

Challenges in ‘Intercultural Dialogue’ Among the Non-governmental Organizations for Integrating North Korean Migrants in South Korean Society

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Abstract: For social integration between North and South Korean society, an intercultural approach is necessary for North Korean migrants and South Korean residents. Among various efforts to provide social services, there is needed to restore of relationships between existing South Korean non-governmental organizations (hereafter NGOs) and North Korean migrant organizations. Nevertheless, there has been a lack of research on how to approach them, making it challenging to develop an intercultural approach for NGOs working on social integration. This study focused on the experiences of NGOs involved in providing social services to North Korean migrants to explore the challenges of 'intercultural dialogue' between North Korean migrants and South Korean society. To achieve this, the partnership process between North Korean NGOs and South Korean NGOs was analyzed. An exploratory qualitative design was employed, and personal interviews were conducted with seven participants, including two North Korean migrant managers. The results of the thematic analysis revealed that building trust for partnership was difficult due to the gap between same-ethnic ideology and anti-North Korea ideology in the multicultural context. To diminish practical risks in partnership, the NGOs attempted to cooperate temporarily using their strengths, which were the resources of the South Korean NGOs and service users of the North Korean NGOs. However, due to socio-political constraints, the NGOs primarily concentrated on addressing their weaknesses rather than collaborating. South Korean NGOs made efforts to embrace and respect North Korean culture, fostering equal participation by the migrants as citizens. North Korean NGOs worked on expanding their networks with foreign organizations and securing their economic stability. These results underscore the complexities and significance of not only organizational aspects in partnership but also the socio-political context of partnerships among NGOs in the multicultural service delivery system.

Keywords: Intercultural Dialogue, Multicultural policy, NGO, North Korean Migrant, Partnership

1. Introduction

When there is partnership, there is technically an openness in sharing information, resources, decision-making, responsibility, and accountability[1]. According to [2] about partnerships between culturally diverse groups in Australia, developing the practice of partnership between intercultural organizations is one of the most important strategies to solve complex multicultural issues. Partnerships such as networking, cooperation, coordination and collaboration can drive better quality care and improve outcomes in social services for minority groups in the host society[2]. These intercultural partnerships can also help achieve mutual acceptance and understanding differences, which is the

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fundamental role of 'intercultural dialogue'. In addition, as [3] mentioned, the significance of intercultural dialogue in the EU policy is 'preventing racism, isolation and discrimination against immigrants (p. 87). The partnership between the multicultural organizations can improve cultural sensitivity and promote service integration in the organizational practice.

There are some factors that can facilitate inter-organizational partnerships. [4] suggest the trust, control, and risk typology to analyze partnerships. Based on their framework, [5] stresses the importance of developing trust, diminishing risk and equalizing control in collaboration with an indigenous and non-indigenous social service organization in New Zealand (p. 281). In addition, in realizing working together, [2] argues that there are challenges for reaching an agreement on service delivery goals because of 'inequalities and power differentials between organizations.' Working between multicultural organizations is particularly challenging because power differentials and inequalities between the organizations are more clearly revealed than those between the mainstream organizations.

However, there is hardly any reported partnership working between multicultural organizations, in particular, North Korean migrant organizations and South Korean organizations. Although various NGOs, which are the main service delivery bodies in South Korea, have been involved in resettlement programs for North Korean migrants, there were issues about the fragmentation and duplication of services. Regarding this point, [6] argued that NGOs for North Korean migrants should strengthen solidarity and partnership to support North Korean migrants (p. 225) rather than compete with similar programs.

Therefore, this paper explored the challenges in 'intercultural dialogue' between North Korean migrants and South Korean society by investigating this research question: 'how can the NGOs set up partnership and what are difficulties of partnership working?' To address this question, the partnership process between North Korean NGOs and South Korean NGOs was analyzed. Within the analysis, the trust and risk challenges faced by the NGOs, along with their responses through partnerships, was explored. Furthermore, additional issues related to these challenges within the socio-political context of North Korean migrants in South Korea were highlighted.

