
The Elements of Population and Culture in the Identity Construction of Incheon City, South Korea

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Abstract

The inquiry into identity should be made in terms of ‘becoming’ or routes rather than ‘being’ or roots. This is also an inquiry into the process by which a social space is created by an individual and a social group, rather than the process by which they are integrated onto a social space. Based on such (re)conceptualization of identity, the study makes an attempt to examine how a variety of population groups in Incheon City have set up social, cultural and political categories, distinguishable from the other population groups, in the construction of identities.

The majority of migrants from Hwanghae Province settled down in the districts of city, Jung-Gu and Dong-Gu, after the Korean War(1950), and constructed the political identities concerning anti-communism and cultural identities with the preservation of folk culture. Then, they were followed by the migrants from Chungnam Province, in particular coastal areas, whose majority settled down in the districts of city, Dong-Gu and Nam-Gu, in the 1960s and 1970s. Finally, in the 1980s and 1990s, the migrants from Jeonla Province settled down mainly in the districts of city, Bupyeong-Gu, Gyeyang-Gu and Seo-Gu, where industrial zones were developed in large units. Here, they constructed a progressive political identity, distinguishable from the conservative one in the districts around old city.

Keywords: (re)conceptualization of identity, immigrants from Hwanghae, Chungnam and Jeonla Provinces, political and cultural identity

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