

The New Face of Korea

This chapter describes the hegemonic *imagining* of Korea at particular points in the nation's history to dismantle the long-standing myth that Korea is a one-blooded nation. In different historical contexts, ideological apparatuses, including the state and media, mobilized particular modes of discursive articulation of Korea's national identity as either a "monoracial Korea" or a "multiethnic, global Korea." Though notions of racial homogeneity and ethnic purity have been articulated and reinforced throughout the modern era to strengthen the modern nation-state in Korea, the growth of the immigrant population and other newly emerging populations of ethnic Koreans both within and outside Korea challenges the validity of these ideas. Thus, the new terminologies referring to a "multicultural society" and "multicultural families" developed to describe these recent changes indicate a shift in the discursive practice of imagining Korea as a racially homogenous country.

In this chapter, I argue that the rhetorical transformation from a (presumed) monoracial Korea to a multiethnic Korea is as much a *discursive shift* in people's general understanding of what the Korean nation should be as it is a demographic change in Korea's racial/ethnic minority population. As described in the Introduction, Korea's demography has dramatically changed in the past few decades to include multiple ethnic groups and substantial foreign populations. Yet Korea's shift toward multiculturalism is not a straightforward response to demographic change.

Instead, these statistics are mobilized in particular contexts to (re)imagine a new multicultural Korea.

The dominant rhetoric produced by the media, academia, and government about Korea's multiethnic transformation is rooted in a particular formation of neoliberal multiculturalism. In this chapter, I use a "race-nation-media articulation" framework to problematize this rhetoric and to examine the sociohistorical context in which it is produced. I argue that the shift in Korea's imagined national identity from a mono-racial Korea to a multicultural Korea cannot be fully captured without understanding how social categories of race, nation, and media intersect. This framework is especially useful to delineate changes and continuities in the various forms of Korean (ethnic) nationalism that have shaped Korean national identity throughout modern and contemporary Korean history. Whereas previous scholarship in Korean studies focuses on the articulation of either race and nation (e.g., explaining the history of ethnic nationalism; see [Pai 2000](#); [Shin 2006](#)) or media and nation (e.g., arguing that media institutions are an engine for national development and modernization; see [Cho and Park 2011](#); [Han 2011](#); [Lim 2011](#)), it is only by examining the complex articulation of race, nation, and media that we can clearly examine changes in the national imagery of Korea.

Instead of offering a linear historical account of ethnic nationalism in Korea, this chapter works to make sense of the contemporary rhetorical shift from a monoracial to a multicultural national imagery. Specifically, I narrate this shift by examining the social production of different types of mixed-race populations in Korea. I examine how the mixed-race category has been defined and contested over time and how mixed-race people have been treated by the state and represented in media in relation to Korea's changed status in the global cultural economy. By examining the sociohistorical development of the race-nation-media articulation in Korea with an emphasis on social production of the mixed-race category, this chapter describes how the Korean national identity has been imagined differently in contemporary Korea as globalization and multiculturalism have become increasingly prevalent.

(DE)CONSTRUCTING THE MYTH OF MONORACIAL KOREA: AMERASIANS AND STATE RACISM IN POSTWAR KOREA

Scholars have theorized the modern Western nation-state as fundamentally racially configured ([Balibar and Wallerstein 1991](#); [Foucault 2003b](#); [Goldberg 2002](#); [Omi and Winant 1994](#)), but the formation of the modern

racial state in East Asia followed a different path. East Asian countries experienced a different set of historical influences in the past two centuries, including Western imperialism, Japanese colonialism, and American militarism. After Japanese colonialism, Korea experienced a series of national crisis, including the division into two Koreas (1948) and the Korean War (1950–1953). These national crisis ignited a national aspiration to build a strong, modern nation-state and led to rigorous modernization and industrialization. Ethnic nationalism played a critical role in all three of these pivotal moments in Korean history (Chang 2008; Pirie 2008).

Social Production of Amerasians in Postwar Korea

After the Korean War, the issue of mixed-race/blood emerged as a “social problem” for the first time in Korea (Durebang 2003). Though a mixed-race population existed in Korea even before World War II (Nam 2008), it had never before challenged the hegemonic notion of ethnic purity. However, the Korean War produced a large number of mixed-race children and wartime orphans who became highly visible in society. The postwar situation thus produced a particular type of human—mixed-race people—whose difference was inscribed in their blood and on their skin. The term Amerasian was first introduced in this historical moment to describe the increasing mixed-race population in Korea (Durebang 2003). According to previous research, the number of Amerasians grew in the 1950s and 1960s because of the installation of camp towns and the rise of the prostitution industry in the camp town districts (Kim 2009, 39–40).