2. Background of North Korean Migrants in South Korea

2.1 Status of North Korean Migrants

North Korea's economic difficulties, such as a severe starvation in the mid-1990s, had pushed many people to leave the country. Almost all escaped across the border into China. The North Korean authorities considered them to be 'defectors' and 'offenders' because they had illegally crossed the border. If North Korean defectors were recognized or discovered to have returned to where they came from, they and their family were sent to prison and suffered torture. They were politically persecuted by the North Korean government [7] (p. 76). Therefore, most North Korean defectors decided to re-defect to other countries, including South Korea, if they could. Because they had been informed by middlemen/women or acquaintances that they could have secure status/citizenship and various benefits, including educational support in South Korea, most became determined to go to South Korea[8]. All the North Korean people had the same status as the South Koreans in the South Korean constitution, if the North Koreans wanted to live in South Korea.

2.2 Challenges of North Korean Migrants

Aside from economic difficulties and being labelled as "defectors" and "offenders", North Korean migrants experience some other challenges[7]. In 2020, number of North Korean migrants reached 30,000, of which 70% were women, 30% were aged 30-39, 50% were unemployed, over 52% were

working class, and 70% were educated at secondary school level. By 2022, over 33,000 North Korean defectors had migrated to South Korea[9].

However, [10] reported that it was a real tough life for North Korean migrants in South Korea. Most North Korean migrants had not learnt how to deal with economic difficulties in a capitalist society before. They faced challenges finding jobs, making money for a living, and difficulties learning basic daily skills such as using markets, transportation, and banks. Also, according to a South Korean government report, there were high crime and alcoholism rates and health issues among North Korean migrants. Moreover, the migrants encountered linguistic, cultural, and social difficulties with most South Koreans even though they shared the same language and cultural history. For instance, South and North Korean dialects are different.

[11] argued that the North Korean migrants were less adaptable to South Korea society because they were from a poor, autocratic, patriarchal, and communist country. The common perception of South Korean people was that North Korean migrants were less skilled, less competitive, and less healthy in the labor market. Thus, it was more difficult for the migrants to get proper jobs in South Korea. Because of this perception by the South Korean society, many migrants depend on social security benefits from the South Korean government.

Consequently, North Korean migrants, being the newest migrant group in South Korea, have challenged the South Korean society as 'a significant minority group'[12] and have been the special target group of policymakers and the helping professions in South Korea.

2.3 Governmental Approach and Benefits

The support system for North Korean migrants since the 1960s has been changed by the ideologically-based political context. North Korean migrants have been considered as having various statuses in South Korea, such as the heroes, the veterans, and the vulnerable. These days, they have become the symbol of unification but also the less healthy citizens[13].

Based on 'the Protection and Settlement Support of Residents Escaping from North Korea Act' in 1997, establishing independence and a self-supportive system for North Korean migrants to settle as 'healthy citizens' in South Korea has been emphasized[14]. Particularly, the policy has focused on building the capacity of the migrants to work in the South Korean labor market. The South Korean government announced that '...giving a job is the best way to help them stand on their feet[9].' For this, the government has improved the system such as providing more subsidies for job seekers, allowing medical benefits, tax credits and financial benefits for job holders, and hiring in the public sector. In addition, there is settlement money (about £ 3,000-20,000 for a single person) and up to 85m² of the size of housing, which is the permanent rental apartment, including adaptation services. However, those benefits have made them 'enjoy a lower-middle-class lifestyle' because most migrants could 'receive only small standard payments' and take a lower level of job[15]. Therefore, the support system for North Korean migrants has focused more on individual adaptation rather than on South Korean society changing.

