

Trends & Policies in Criminal Justice

No. 009 December 2020

Dr. Jisun Kim

Senior Research Fellow at Korean
Institute of Criminology
(jjsun227@kic.re.kr)

Dr. Gwanghyun Rah

Assistant Professor at Dong-a University

Dr. Hyeonseok Jang

Professor at Kyonggi University

Dr. Hyeonho Park

Professor at Yong In University

Dr. Younghee Cho

Associate Research Fellow at Migration
Research & Training Centre

Dr. Youngtae Jeong

Associate Professor at Inha University

Dr. Kyungmi Kim

Senior Researcher at Sogang University

Measures for Strengthening the Efficacy of Criminal Justice Policy for Public Safety (IV): Safety Condition and Policy Issues in Foreign Population-concentrated Areas

Introduction

As of 2018, the number of foreign residents in Korea is about 2.37 million, accounting for 4.57% of the total population. Immigration of foreigners is emerging as a population policy to provide an alternative to the solution to the problems of shortage of labor and a decrease in population due to aging and low birthrates, therefore the proportion of foreign residents is expected to increase in the future. Meanwhile, foreign residents exhibit a strong tendency to reside densely in certain areas, and the areas heavily populated with foreigners are expanding and becoming more visible in line with their increase and their tendency towards settlement.

In general, the formation of the areas heavily populated with foreigners has several advantages: Providing places for information exchange for immigrants and services that help them settle, promoting cultural diversity in the entire society by maintaining and developing cultural characteristics of each ethnic group, and forcing revitalization of underdeveloped areas' economy. In the long term, however, the formation also has several disadvantages: Narrowing immigrants' sphere of living, disconnection with the mainstream society and subsequent creation of an obstacle to their adaptation to society, lowering satisfaction with housing among Koreans due to influx of low-income foreigners, provoking anxiety over safety, causing conflict between Koreans and foreign immigrants as the areas could develop into slums and the image of the areas could be tarnished among the public.

- European countries accepted short-term foreign workers due to shortage of labor after Second World War. Most of the areas heavily populated with foreigners developed into slums and consequently, European countries are experiencing numerous social problems that could affect the society, such as crime, disorder, sanitation issues, discrimination against foreign workers' children, reproduction of poverty, and racial conflict. These problems make disadvantages of immigration particularly noticeable. Accordingly, the European government is treating the areas heavily populated with foreigners (racial minorities) as the most important target for multicultural policies.

South Korea's multicultural policies have experienced rapid development and extension since 2006, but have paid relatively less attention to the areas heavily populated with foreigners. Amid such policy indifference, the areas heavily populated with foreigners have become more sophisticated and expanded. And the areas heavily populated with foreigners, especially Korean-Chinese, are negatively labeled as crime-ridden or dangerous areas by the public after the murder by Wú Yuánchūn and theatrical release of two Korean movies, "Midnight Runners" and "The Outlaws". Such perception among the public is causing psychological and cultural ghettoization of the areas heavily populated with foreigners, which is likely to result in physical and socio-economic ghettoization of the areas. In addition, the negative perception of the crime committed by foreigners and the security issues of the areas heavily populated with foreigners has been found out to be a major factor behind anti-multicultural sentiment spreading recently and therefore needs special attention.

In this context, this study was carried out to review the actual condition and issues concerning the crime and safety of the areas heavily populated with foreigners and to draw up relevant policy agendas including the actual condition and trend of the areas, level of vulnerability to crime of the areas, the actual condition and characteristics of the crime committed in the areas and the damage incurred by the crime, the level of perceived safety and crime prevention activities among Korean and foreign residents in the areas, the actual condition of safety policies and their problems in the areas, the demand for safety policies from Korean and foreign residents in the areas, and the major immigrant destinations' policies on the areas.

