

# **Internationalisation of Higher Education in South Korea: Reality, Rhetoric, and Disparity in Academic Culture and Identities**

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## **Abstract**

The central theme of this paper is contradictions: the ways in which official agendas of internationalisation in higher education and academic identity are disturbed by the principles of inclusion and exclusion in the local context of university academic culture. The paper takes the case of South Korea to show how the national policies for the internationalisation of higher education are translated into local cultural practice inside academe. The paper examines specifically (i) what are the ‘positions’ of foreign and female academics in the specific national university context; (ii) how are they constructed by official policies of internationalisation, and (iii) how are they experienced by individuals to form new reflexive identities?

Drawing from biographic notes, the paper offers an illustrative analysis of the *positioned* and *positional* identities of foreign and female academics and the *boundaries* of inclusion and exclusion drawn around their identities. The paper is an exploratory one, aimed at future research agendas for a larger theoretical study on internationally mobile academics in different social contexts.

## **Internationalisation of Higher Education in South Korea: Reality, Rhetoric and Disparity in Academic Culture and Identities<sup>1</sup>**

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### ***Introduction***

The overall purpose of this paper is to examine how the internationalisation of higher education is realised locally. Governments of most OECD member countries have created rationales to internationalise their higher education systems under the pressures set by problems that nearly all OECD countries face. These pressures include increasing the recruitment of international students and scholars, declining funds for teaching, increasing concentration on research and the emphasis on business activity. Their policy agendas are often similar but are linked to specific national targets (Enders, J. & Fulton, O. (eds). 2002; Marginson, S. 2003; Odin, J.K. and Manicas, P. (eds). 2004).

The British government, for instance, set a target in 1999 to have 25 per cent of the global market share of higher education students; and to increase the number of international students studying in the further education sector by 100 per cent by 2005 (PM Speech, 1999). Accordingly, most universities in Britain have developed new strategic plans to increase international student enrolment and enhance their international profiles. British universities are facing increasing demand for places and

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more competition for international students. Extra recruitment of non-EU students has already generated over £1bn for the UK economy (McNulty, B., 2003).<sup>2</sup>

In this paper, the case of South Korea will be taken as an exemplary site where the changing nature of the university and personnel can be critically reviewed against the overall national policies for internationalisation. This paper will first examine official policies for the internationalisation of higher education in South Korea; and second, analyse the local context of the official version of ‘what it means to be a foreign or a female academic’ against historical assumptions about the university.

The central theme of this paper is contradictions: the ways in which official agendas of the internationalisation of universities and academic identity are disturbed by the principles of inclusion and exclusion in university academic culture in South Korea.

The immediate purpose of this paper is to ask questions about the implications of certain kinds of boundaries for academic identities. What are the ‘identities’ of foreign and female academics in a specific national context? How are they constructed by official national policies of internationalisation and how are they experienced by individuals?

The problem which the paper explores can thus be stated as an *illustrative* analysis of the positioned and positional identities of foreign and female academics and the

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<sup>2</sup> In the recent report, *Vision 2020: Forecasting International Student Mobility*, the British Council predicts that by 2010 there will be more international postgraduate than undergraduate students in the UK; overall the global demand for international student places in English speaking destination countries is likely to increase from the current 1 to 2.6 million by 2020 (British Council, 2004).

boundaries of inclusion and exclusion drawn around their identities. This technical vocabulary can be defined.

The concept of *boundaries* is partly drawn from work on collective identities - as explored by Barth (1969) and Jenkins (1996). “Boundaries are permeable, persisting despite the flow of personnel across them, and identity is constructed in transactions which occur at and across the boundary.” (Jenkins, 1996: 24)

The term *positioned* identity is taken to mean an institutionally framed identity. ‘Positioned’ identity is a socially constructed official identification, including nationality, gender, institutional job title and professional knowledge. *Positional* identity is defined as how individuals *see* their position: their personal or reflexive identity.