3. Methods

3.1 Research Design and Subjects

This study adopted an exploratory qualitative research design. A snowball sampling technique was used for participant recruitments due to a hard-to-reach population. Considering appropriateness and sufficiency for data collection, it was attempted to reflect the perspectives of various organizations in the community in a balanced manner. To overcome the limitations of previous research that had focused

on the experiences of local social welfare centers or Hana Centers, this research included managers from North Korea and organizations established and operated by North Korean migrants.

The participants were selected from seven different organizations, including one community center, one governmental organization, three South Korean NGOs and two North Korean migrants' NGOs. Migrant backgrounds were two North Korean migrants and five were South Koreans. Gender differences were three males and four females. They had working experience with North Korean migrants ranging from one to ten years. Seven managers from the various NGOs participated in this study.

3.2 Data Collection and Analysis

As a general service delivery system, particularly in the North Korean migrants' densely populated area, a president of a community center (LCW, male, ten years experienced social worker) participated. Among the South Korean NGOs, there was a vice-president of an alternative school for North Korean migrant children (JMS, female, ten years experienced teacher), a president of a North Korean women's right organization (CYA, female, two years experienced activist), and a manager of radio broadcasting to North Korea (JCN, male, a year experienced manager) were interviewed. The North Korean NGO managers were the CEO of a civil organization for the unification of Korea (KYI, male, five years experienced activist), a manager of a Human Rights organization and a social entrepreneurship company for North Korean migrant women (BEW, female, four years experienced activist). In addition, a manager of the North Korean Refugee Foundation (a public organization) (JEJ, female, nine years experienced social worker), which is managing and funding the NGOs was interviewed. KYI and JCN were themselves from North Korea.

The managers' diverse and complex experiences were collected through one-on-one in-depth interviews with each lasting about 90-120 minutes and the onsite atmosphere was observed through institutional visits. The topic guide for the interview were as follows. 1) general purpose, goals and activities of NGOs supporting North Korean migrants, 2) experience in providing services from NGOs for the social integration of North Korean migrants, 3) Problems in the service delivery process, and 4) problems of relationships between the service organizations. To improve the quality of information, through 'diversification of information', in-depth interviews, observations, collection of documentary data - suspicious and controversial statements were checked to increase their veracity.

This study conducted a thematic analysis to analyze the data. The data analysis process involved summarizing, coding, and searching for keywords and topics within the original materials, which included deep interview transcripts, research notes, and memos. These were summarized, coded, and categorized into topics. The detailed procedures of the data analysis were as follows: 1) categorizing units with similar or matching content and categorizing them into categories, 2) finding relationships between categories through interpretation of the meaning of the notes, 3) looking for differences and commonalities, and 4) finding patterns beyond categories and learning from examples through insight and reasoning described[16] (p. 189).

The research question that was how the NGOs set up partnership and its challenges was addressed in the analysis process while taking into account the balance of conflicting perspectives that exist among voices, especially between South Korean participants and North Korean migrant participants.

3.3 Research Ethics

Prior to conducting the research, ethical approval was obtained from the ethics committee of the institutional research board, to ensure that the study adhered to ethical guidelines and safeguarded against any potential human rights violations involving the research participants. Before the interview, consent forms were obtained from all participants, and the research process was fully explained.

Confidentiality among participants was prioritized, ensuring that the identity of research participants was not disclosed to others and thereby safeguarding their privacy and anonymity.

Additionally, throughout the analysis process, the researcher tried to understand the research participants without bias and continually reflected on the attitudes. To ensure the consistency between the analysis results and the original data, through a 'peer debriefing session', the research community and research participants confirmed the research results and verified the contents.

4. Findings

Many North Korean migrants' organizations and South Korean organizations for working with North Korean migrants have designed and provided various educational and cultural programs. The NGOs are the main service delivery bodies in South Korea. There is the Association of the NGOs for North Korean migrants that provides direct services to support settlement, various programs for problem solving, support for children, youth and women, education and scholarship, and religious support.

4.1 The NGO's General Aims and Activities

The aims, objectives, and activities of the NGOs from interviews were mainly divided into three parts: economic independence, community awareness and changing policy. [Table 1] shows the aims and major activities of the NGOs.