Under Rhee Sŭngman’s First Republic (1948–1960), the state worked to conceal the existence of the mixed-race population and to minimize any potential social problems they might cause. The government was very positive about sending mixed-race children to the “father’s country,” America, to secure national ethnic purity. According to scholars of transnational Korean adoption such as Eleana Kim (2010) and Kim Park Nelson (2016), many biracial children were adopted by American parents through humanitarian Christian-based American adoption agencies during this period. The overseas adoption policy was backed not only by the Korean government but also by the US government as President Eisenhower amended US immigration law in 1957 to allow the adoption of Amerasian children from Korea.

Rhee’s government also employed practices to maintain a monoracial national identity. The Korean Nationality Act, enacted in 1948, defined

patrilineal descent as the sole determinant of Korean citizenship. To obtain citizenship, mixed-race children with a Korean mother had to be adopted by their maternal family to be officially registered as a family member. But this process was quite difficult; so many mixed-race children remained unregistered. According to statistics from 1959, the total number of mixed-race/blood children was 1,020; among them, only 325 were granted Korean nationality, marking the rest as non-national (Kim 2009, 52). Unregistered children were unable to attend school, but even among registered mixed-race children, few were able to finish their compulsory education for various reasons, including economic poverty, a lack of parental support, or peer bullying and discrimination (Durebang 2003). Given that the schooling system is the place where modern subjectivity is produced and where the dominant ideology is reproduced (Althusser 1971; Foucault 1977), mixed-race people who were left out of school were deprived of the opportunity to become modern subjects.

The Korean Nationality Act of 1948 was not only racialized but also gendered in its enforcement of the Household Registration Law (*hojuje*) that granted Korean nationality by patrilineal descent. The law enforced the notion that a man was the only suitable head of a family, reproducing a patriarchal social structure. As long as patrilineal registration remained the sole source of citizenship, the Korean nation maintained its racial purity through the masculine bloodline. Thus, many Amerasians in postwar Korea remained fatherless not only physically but also legally. In 1980, Korean government policy changed to allow Korean mothers of mixed-race children to register their children, but these women had to leave the father's column blank. This means that even when mixed-race children were legally recognized as Korean, they were still stigmatized as foreigners by their blank column under "father" (Durebang 2003, 20).

The social problem of Amerasians in postwar Korea illustrates a power imbalance where Korea was subordinate to US economic and military power. This power imbalance influenced media and literary representations of Amerasians. Although Rhee's government was attentive to media and cultural policy (Park 2010, 71), mixed-race people as a social issue were largely invisible in the Korean media during the postwar period. This is because Korea's media and broadcasting system was not stabilized enough after the sociopolitical turmoil of the Korean War, and such portrayals would contradict the authoritarian regime's interest in uniting the nation.

In an article describing representations of mixed-race people and the myth of a monoracial Korea in modern Korean novels from the 1950s through to the 1970s, Choi Kang-Min (2006) finds that the social problems Amerasians faced were rarely at the center of the narratives. Rather, Amerasian themes served as a literary device to reveal the tragic status of camp town prostitutes (Choi 2006, 289). He notes that in the 1950s, the mixed-race issue was briefly mentioned only to describe the camp town landscape, and in the 1960s, it was only used metaphorically to describe Korea's inferior status to America (Choi 2006, 310). Furthermore, novelists of this period frequently characterized mixed-race people, whether white or black, as mentally challenged or mute, locating them as unspeakable subjects within Korean history. In this manner, novelists of the time constructed mixed-race bodies as "the abnormal" against which full-blood Koreans are read as "normal" in Foucault's (2003a) sense. Hence, the national literature remained largely silent on issues pertaining to mixed-race people in postwar Korea, and it was only after the 1970s that Korean novelists began to discuss Amerasians in earnest.