The distinction between positioned and positional identity invented for and employed in this paper can be compared in principle to the distinction which Jenkins (1996) draws between nominal identity and virtual identity: “The former is the name, and the latter the experience, of an identity, what it means to bear it. It is possible for individuals to share the same nominal identity, and for that to mean very different things to them in practice, to have different consequences for their lives, for them to do it differently.” (Jenkins, R., 1996: 24). However, the vocabulary used here (positioned and positional) is preferred, not least because persons are currently and increasingly being positioned by official internationalisation policies.

To identify this theme in relation to foreign and female academics, biography will be used. The paper attempts to understand the private in public terms, the intersection of biography with history and social structures (C. Wright Mills (1959) *The Sociological*

*Imagination*, London: Oxford U.P.):

“neither the life of an individual nor the history of a society can be understood without understanding both. Yet men do not usually define the troubles they endure in terms of historical change and institutional contradiction. ... The sociological imagination enables its possessor to understand the larger historical scene in terms of its meaning for the inner life and the external career of a variety of individuals” (Mill, C.W. 1959:3-10).

For university academics, both positioned and positional identities were initially constructed by the fact that universities have developed as *national* institutions, despite the theme of ‘universalisation’ in their history (Rothblatt, S. 1997). University academics are partly defined by historical assumptions about a particular role and institutional identity, within a national cultural tradition and social structure (Enders, J. 2004; Henkel, M., 2000; Kogan, M. et. al., 2000; Kogan, M. and Hanney, S. 2000; Scott, P., 1998). More and more national universities are eager to become international, vying to increase (global) market competitiveness and prestige beyond the boundaries of national territories. Accordingly, international staff mobility has notably increased in the last decade. Given the emergence of a global higher education market, there is a new breed of mobile academics working in foreign universities.

What are the positioned and positional identities of these mobile academics who cross boundaries? The paper will examine the case of Korea now, in the context of internationalisation.

### ***Internationalisation Policies***

University academics in South Korea have experienced structural and cultural changes in the last decade given the government higher education policy of internationalisation framed by perceptions of globalisation.

The vision of this policy was clear: to upgrade major South Korean universities to the level of a global standard of excellence and solidify South Korea's reputation as one of the region's "knowledge economies" (Kim, T. 2000). The ways to realise this goal included new rules of competition among universities for the available national research funds and a new evaluation system for measuring good academic performance (as this is defined by the government) (Kim, T. 1996; 2000). For instance, in 1999 the government embarked upon the Brain Korea 21 (BK21) project, which was to last for seven years with an investment of US\$ 1.2 billion. The aim was to improve graduate schools at the top universities, strengthen regional institutions and upgrade academic research. The last goal was to be achieved by a benchmarking project that measured local institutions against foreign, mainly Anglo-American, counterparts. The "global standard" specified relied upon the number of international publications and the international ranking of research universities on the basis of internationally published Scientific Citation Indices (SCI). According to the Ministry of Education, BK21 contributed to an increase in the SCI-level publications by Korean academics. The government announced that the Korean ranking has moved up from 17th in 1998 to 14th in 2001. (MOE, Republic of Korea, 2002)

BK21 is currently sponsoring 629 selected research projects conducted by 69 teams (MOE, 2002). There are annual and mid-term evaluations. The emphasis is on building a supportive system for launching international collaboration programmes with leading universities (mainly Anglo-American research universities) as well as merchandizing

research outputs and strengthening industry-university ties.

As a way to enhance the research capacity of academics and to nurture the next generation of R&D manpower, over 70% of BK21 funds are invested in graduate students, post-doctorates, and contract researchers. Through BK21 projects, 34,153 graduate students have so far received financial support for three years; 12,751 graduate students have had short-term study visits to foreign countries; and 510 students have had long-term study visits. For the BK21 projects, 1,933 post-doctoral posts and 1,096 contract professorships have been created (MOE: BK21, 2002).

Simultaneously the government has created a new fund to invite to South Korea 431 distinguished foreign scholars in science and advanced fields of research, and to implant state-of-the-art research and education (MOE, May 17, 2002). Thus, elite universities in South Korea are now in competition to recruit foreign students and scholars, to conduct more lectures in English, and to establish an infrastructure for welcoming foreign students.