[Table 1] Aims and Major Activities of the NGOs (from interviews)

Aims	Objectives	Major Activities
Economic Independence	Personal development	Adaptation programs, Job training
	Self empowerment	Emotional support, Legal advice
Community Awareness	Making relationships	Mentoring, Volunteering
	Changing public perception	Community events, Campaigns
Policy Changing	Developing policy	Advocacy
	Transnational actions	Rallies, Seminars, Broadcasting

For the economic independence of North Korean migrants, the NGOs had objectives, such as personal development and self-empowerment. They provided mainly adaptation programs about South Korean norms or behavior, accents (language), emotional support, legal advice about their identity, and their rights and responsibilities as North Korean migrants. In addition, job training, such as special skills and computer training and job seeking programs were provided.

For increasing community awareness, the NGOs had objectives, such as making good relationships between migrants and South Koreans and changing the public perception of North Korean migrants. They provided not only mentoring and volunteering programs in which the migrants could meet and learn from individual South Koreans, but also community events and campaigns which could share North Korean food or the difficulties of North Korean migrants in South Korea.

Lastly, for changing policy for the migrants, the NGOs had objectives, such as developing the policy and transnational actions. They advocated the policy for developing community based services and an alternative education system for North Korean migrants. In addition, they, usually North Korean NGOs, worked for North Korean Human Rights in North Korea through rallies, seminars and broadcasting.

However, most of the NGOs' activities have been for economic independence through personal development. According to [17], the NGOs' services should be expanded more to improve the public's awareness and develop structural changes in society (p. 120) rather than to continue with adaptation programs because public prejudice and discrimination were the main cause of difficulties in North

Korean adaptation in South Korea. Although various NGOs have been involved in resettlement programs for North Korean migrants, the efforts of those programs are hardly coordinated and are provided separately due to the characteristics of these organizations. In addition, the effectiveness and efficiency of the programs have rarely been evaluated. As a result, the sustainability of these NGOs' services could not be guaranteed but mostly be questioned by the government, the public, and the service users. As a consequence, there were issues about the fragmentation and duplication of services. Regarding this point, [6] argued that NGOs for North Korean migrants should strengthen solidarity and partnership to support North Korean migrants (p. 225) rather than compete with similar programs.

4.2 Context to the NGOs' Services

The National security system could control and monitor the activities of NGOs and manipulate these as a tool for political decision. In particular, the collaborating activities could always be more sensitive in the political situation between North Korea and South Korea.

Since being a communist in South Korea is illegal by National Security Law (NSL)[9], this perception which was based on the legal environment made the NGOs difficult to build partnership working with NGOs and community. CYA explained that,

If we are coming closer to North Korean migrants, it is interpreted and recognized that we have a strong political tinge (activities) among South Koreans. That was because we were still in truce and in a divided situation between the two Koreas. North Korea was regarded as the enemy of South Korea in reality.

The other perception was about multicultural attitude in South Korea. The North Korean migrants were not regarded as foreigners so they could be excluded in the multicultural policy and services in South Korea. LCW mentioned that South Korean attitude towards multiculturalism was differently applied to North Korean migrants.

The attitude of South Koreans towards North Korean migrants was a more of a feeling pity and sympathy. It was compared with a negative feeling towards foreign workers from East Asia. With the presupposition of a same ethnic-same nationality, the South Korean society had an obligation to support North Korean migrants normally.

This attitude might assume that the cultural differences between the two Koreas might not be accepted. If differences existed, South Korean people asked North Korean migrants to learn the South Korean ways. North Korean culture was not respected in South Korea. With regard to North Korean migrants as the same citizens, the South Korean society might expect that North Koreans could have the same (more than similar) behavior and culture as themselves. North Koreans were easily referred as to having inappropriate knowledge and behavior that could not reach the standard of the South Korean society.