Research Methods

Literature review

- Review of domestic and foreign literature on relationship between increase in immigrants and concentrated residence of foreigners and number of crime committed, damages incurred by crime, and fear for crime and on the actual condition of domestic and foreign social integration policies and safety policies targeting immigrants

Analyses into official statistics

- Analyses into official statistics of the crime committed by foreigners and committed in the areas heavily populated with foreigners, "Annual Report on Statistics of Foreigners and Immigration" by the Ministry of Justice, and "Statistics on Foreign Residents by the Local Governments" by the Ministry of the Interior and Safety

Survey

- Survey population: Residents aged 19 or older residing in the areas heavily populated with foreigners (eup (town), myeon (township), or dong (neighborhood) where the proportion of foreign residents is 10% or more or the number of foreigners is 5,000 or more)
- Sampling and sample allocation: 20 areas were randomly selected in consideration of the proportion of foreign residents to total residents and the number of total residents and 40 Korean residents and 60 foreign residents were surveyed in the sampling area. As for Korean residents, quota sampling was applied in consideration of their gender, age, and area of residence. In principle, an average of 13 to 14 sample households were surveyed at each census output area, and a total of 60 census output areas were sampled. As for foreign residents, samples were allocated in consideration of the distribution of status of sojourn in eup, myeon, and dong and the distribution of nationality in si (city), gun (country), and gu (district), and the snowball sampling was used.

Focus group interview and individual interview

- For contextual understanding in interpreting the survey results, focus group interviews and individual interviews were carried out in order to identify safety-related issues in the areas heavily populated with foreigners, assessment of safety policies, and suggestions targeting domestic and foreign residents in the areas, people concerned with organizations supporting foreigners not included in the survey, and members of volunteer patrol.
- Four advisory meetings were held with the head of Foreign Affairs Departments at 19 District Police Offices in charge of safety zones for foreign affairs and police officers in charge of CPTED (crime prevention through environmental design) at Public Safety Bureau and ten advisory meetings were held with experts in multicultural issues and researchers of the issues in the academia.

Field survey

- For the purpose of assessing the risk of crime in the areas heavily populated with foreigners while focusing on their physical and spatial environment, five areas where the number of five major crimes committed by foreigners was 50 or more during the past year were sampled out of the 20 areas selected for the survey and the checklists drawn up through environmental criminology, situational crime prevention theory, and review of related prior surveys were used.
- The number of the areas heavily populated with foreigners at si, gun, and gu is increasing every year and residential segregation indexes in Siheung-si (city), Gimpo-si, Danwon-gu of Ansan-si, and Guro-gu of Seoul are 0.5 or more. The number of eup, myeon, and dong where the proportion of foreign residents is 10% or more of the number of foreign residents exceeds 5,000 is 228 and is increasing year by year. The proportion of foreign residents at Wongok-dong of Ansan-si and Daerim-dong of Yeongdeungpo-gu in Seoul is 77.7% and 50.4% respectively and they are the administrative divisions where foreign residents greatly outnumber Korean residents.

Results

Actual condition of the area heavily populated with foreigners

- Foreign workers (E-9 visa) tend to congregate in the hinterland of industrial complexes, international students tend to congregate around university districts, and overseas Koreans (F-4 visa) and Korean-Chinese qualified for working visit visa (H-2 visa) tend to congregate in inexpensive residential areas in densely populated regions such as Seoul and Gyeonggi-do.
- 68% of foreigners aged 15 or older are employed and their labor force participation rate is 71.5%, indicating that most of the foreigners staying in Korea are achievement-oriented and voluntary immigrants who came to Korea for better paying jobs than those in their home countries. Foreign workers, especially those from Southeast Asia, invest a significant amount of money to come to Korea, so the likelihood of their committing crime is extremely low.

Characteristics of foreign residents and the areas heavily populated with foreigners

- The percentage of underage children of foreign residents (11.4%) is increasing year by year and there are a number of the youths with immigration backgrounds that are not captured in statistics. Prior studies have shown that the second generation of immigrants, when faced with problems such as poverty or unemployment, resolves their tension in a far more deviant and criminal way than their parent generation (the first generation of immigrants) who chose to immigrate to pursue a better life and get a job. Therefore, as one of crime prevention measures, it is required to pay attention to the youths with immigration backgrounds socially and make policy interventions for them.
- The proportion of marriage immigrants, naturalized Korean citizens, and children of foreign residents, who are expected to permanently settle in Korea, is increasing and the number of overseas Koreans expected to settle in semi-permanently is also increasing. In addition, due to the change in the government's policy for foreign workers, they are allowed to stay in Korea for nearly 10 years, leading to the overall tendency towards settlement

among foreign residents. The settlement of Korean-Chinese will increase the stability of their lives and housing and strengthen family ties, thereby reducing various risks of crime previously raised by their individual immigration.