However, these contemporary developments themselves are framed by historical forces, which have defined some of the basic parameters of positioned identity. South Korea was strongly influenced by Japanese and American models of the university.

### *The Korean context*

The modern university academic profession in South Korea developed quickly with the expansion of higher education in the second half of the twentieth century, after political

independence from Japan in 1945. The late transition of Korea from agricultural to industrial society was made during the concurrent processes of (post-) colonisation and modernisation, and, as in the case of Japan, industrialisation was led by the government rather than by a self-conscious middle class. In Korea most people identify themselves as middle class - though the ongoing economic restructuring after the economic crisis in 1998 has made a widening gap between the rich and the poor (Kim, T. 2000). During the colonial period (1910-1945), Korean socio-economic and occupational structures were quickly transformed within the Japanese colonial model of modern society.

The embryonic Korean academic profession was therefore being shaped by the Japanese colonial State's control over the meritocratic principle in education, which was fundamentally defined by nationality. For instance, the professorships in Kyung Sung Imperial University were open only to Japanese. Accordingly, the private sector of higher education was the alternative favoured by the Korean academic candidates for a professional career.

The American influence was also significant: the US model of higher education in the private sector was the major academic route open for a national (and nationalistic) Korean elite to enter the academic profession (Kim, T. 2001; Joung, S. E. 2002; Son, I. S. 1971).

As a colony, Korea experienced a process of cultural importation and adaptation of Japanese and Western (mainly American and German) academic models. Thus, the first generation of modern university academics in Korea lived in a doubly-divided culture. In academe, there were different channels for absorbing Western knowledge and culture in the Japanese imperial university, and in the nationalist private institutions of higher

education, some of which (as indicated) were established by and directly linked to the US missionary organisations.

Thus the dual history of Korean higher education originated from the Japanese colonial education system. The first generation of the university academic profession in the public sector was mainly Japanese whereas in the private sector the academic profession was dominated by the foreign educated – including Western expatriates as well as Korean nationals. As argued in Kim, T. (2001), the changing composition of the academic profession itself shows the dramatic compressions of South Korean nation-building.

Overall, then, the cultural context of the modern, colonised, academic identity of the first generation of Korean university academics can be understood on three dimensions: first, the continuity of the Confucian tradition ensures high social respect for scholars in Korea; second, Japanese colonialism produced anti-colonial and nationalist attitudes; and third, the colonial route to promotion for Koreans was through teacher training and vocational/technical education - rather than liberal higher education.

These characteristics are still visible as Japanese colonial residues in contemporary South Korean academic culture.

Given the old colonial legacy of training, and the government's selective promotion of technological skills and manufacturing industry from the 1950s, and the rapid expansion of higher education institutions, university academics in South Korea are notably technocratic. Many of them were the first generation of university-educated persons in their families. However, the strong tradition of the Confucian scholar mandarin in South

Korea has guaranteed high social status. Contemporary university academics are a privileged class in South Korea (Kim, T. 2001: 146-154; 177-182).

The old legacy of Japanese modernisation strategy, often identified with the slogan 'Eastern spirit, Western science', has also survived in the South Korean university academic culture and institutional identity. Despite the significant number of Korean academics with foreign PhDs, which far surpasses the number of local doctorates in major universities in South Korea, there are not many bi-cultural (let alone multi-cultural) South Korean university academics.

According to the Korean Council for University Education (KCUE), the proportion of doctorates in the university academic profession in Korea is 82.9% and about 40% of them gained PhDs overseas (KCUE, 2000). However, more than two thirds of the PhDs were obtained in the USA. In the case of Pohang University of Science and Technology, 93.3% of the academic staff took PhDs in the USA and in the case of Yonsei University, the proportion of American doctorates is 81% and in Seogang and Ewha Women's University, it is estimated at 81.3% and 80.2% respectively (*Joongang Ilbo*, 2002, November 15). Among the newly appointed Korean university academics in 1999, the percentage of those with overseas PhDs was estimated at 52.2%; and the proportion of American PhDs in the group was 70.5% (KCUE, 2000). Overall, the pattern of male academics with American PhDs has been the tradition of the Korean university.