On the other hand, since North Korea has focused on the ethnic and national unity of Korea, North Korean migrants expected that the South Korean people would be more friendly and generous towards them, as JCN mentioned.

Sharing the opportunities to get a job, and graduating to enter a college is possible for North Korean migrants. However, South Korean people may think that why they share their turf with strangers. Frankly, it is a turf war. They say that North Korean migrants 'should survive in competition.'

In addition, when North Korean migrants realized that South Korean society did not trust their saying, they felt even more convinced that there was a higher barrier to be accepted by the South Korean society than they expected. For example, KYI, a CEO of North Korean NGO, said in this point that,

The South Korean society believed in the information about North Korea not from us but from other country. So we sent the information about North Korea to other country first, then it could report to South Korea. It was a very strange and absurd situation.

One of the coping strategies of North Korean migrants might involve maintaining a strong sense of rivalry to protect their self-esteem. This arised from their belief in equality between North and South Korea, grounded in the same-ethnic ideology. However, in reality, inequalities existed between them and other multicultural minority groups in South Korea. These instances illustrated how socio-cultural attitudes and expectations could impede greater collaboration between South and North Korean NGOs.

4.3 Stages for the Ngos in the Formation of Partnership

4.3.1 First Stage of Trust: Goodwill Approach

There are regional service coordination boards in each community with over one hundred North Korean migrants. This community board is suggested to establish by 'The Protection and Settlement Support of Residents Escaped from North Korea Act'. The members of the board are governmental organizations, such as the local authority and regional police and related South Korean NGOs, including community centers. However, although 'partnership; cooperation' is emphasized in the service delivery system, little North Korean NGOs were involved in these boards, as mentioned by JEJ, a manager of the North Korean Refugee Foundation.

The reason was that the North Korean NGOs were judged by the South Korean NGOs to have an assertive attitude with strong opinions. CAY, a South Korean president of North Korean migrant women's right organization, observed that the North Korean NGOs did not admit South Korean NGOs as partners in the service delivery system because,

The North Korean NGOs don't understand why the South Korean NGOs can share the budget or services for settlement of North Korean migrants. Since the government does not mention about 'cooperation' between the North and the South Korean organizations officially, the North Korean NGOs look at the South Korean NGOs as the people 'who sell out North Korean migrants for organizational survival'.

Contrary to the South Korean NGOs' perception, the North Korean NGOs explained from their perspective why the relationship was difficult with the South Korean NGOs. KYI, a North Korean CEO of a civil organization for the unification of Korea, said that,

Some of the conservative South Korean organizations give North Korean 'a condescending attitude'. However, they usually have advertised to the public that they help North Korean migrants with every effort.

KYI's comments could be an example to show the challenge in 'goodwill trust' [4] for partnership between the migrants and mainstream NGOs. Due to this condescending attitude, South Korean NGOs were regarded as insincere by North Korean NGOs. In the formation of partnership, the NGOs could not respect the partners' mission for North Korean migrants because of North Korean NGOs' over-assertiveness and South Korean NGOs' insincerity.

4.3.2 Second Stage of Trust: Competency Approach

Another issue was related to their resources and skills in organizational performance[4]. The South Korean NGOs did not have a practical need to cooperate with the North Korean NGOs because not only they already had a strong network in the community, they also presumed that the North Korean NGOs were inferior due to lack of resources and skills. JEJ explained the South Korean NGOs' strength in

performance.

Since North Korean NGOs have not enough performance or competence, some South Korean NGOs have delivered services with know-how and passion for ten years till now. Therefore, when South Korean NGOs were criticized by North Korean NGOs, they expressed their anger and ignorance against the critiques.

On the side of the North Korean NGOs, the performance of the South Korean NGOs was criticized. The North Korean service users may have felt that the South Korean NGOs' programs have not shown the impact but left mistrust. BEW, a South Korean manager of a Human Rights and a social entrepreneurship company for North Korean migrant women, said that,

About the South Korean NGOs' education programs, the migrants replied that they didn't need to be educated. If the South Korean NGOs persuaded them to give jobs, the migrants replied that 'please don't go cheat on me!'

