lies in its adoption of a rights-based approach, which goes beyond the conventional focus on cultural awareness and integration. By exploring the rights-based perspective, the study sheds light on the critical role that recognizing immigrants' fundamental rights plays in promoting social inclusion. This expands the discourse on multicultural inclusivity and proposes specific strategies to enhance rights recognition as a means to foster a more inclusive society.

The practical implications of these findings are particularly relevant for policymakers seeking to promote multicultural inclusivity. The positive association between rights recognition and attitudes toward immigrants indicates that embracing rights-based approaches can positively influence how immigrants are perceived and integrated into society. Therefore, policymakers and practitioners should prioritize the development and implementation of policies that explicitly recognize and protect the rights of immigrants while addressing underlying structural inequalities. Moving beyond superficial cultural awareness, comprehensive policies should be designed to ensure that immigrants' rights are understood and respected. These policies can contribute not only to the well-being and integration of immigrants but also to the overall social fabric of multicultural societies. Such efforts may include educational campaigns, anti-discrimination training, and initiatives aimed at challenging stereotypes and enhancing intercultural understanding among the population.

Engaging in open and inclusive discussions about citizens' recognition of immigrants' rights is vital in fostering greater understanding and empathy. By affirming the multidimensional rights of immigrants, South Korean society can take significant strides toward achieving principles of equality, social

integration, and social cohesion. These endeavors will contribute to the establishment of a more inclusive and harmonious society that upholds the rights and dignity of all individuals, regardless of their immigrant background. Ultimately, by prioritizing rights recognition, societies can create an environment where cultural diversity is celebrated and where all individuals have equal opportunities to thrive and contribute to the betterment of society as a whole.

In addition, the contrasting attitudes observed between small cities and large cities highlight the potential influence of the local context on attitudes toward immigrants in different social settings. Although the size of the city was included as a control variable rather than an independent variable, its potential influence on multicultural inclusivity is noteworthy. Further investigation is warranted to explore the underlying factors that contribute to these differences and their implications for social integration and cultural diversity in varying urban environments. It is also important to note that the measurement of cultural and civic rights recognition in this study relied on existing secondary data, which may have limitations in capturing the full complexity of these recognitions. Future research should employ more nuanced measures that offer a deeper understanding of the intricacies and subtleties inherent in cultural and civic rights recognition, ensuring a more comprehensive assessment of these dimensions. Qualitative research approaches may provide deeper insights into individuals' perceptions and experiences regarding rights recognition and its impact on multicultural inclusivity.

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