On the whole, there is considerable evidence to indicate that the Korean academic profession is already 'internationalised' in terms of the overseas academic experience of its members. Current internationalisation policies include efforts to recruit more overseas (students and) academics into the Korean university.

Here, however, it may be asked whether the academic culture of Korean universities is open: inclusive enough to accept overseas scholars not just as visitors but as members of the university faculty? To put the same point another way: there is evidence that the *positioned* identity of many Korean academics is internationalised on the criterion of their overseas-based doctorates. However, does the culture of Korean universities provide a welcome for the *positional* identities of overseas scholars, even if the official policies of the Korean government would welcome such ‘positioned’ overseas academics? One area of sensitivity, then, for evidence on these questions is the situation of foreign academics in Korea.

Despite the official emphasis, for more than a decade, on internationalising higher education, culturally the internal sociology of the contemporary university in South Korea is still very local in practice. It draws on Confucian patriarchal relationships and principles. The culture has not shifted to embrace the consequences of internationalisation and entrepreneurialisation policies. Regardless of the international experiences of Korean university academics studying abroad, especially in the USA, not many of them actually gained intercultural identities, as they crossed international boundaries. Some of them, after returning home to take up a tenured academic post in South Korea, often become even more Korean – nationalistic and local minded, focusing on local institutional politics. The overall character of university academic culture is homogeneously Korean. Accordingly it can be suggested that the foreign academics working in South Korean universities are likely to be in a disadvantageous minority position and culturally segregated, a theme which is explored in the next section.

### *Foreigners in Korean Academe*

The number of foreign academics working in Korean universities is still fairly insignificant. There were about 1,211 foreign academics in the university sector as of August 2001, which is equivalent to 2.9% of all university academics in South Korea. Among them 49.6% were American, 16.1% Canadian, and 9.7% Japanese. The foreign academics working in South Korean universities are paid the local university stipend (20,000 US dollars - in the public sector), and most of them have been working on a contract basis, mainly teaching in language departments (*Daehack Sisa*, 2003, April 7).

However, the new official policy of internationalisation of Korean universities has established specific rules and conditions especially for elite universities such as Seoul National University, Yonsei University, Ewha University, Korea University, KAIST(Korea Advanced Institute of Science and Technology), PosTech(Pohang University of Science and Technology). For instance, university courses offered in English will be increased by 30%, and the number of foreign and international students and scholars will also be increased ([www.moe.go.kr](http://www.moe.go.kr)).

Nevertheless, there is still a wide gap between policy aspiration and institutional implementation even among the best universities in South Korea. Yonsei University - the best and the oldest private university in Korea - has only seven full-time foreign academics among 1345 academic staff members, despite its public reputation as the most internationalised university in South Korea. Korea University - one of the elite private universities in South Korea - has none as of 2003, despite its ambitious target to recruit 300 foreign academics by 2005 (*ibid*).

Seoul National University - the most prestigious national university in South Korea - has just one full-time foreign academic. Overall, the total number of foreign academics and international students at SNU was 28 and 660 respectively, in 2001 ([www.snu.ac.kr/international/foreigner/foreigner\\_01.php](http://www.snu.ac.kr/international/foreigner/foreigner_01.php)). There are also the possible effects of the government's new quota system and very simple criteria for academic staffing: one-third of new faculty hired have to have degrees from outside SNU and new faculty need to have two articles published in the past year to be considered for employment. For example, those who are publishing books rather than journal articles would be disadvantaged. Similarly, a candidate who might have made a major contribution to his/her field three years earlier might not be considered. This problem was also indicated by the international panel on Educational Excellence organized by the South Korean government. This was composed of invited prominent international university academic managers mostly from the USA and the UK: Under the new government's guidelines for academic staffing, scholars like "Daniel McFadden, a Nobel laureate in economics who had one article in print when he was granted tenure three years after arriving at Berkeley, would not be eligible to teach at SNU." (SNU, 2001: 22).