Competence in establishing partnerships revealed tensions between the skills and resources of South Korean NGOs and the needs and satisfaction of service users from North Korean NGOs. This indicates that trust in the 'performance' of the service delivery system may be a significant factor in forming partnerships[5].

4.3.3 Risk of Partnership

Consequently, the two NGO groups might hesitate to take the 'risk' of partnership. To diminish the risk, the governmental organization asked that the South Korean NGOs support the North Korean NGOs to develop their skills. On the other hand, the North Korean NGOs were asked to show their capability through the formation of partnership. JEJ tried to build a network for promoting the South Korean NGOs' responsibility and the North Korean NGOs' accountability, but failed because:

I feel that there is a block between the two NGO groups. The South Korean NGOs have network with the South Korean organizations. They say that they don't have time to take their responsibility to lead the North Korean NGOs which have difficulties and need to be supported. On the other hand, the position of the North Korean NGOs is that although they have difficulties to manage the organization, they do not want to be beneath in the South Korean NGOs. It is uncomfortable to show up their all lines on the work to the count part.

Realizing partnership working between migrants and mainstream NGOs can be challenging. To undertake the risk of partnership without trust, NGOs may require not only sufficient incentives from the government but also a willingness or philosophy aligned with their missions. Given that North and South Korean NGOs have primarily focused on directly delivering services through individual organizations, both of them might have less motivation to collaborate.

4.3.4 Result: Tactical Cooperation

Despite these implicit dynamic challenges for partnership, the two NGO groups just agreed with a 'tactical cooperation'. BEW gave an example. If the South Korean NGOs needed to mobilize North Korean migrants as the service users, partnership with the South Korean NGOs was built in a temporary, opportunistic way. In this cooperation, for example, the role of North Korean NGO could mobilize the migrants to participate in the South Korean services, but the role of South Korean NGO put the North Korean NGOs' name on the board of services. This case showed that partnership could start based on an opportunity between the North and South Korean NGOs without solving the issues on trust and risk of partnership in the formation stage, as [5] mentioned the opportunistic choice. Therefore, this tactical cooperation between the North and South Korean NGOs could show the possibility to improve the trust

between them.

4.4 Reactions of the NGOs

4.4.1 Reaction of the South Korean NGOs: Improvement in Cultural Acceptance of the Society

Although there were socio-political challenges for partnership with North Korean NGOs, some of the South Korean NGOs tried to build a partnership with the North Koreans. As the services for supporting North Korean migrants could be interpreted as an experiment of the future unification of Korea by the government, some NGOs argued that South Korean society should change its attitude towards North Korean migrants to be partners. In their strategies, they intended the community to learn how to look at the situation about North Korean migrants and a divided Korea. They facilitated the people to change their negative stereotypes and find ways to work together in their daily lives. CYA, a president of a South Korean NGO, established the organization to promote collaboration between North Korean migrants and South Korean society. She programmed singing a choir with North and South Korean women. She said,

It was evaluated as a successful model because this was based on the cultural strength of North Korean music. The participants of this choir could accept and respect the singing way of North Korea.

This case showed that although the South Korean NGOs confronted a huge difficulty from the society, they tried to share the meaning of collaboration between North and South Korean people.