- As of 2017, 876,665 Koreans with foreign nationality reside in Korea. The recent increase in foreign residents is driven by the increase of Korean-Chinese, which is the result of the government's various engagement policies towards them. However, Korean-Chinese are still in a blind spot with regard to multicultural and social integration policies and they are receiving a discriminatory treatment compared to Sakhalin Koreans in terms of the policies for overseas Koreans. In addition, not only the general public but also Koreans, especially young women, living in the areas heavily populated with Korean-Chinese regard Korean-Chinese as potential criminals under the influence of various crime reports and popular films. Overseas Koreans' dissatisfaction is very deep due to the discrimination, exclusion, and ignorance they are suffering from in Korea that they regard as their home country.
- Many of the areas heavily populated with foreigners are made up of Korean-Chinese. The areas heavily populated with Korean-Chinese have shown a tendency towards successive immigration waves based on blood ties beyond the bonds between the same ethnic group and, unlike the areas where people from various nationalities mix together, a single ethnic group dominates in such areas. This can be expected to serve as a strong unofficial social control to curb deviation and crime committed by Korean-Chinese. However, Korean residents think that Korean-Chinese have no will to be assimilated into Korea as they are densely populated in an area, enjoy their own food culture, use their own language, which make Korean residents living in the area feel as if they are strangers.
- The areas heavily populated with foreigners usually have frequent moving-in and moving-out of residents and show a higher rate of family dissolution and single-person household than the national average, making it structurally difficult to establish close ties between residents and build collective efficiency. Among the areas heavily populated with foreigners, the denser areas with cheap housing in metropolises need a special policy attention because they are packed with disadvantageous social structural conditions compared to other areas.

Assessment of the level of vulnerability to crime in the areas heavily populated with foreigners

- Social relationship between Korean and foreign residents in the areas heavily populated with foreigners is poor and unequal. In the areas heavily populated with foreigner, Korean and foreign residents feel tension over 'the differences in cultural and life habits', 'communication troubles due to language difference', 'prejudice and discrimination', 'issues related to basic social order such as garbage disposal and noise', and etc. and such tension is heightened in the denser areas with cheap housing in metropolises. Foreign residents in Korea have had active social exchanges with their friends, co-workers, and relatives from the same country and those who have well-established social ties with their acquaintances from the same country are also found out to have active social relationship with Korean neighbors. This suggests that the social ties that foreign residents have with their own people in Korea do not isolate them from the mainstream society.
- Both Korean and foreign residents in the areas heavily populated with foreigners consider their relationship with neighbors and unofficial social control more positively than the residents in the areas not heavily populated with foreigners. The perception of collective efficiency among Korean residents decreases as the proportion of foreign residents increases and the concentrated residence of Korean-Chinese also has a negative effect. The collective threat perception among Korean residents living in the areas heavily populated with foreigners is higher than the national average and that among Korean residents living the areas where 80% of its foreign residents are Korean-Chinese is a lot higher than the average. Foreign residents have various experience of discrimination in their daily and work lives.
- Violation rate of basic social order in the areas heavily populated with foreigners is high among not only foreign residents but also Korean residents and the level of perception of physical and social disorder in the areas heavily populated with foreigners is much higher than that in the areas not heavily populated with foreigners. The higher the proportion of foreign residents, the higher the rate of violation of basic social order, and the residents become more inclined to perceive their neighborhood as physically and socially

disordered. From the perspective of CPTED, crime prevention in the areas heavily populated with foreigners has improved compared to 2012, but poor management has caused some trouble after CPTED projects.

- The arrest index per 100,000 Koreans in total crimes is twice higher than that of foreigners. However, the rate of murder committed by foreigners is twice higher than that by Koreans. The arrests index of foreigners in the jurisdiction of police offices including the safety zones for foreign affairs is slightly higher than that of foreigners nationwide. And the relationship between the proportion of foreign residents and the arrests index of foreigners shows a reversed U-shaped pattern.