However, the main difficulty in attracting world-class scholars is the relatively low salaries offered by SNU, which are 10 per cent to 30 per cent lower than other public and private universities in South Korea. Overall, in terms of its staff profile, SNU is not yet an international university, even though it is undoubtedly prestigious in South Korea.

At the policy level, the government announced in 2002 a new major strategy for the internationalisation of higher education. It set a target to increase the number of foreign

students and foreign academic staff to 17% in the public sector of higher education, and 30% in all higher education. It was announced that 103 new foreign academics would be paid up to 100,000 US dollars to start working in the thirteen national universities from the autumn of 2002. The so-called “Brain pool” scheme has been implemented as a new incentive to attract foreign academics to South Korea within new fields such as Information Technology and Bio-technology and basic sciences (Kang, H.S., 2002, May 20). Thus it is clear that structural change looks like occurring, following the government’s new steps in internationalization policy. The strong desire for drastic change in internationalization policy was also noticeable in the new appointment of Professor Robert Laughlin, the American Nobel Prize laureate in Physics in 1998, to the presidency of State-run Korea Advanced Institute of Science and Technology (KAIST) in May 2004.<sup>3</sup> KAIST has become the first state-funded university in Korea to be headed by a foreigner. The appointment signalled a change for internationalisation from within university governance and management.

However, there remains the question of the culture of the Korean university and the possibility of a contradiction between official policy assumptions and the realities of internationalisation on campus. There is anecdotal testimony by foreigners to illustrate this contradiction - and the anecdotal evidence is enough to suggest the need for systematic research.

For instance, a French (male) professor who has been in a private Korean university for more than 20 years is still working on short-term contract(s) as of 2001. (In fact he understood that he cannot be tenured - officially because of his foreign nationality.) In

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<sup>3</sup> Prof. Laughlin had applied independently to the KAIST presidency, along with four other (Korean) candidates. (*The Korea Times*, 28 May 2004)

private life he is well assimilated into the Korean culture and has a Korean wife. In public life, he never feels fully accepted by Korean society, despite having lived and worked for a long time in Korean higher education. Despite his long service and his fluent Korean, he has never been able to attend the Faculty meeting, allegedly due to his non-Korean ethnicity and nationality. On the other hand, his junior Korean-American colleague in the same faculty was invited to attend the Faculty meeting. The French academic sees the reason for this exceptionalism as 'Korean ethnicity', which is the most important attribute marking the boundaries of inclusion and exclusion in the Korean university faculty.

Two American (male and female) professors, both working in a major university in Korea for over thirty years, also confirm that the Korean university system does not allow foreign academics to have tenure tracks, nor to enter academic management positions. Foreign academics, especially those in the foreign language departments, are often treated as "functionaries" rather than professionals. In the existing Korean university system, there is no formal route open for foreign academics to develop their professional careers. Foreign academics in Korean universities have been employed on the basis of one or two year contracts. This has led to the de-professionalisation of foreign academics working in the Korean university system.

The American professors say there are two questions often asked of foreign academics in sequence when they are first introduced to their Korean colleagues: one is "when did you come to Korea?" and next, "when are you leaving Korea?" The two American professors have experienced this sequence of questions numerous times during the 60 years of their (joint) service. Overall, they feel there is a strong tendency in Korean society to "control" or "deal with" foreigners regardless of the length of their residence

in Korea.

Obviously these anecdotes indicate that there is a strong cultural closure not to allow foreigners to be a part of Korean society and persistent resistance against foreigners entering the “Korean boundaries”.

This is reminiscent of the boundaries of exclusion established in the Japanese colonial period (Kim, T. 2001). The colonial discriminatory principle of ethnicity in the academic staffing and reward systems has survived in the contemporary post-colonial Korean academic culture. The boundaries are often articulated with a vivid sense of exclusive Korean nationhood.

Both the French and the American narratives drawn from my interviews suggest that the boundaries of exclusion drawn in Korean academic culture make it unlikely that foreign academics will have equal status, access, participation in faculty meetings and influence on the decision-making process. Culturally, foreign academics working in Korean universities are categorised separately by their racial, ethnic difference rather than by their nationality.