4.4.2 Reaction of the North Korean NGOs: Expansion in Partnership with the Other Organizations

The instability of financial conditions facilitated the North Korean NGOs to expand their networks internationally. Since the NGOs just depended on the yearly basis funding system, that used to support only for the programs not for staffing, at this point, the South Korean NGOs could take advantage because they could have more financial stability based on fundraising and membership. Moreover, some of them, such as community centers, could get a budget from the government/local authorities. Thus, the North Korean NGOs felt that there is inequality and became less confident in collaborating with the South Korean NGOs. To solve these issues, some North Korean NGOs tried to find some funds in the other countries/organizations such as the EU and the USA. These days, a lot of funds to the North Korean NGOs came to provide programs for two to three years, including money for staffing to advocate North Korean Human Rights and promote North Korean migrants to be democratic citizens. Therefore, KYI said that

It was more likely to see North Korean NGOs collaborating with some foreign organizations rather than with South Korean NGOs. Even though most North Koreans had difficulty speaking and writing in English, they managed international relationships for the NGOs' transnational actions.

In this partnership experience, the North Korean NGOs could develop their skills and resources so to make them confident to collaborate with South Korean NGOs eventually.

5. Discussion and Conclusions

This study explored the challenges in 'intercultural dialogue' of the partnership process between North Korean NGOs and South Korean NGOs. Exploratory qualitative design was employed with seven participants to gather data and applied thematic analysis was conducted to make meaning out of these data.

5.1 Discussion

In the result, most of the NGOs' activities have been for economic independence through personal development, although public prejudice and discrimination were the major causes of difficulties in North Koreans' adaption in South Korea. These results showed that NGOs should make more efforts to solve the problems of prejudice and discrimination of South Koreans and the lack of opportunity structure in South Korean society for the social integration of North Korean migrants, as claimed by [18]. In this study, as argued by [5], it was difficult to build trust in partnerships between organizations. Organizations blamed the other party's organizations for a lack of resources and skills [4] and a lack of 'performance'[5]. At the same time, organizations made opportunistic choices as claimed by [5]. Until now, the NGOs have looked for indirect solutions due to the socio-political constraint. Building trust for partnership was difficult because of the gap between same-ethnic ideology and anti-North Korea ideology in the multicultural context. To diminish practical risks in partnership, the NGOs attempted to cooperate temporarily using their strengths which were resources of the South Korean NGOs and service users of the North Korean NGOs. However, due to socio-political constraints, NGOs often prioritize addressing their own weaknesses rather than fostering cooperation. South Korean NGOs attempted to embrace and respect North Korean culture while involving migrants as equal citizens. North Korean NGOs sought to expand their networks with foreign organizations and secure their economic situations. These responses to partnership challenges were explained as indirect practices to form partnership working between the North Korean migrant and South Korean NGOs in the future. These findings contributed to understanding the specific contexts that hindered North Korean migrants from participating in community networks. Despite emphasizing inter-organizational cooperation and network establishment [6] for social integration in the community, the specific basis for why inter-organizational cooperation was difficult was understood in terms of inter-organizational relations. In other words, it was confirmed that the inequality of mainstream society and minority groups mentioned in [19] was also an obstacle in cooperation between North Korean migrant organizations and South Korean organizations.

5.2 Conclusions

Based on the findings, it can be inferred that the complexities and significance of not only organizational issues on partnership but also socio-political context of a partnership between NGOs in the multicultural service delivery system. This study empirically showed that to establish mutual cultural relations with North Korean migrant organizations for social integration, it was necessary to overcome double obstacles rather than relations with general migrant organizations.

For future developmental alternatives, first, a training program for partnerships between South Korean NGOs and North Korean NGOs should be developed. To facilitate cooperation among various institutions in the community, it is necessary to recognize the similarities and differences based on equality, and find strategies such as successful coalition activities and a cooperative atmosphere. Second, it is important to provide opportunities for North Korean migrants to develop expertise and engage in work. Creating an organizational culture that promotes cooperation and support will help in establishing partnerships for social integration. Finally, this will enable the provision of a guide to monitor the social integration process of minorities with diverse migration backgrounds and mainstream society, while also exploring practical tasks. However, this study has limitations as it is an exploratory qualitative study involving interviews with a small number of managers from seven organizations. In a follow-up study, the use of quantitative research methods will be necessary to investigate the causal relationship between intercultural partnerships and how these issues affect the social integration of North Korean migrants.

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