Actual situation of the crime committed by foreigners and the crime committed in the areas heavily populated with foreigners

- The number of foreign residents and the proportion of foreign residents are not related to the incidence rate of the five major crimes. However, the incidence rate of the five major crimes decreases as the proportion of marriage immigrants increases and the incidence rate of the five major crimes increases as the proportion of foreign workers increases. In addition, the incidence rate of sexual violence decreases as the proportion of foreign residents increases.
- The result of self-report surveys says that the rate of offense committed by Korean residents living in the areas heavily populated with foreigners is higher than that committed by foreign residents living in the areas and the rate of offense committed by foreign residents living in the areas heavily populated with Korean-Chinese is higher than that committed by Korean residents living in the areas, compared to the areas where people from various nationalities mix together. 48.8% of foreign residents who commit offense target foreigners.

Actual situation of the damages incurred by crime to the residents in the areas heavily populated with foreigners

- The percentage of residents who become the victims of crime in the areas heavily populated with foreigners is 4.95% and the percentage of Korean

residents living in the areas is higher than that of foreign residents. However, when excluding the damage by destruction, the percentage of foreign residents who become the victims of crime is higher than that of Korean residents who become the victims of crime. The percentage in the areas heavily populated with Korean-Chinese is higher than that in the areas where people from various nationalities mix together.

- The reporting rate of property crime is higher than that of violence crime and the reporting rate of Korean residents is higher than that of foreign residents.

Level of perceived safety among the residents in the areas heavily populated with foreigners

- 50.6% of the residents in the areas heavily populated with foreigners answered that their neighborhood is 'safe' from crime while only 13.3% of them answered 'not safe'. When the residents are asked to assess their chance of being the victims of crime in their neighborhood according to specific type of crime, the perception of risk of crime decreases—less than 6% of residents respond that there is a chance of being the victims of crime. As for the general fear of crime measured by the level of safety they feel when walking the neighborhood at night, about 14 out of the 100 residents answer that they are afraid of walking at night. When converted into scores, the average is 2.57. When they are asked about the level of fear they feel according to type of crime, the level of fear they feel is lowered and the average of each seven major crime never exceeds 2.2. From the perspective of people not living in the areas heavily populated with foreigners, the areas are considered as crime-ridden areas but the worry and concern about the risk of crime by the residents living in the areas are not great.
- Korean residents living in the areas heavily populated with foreigners perceive that their neighborhood is not safe from crime compared to their foreign counterparts and are more afraid of walking in alleyways at night. In addition, Korean residents have a higher score for the chance of being the victims of all types of crime except for fraud, compared to their foreign counterparts. However, this is only the result of a relative comparison with foreign residents and the proportion of Korean residents who respond that their neighborhoods are safe is higher than the

proportion of those responding that their neighborhoods are not safe. And the proportion of the residents responding that the chance of being the victims of crime in their neighborhoods is high never exceeds 7%. This explains that the worry, concern, and anxiety about crime that Korean residents feel in the areas heavily populated with foreigners are not great.

- The general fear (fear for walking in the neighborhood at night) of Korean residents in the areas heavily populated with foreigners is higher than that of Korean residents nationwide. The fear the Korean residents living in the areas heavily populated with foreigners feel according to the type of crime is higher than that of others. Koreans as well as foreigners think that they are more likely to be the victims of crime committed by foreigners than by Koreans and they are more afraid of being the victims of crime committed by foreigners than by Koreans.
- Even when the factors influencing the perception of the risk of crime are controlled, the variables specific to the areas and related to the increase in the proportion of and concentration of foreigners have an influence on the assessment of the safety of the neighborhood by Korean residents living in the areas heavily populated with foreigners. In addition, among the variables used, the variable that has the greatest influence on the assessment of the safety of the neighborhood by Korean residents living in the areas is the rate of their violation of basic social order.

Actual condition and assessment of safety policies targeting the areas heavily populated with foreigners

- The police, the government, and local governments are providing security and safety services to the level of local communities heavily populated with foreigners and it can be said that the system to deliver the services to them is efficient. However, the police need to be more systematic when cooperating with the Ministry of Justice, the competent government ministry jointly in charge of the issues related to crime and foreigners at the local level. And the “Master Plan for Immigration Policy” and the “Master Plan for Multicultural Family Policy” need to provide the support for the damages incurred by crime not only to migrant women and youths with immigration backgrounds but also to foreigners in general.