However the anecdotes merely provide hints about what the situation might be – thus highlighting the need for further research on the gaps between the policy discourse of internationalisation and the everyday-life discourses of self/other relations and positioning interactions inside academe. Perhaps there is no cultural space created yet inside the university work environment for a new breed of academics, whose positional identities would not be confined to a particular national academic culture but be open to a intercultural and cosmopolitan domain. They are constantly crossing over academic

cultural boundaries and engaging with new *others*.

The author's own experience also confirms anecdotally another aspect of the Korean context of positioned and positional identity - e. g. what it means to be a female contract professor in the university academic culture. The next section will focus on the female academic position and identity in South Korean university culture.

### ***Women in Korean Academe***

Despite the government's policy to increase the number of female academics in universities, the overall gender profile has remained unchanged. Just 15.6% of the country's academic posts - most of them non-senior positions – are held by women and only about 35% of the country's students are female (Cohen, D., 2002). In 2000, over 20% of Korean doctorates were female, but female academics occupied only 14% of tenured university academic positions. According to the Ministry of Education, 817 out of 1238 national university departments (66%) still have no female academics. In the case of Seoul National University, the proportion of female academics is estimated as only 9.8%, which is lower than the national average (15.3%) (*Hankook Ilbo*, 2004, October 13). Exceptionally, Ewha Women's University in South Korea – the oldest and largest women's university in the world – boasts a high proportion of female faculty at 54%; though most of these female academic staff have undergraduate degrees from Ewha. (*Monthly Chosun*, 2000, April).

Overall, female academics in South Korea are positioned as a minority not only in numbers but also in institutional status and decision-making power. This is not so

unusual; but it leaves positional academic identity unexplored. We know already - from the USA where gender sensitivity in work placement is much higher than South Korea - that female academics complain of their positional identity, saying they continue to suffer discrimination, and feel systematically marginalized (Tuan, M., 1999).

What is the situation in South Korea? Again we do not know, but I would like to refer to anecdotal evidence about the positional identity of one female Korean academic in a male-dominated Korean university faculty culture. She was one of three “female” contract professors in the faculty, who were recruited specifically for a funded research project sponsored by the Korean government. She was marginalized in general terms – like her two other female colleagues in the same job – on the basis of gender and institutional status hierarchy, i.e. as a “female contract professor”. However, her female colleagues were relatively well adjusted to the patriarchal university faculty culture partly because they had graduated from the same university, and the same department. She was the first female staff member with different (national and international) university degrees in the faculty. Above all, she was the youngest in the faculty. Age is still important in defining position within a faculty culture marked by a patriarchal hierarchy. All tenure track academics in the faculty at that time were male with American PhDs, with one exception (and this staff profile has not changed since then). She left the university to transfer to another academic post in a different university before the end of her contract, and both of her female colleagues in the same posts have returned to their previous part-time lecturing posts again in the same university, after the termination of their contracts.

Drawing on this anecdote, it can be construed that the female academics’ professional positions as “contract” professor were casualised - and often subject to internal politics -

and their social positions were marginalised by the male hierarchy in the university.

The culture of work and social environment in the Korean university faculty was like a Confucian family culture in a rural village. The female was treated as if she were an exotic guest visiting the big Confucian family which was the department, by her colleagues both male and female. Overall, what was so normal and natural to them was often unusual and difficult to her - despite her Korean nationality and her familiarity with Korean culture as a whole. She thinks her different (foreign) educational qualification further contributed to her positional identity as separate from the others in the university faculty.

The paper suggests in this short sketch that while her positioned identity was contingent in the faculty culture, given the conditions of “contract”, the positional female academic identity was being constructed in between the boundaries of inclusion and exclusion of the Confucian and post-colonial academic culture.

What thus is open for exploration (regardless of the official advocacy of internationalisation and gender balance) is whether the Korean academic group culture is still strongly traditional, Confucian, patriarchal and parochial, rather than internationalised.