- It is suggested that Korean and foreign residents in the areas heavily populated with foreigners have little experience of participating in or using safety-related policies and programs offered by the police, the government and local governments.
- Korean residents demand control-oriented policies such as 'enhanced crackdown on illegal immigrants', 'tighter immigration control over high-risk foreigners', and 'strict response to violation of basic social order such as littering'. And foreign residents demand integration-oriented policies such as 'programs for Koreans to promote their tolerance towards and understanding of multicultural issues'. This shows a gap of perception between Koreans and foreigners.

Policy Recommendations

Budget support through enactment of a special support act for the areas heavily populated with foreigners

- A special support act—that carries out surveys into actual condition of foreign residents and establishes plans to support them according to survey results, regulates installation and operation of supporting facilities to improve foreign residents' settlement conditions, establishes police stations or branch offices in charge of foreign residents, and specifies the organizations, administrative personnel, and budget support in accordance with relevant acts including the Local Subsidy Act and the Local Autonomy Act when special administrative and financial demands for the areas heavily populated with foreigners are put forward—needs to be enacted.

Connection between Urban Renewal New Deal projects and management projects for the areas heavily populated with foreigners

- What is needed is to focus on the methods by which the residents living in the areas heavily populated with foreigners can lead daily lives as independent residents and by which they can improve their quality of life by promoting the management of the areas as part of social integration policies or projecting the goal of social integration into urban policies. To this end, the proportion of foreign residents is included in

housing regeneration projects so that the areas heavily populated with foreigners can be selected as the subjects of housing regeneration projects, which is part of the Urban Renewal New Deal projects.

Enhancement of social integration in the areas heavily populated with foreigners

- Local governments provide various opportunities for mutual cooperation and exchanges between Korean and foreign residents, provide administrative support so that such exchanges can be sustained (e.g. Multicultural Neighborhood Community Projects promoted by the Seoul government), and encourage the public to participate in the projects that Korean and foreigner residents can get together by providing the budget for the project selected.
- Methods for providing the education on reinforcing mutual understanding between residents in the areas heavily populated with foreigners and for encouraging Korean residents living in the area for which the education is not provided to receive the education more enthusiastically should be made. And the system where the conflict between Korean and foreign residents living in the areas can be resolved and, during the resolution process, specially trained multicultural mediators or mediators with immigration backgrounds can participate to give them a chance to understand each other should be in operation.

Methods to prevent disorder and crime in the areas heavily populated with foreigners

- After CPTED projects, relevant budget has to be allocated for the maintenance of existing facilities from the stage where project budgets are planned. In order to reduce the confusion and inefficiency caused by implementation of CPTED by various project entities, enactment of the Framework Act on Crime Prevention (tentative name) is needed and, with the act enacted, consistence and systematical implementation of CPTED should be done under a comprehensive master plan.
- International students and overseas Koreans (F-4 visa) should be required to receive mandatory education programs for helping early adaptation of foreigners, making them receive

compulsory education on basic social order. And the Visiting Class in Crime Prevention offered by the police should be held at more places where many foreigners gather, such as foreign workers' workplaces and multicultural centers.

- Providing the spaces for leisure and rest in the areas heavily populated with foreigners
- Conducting systematic surveys into actual condition of the youths with immigration backgrounds, especially those who enter Korean when they are school aged, and finding methods to support them
- Increasing police officers in charge of foreign affairs and increasing the budget for foreign affairs
- Enhancing the promotion of the system to support the crime victims of foreign nationality
- Expanding the scope of disclosure of the statistics on the crime committed by foreigners and the statistical items to be collected

Expected Effects of the Policies

- Contributing to the preparation of customized safety policies by providing basic data on the difference between actual condition of crime and the factors behind vulnerability to crime
- Proposing policy measures to improve the perceived safety among the residents in the areas heavily populated with foreigners
- Providing the tools to assess the risk of crime in the areas heavily populated with foreigners
- Alleviating the public's vague fear for and hatred towards the areas heavily populated with foreigners by presenting objective data on the actual condition of crime and the damage incurred by crime

Major Keywords

- Areas heavily populated with foreigners, Crime committed in the areas heavily populated with foreigners, Damage incurred by the crime committed in the areas heavily populated with foreigners, Fear for crime felt by Koreans, Immigrants



Change

Human Behaviors
Community Response
Social System