If this traditional Korean cultural code is still strong, it is likely to cancel official projects for internationalisation.

The internationalisation policy in South Korea was implemented in the general expectation that increasing the number of foreign academic staff would help to increase

the standard of Korean universities to the level of international quality and eventually increase Korean economic competitiveness in the world. However, there was no discussion in the official proposals about the internal sociology and the cultural assumptions of Korean academic departments. There was no strategic thinking about daily practices, which involve intercultural personnel.

South Korea is meeting a new challenge now. The internationalisation and globalisation of higher education can be tackled only by a new understanding of what is missing from the economic imperatives of globalisation. It is important and urgent now to build intercultural wisdom and understand similarities in differences, accepting differences and understanding “the others” as a part of our interconnected world. The internationalisation of higher education as a national project should have this norm at its centre rather than concepts of an economic market.

There are more mobile international professionals now across the globe. More and more academics work internationally with two or more bases beyond national borders. More and more people are ‘positioned’ transnationally, given their mobile work spaces created in between/across national cultures. (This pattern is increasingly common especially in Europe.) And more and more academics may be experiencing the strains of newly constructed international/transnational ‘positional’ identity, either by being ‘exoticised’ by local colleagues or by being excluded or marginalised in particular local/national settings.

### ***Conclusions and Future Agendas***

This paper has tried to open up the themes of “positioned” and “positional” academic identity in the university with examples of foreign and female academics in South Korea. The sketch was aimed at showing a possible gap between the official level of university policy assumptions and the quotidian cultural practices of universities.

As indicated earlier, the government even set a very specific target to increase the number of foreign academics to 30 % of the total number of university staff in South Korea by 2005. However, when foreign academics join the local universities, they are subject to the legal bureaucratic rules of the hosting country: this gives them a *positioned* identity. They are also subject to different cultural rules. That is, national cultural boundaries of inclusion and exclusion are drawn in daily professional life within the hosting country. These cultural practices produce *positional* identities in the day-to-day interactions of individuals. In South Korea, in particular, university academics (regardless of nationality) are confronted by strong age rules and gender rules; but in the case of foreign academics, it seems possible that xenophobic classification is being added to the cultural boundaries of inclusion and exclusion.

Clearly such cultural practices are likely to undermine official policies for the ‘modernisation’ of South Korean universities. More precisely, such cultural politics of identity are likely to undermine or contradict official aspirations for university reform.

In a simple sense, more research is needed to establish what in fact is happening inside Korean universities. But there is a more complex sense in which ‘future research’ is needed.

This ‘future research’ needs to be comparative – it is not just a question of assessing the

facts of the Korean situation with some ethnographic and detailed illustrations. The problem is an international one. The problem specification needs to articulate a structural analysis of university traditions, cultural analyses of university departments, and ethnographic interpretations of individual experience. This research could be framed by two questions:

What are the contemporary policies of internationalisation (and genderisation) of the academic profession; and what is the gap between the official agenda for internationalisation and the academic culture inside universities in terms of their treatment of internationally mobile (and gendered) individuals (both male and female)?

International mobile academics may be categorized simply as foreigners and identified as outsiders. Local academics may expect foreign colleagues to be temporary visitors. Those who come for the long-term, or even permanent residence, and cross boundaries can be disturbing and are often perceived as dangerous to the local status quo. The long-term resident foreigners would then have to be classified and labelled by the local social rules and orders. However, the positioned and positional identity of those international mobile academics could not be easily classified in the local cultural rules, upon which the social order and cultural predictability of a university and its internal academic relations are based.

The questions are of dramatic contemporary relevance to those internationalised and simultaneously newly internationalising places.

A research agenda, which covers the theme of how the local rules of inclusion and exclusion would interact with the positioned and positional identity formations as

individuals shift countries, can be opened up for:

- Societies of immigration – affirming new inclusion (e.g. the USA, Canada and Australia)
- Societies being reconstructed to the principles of inclusion and exclusion (e.g. the EU); and
- Societies newly internationalised or internationalising in East Asia, such as Singapore, Japan, South Korea, and China.

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