In a similar vein, because postwar Korea was under the heavy political and economic influence of America, the Korean government restricted media representations of America. According to Koh Dong-Yeon's (2009) study of the representation of American GIs in postwar Korean cinema, any journalistic reports that harmed the national relationship with allied nations were banned under the Press Act and the National Security Act. Until the 1980s, negative visual representations of American GIs were highly censored by state law because Korea's national security depended on the American army and because the postwar restoration relied on economic aid from the USA (Koh 2009, 152–153).

The first film to represent prostitutes in the American military camp towns in the Korean national cinema was the 1958 film *The Flower in Hell* (*chiok'wa*). This film clearly illustrates the restriction of visual representations of American GIs under the Press Act, which made it impossible to critically portray the unequal relations between the US military and female sex workers (Koh 2009). Even though the film portrayed a Korean female prostitute character as a "fallen woman," as the film title suggests, it never directly related camp town prostitution to the American military invasion or referred to the problems of date violence and rape by American GIs. Instead, only positive images of American popular culture, such as dance parties and pop songs, were

allowed on screen in *The Flower in Hell* (Koh 2009, 153–155). In addition, other films of the time showed few mixed-race people whose fathers were American GIs because such figures would remind Koreans of US postwar imperialism and complicate the power dynamics between the two nation-states. In short, in the postwar period, the social production of Amerasians was considered a national tragedy. Under the state legal regime and in the broader society, mixed-race people experienced physical and symbolic exclusion from the local community and from the nation.

Regulating Amerasians During the Modernization Period

In the postwar period, many citizens felt deeply that the nation was destroyed and must be rebuilt from scratch. In response, the postwar Korean governments quickly launched restoration projects with the imperative of national development and rapid modernization. To build a strong national identity, the postwar Korean governments effectively mobilized the myth of racial purity and superiority while identifying “enemies” and eliminating them from the national imagery.

Many Korean television history scholars agree that regular Korean television broadcasting started with the establishment of the state broadcasting system, KBS, in December 1961 (Cho and Park 2011; Han 2011; Lim 2004, 2011). Earlier that year, Park Chŏnghŭi (1961–1979) established The Third Republic of Korea after a military coup d’état. To gain political legitimacy following the coup, Park’s regime initiated a modernization project to boost the Korean economy and founded the Supreme Council on Media Policy in 1962 (Lim 2004, 2007; Park 2010).

During Park Chŏnghŭi’s nearly two decades of dictatorship, the state mobilized television to quickly modernize the nation (Lim 2004, 2007; Park 2010). The Park regime’s effort to reform the nation is best exemplified by the nationwide development campaign called the New Village Movement (*saemaŭl untong*) initiated in the early 1970s. Heavily influenced by the Japanese postwar restoration campaign, the New Village Movement was a total mobilization of the Korean nation toward national development, with an emphasis on the traditional Korean ethics of frugality and co-operation (Park 2010). To effectively mobilize the nation, the government established a New Village Broadcasting Headquarters (*saemaŭl pangsong ponbu*) in 1972 whose primary purpose was to produce broadcast programs related to the New Village Movement and

to circulate them in every city and rural village (Lim 2011, 120). The government asserted strong statist control over this broadcasting system, requiring all stations to air a 20-minute program from 8:00 p.m. to 8:20 p.m. each evening that aligned with statist social agendas, such as anti-communism, national security, and youth guidance (KBA 1997, 511). Through this initiative, Park installed a communication infrastructure that could effectively govern and mobilize the whole nation.

Capitalizing on the popularity of daily dramas during the 1970s, the state television network-produced “national historical dramas” (*minjok sagwan’gŭk*) that renarrated national history through the daily drama format featuring the life stories of Korean historical figures who overcame hardships (Lim 2007). In (re)discovering and celebrating these important national heroes, the state rewrote national history to highlight Korea’s racial/ethnic purity (Choi 2006). At the same time, few foreign programs were imported during the 1970s because the Park regime strictly prohibited “foreign-originating” (*oerae*) forces such as “vulgar commercialism” as part of its efforts to construct a national culture and spirit (Park 2010, 77). In this way, the broadcasting system under Park’s dictatorship functioned as a powerful ideological state apparatus, to use Althusser’s (1971) terminology, that shaped strong ethnic nationalism.

In the meantime, the statist media apparatus treated communists as “outside enemies” who threatened national security, and marginalized any domestic group that threatened the superiority of Korea’s national identity. The National Security Acts identified communists as the greatest threat to national identity and security and established mechanisms for stigmatizing them, punishing them, and eliminating them from the polity. The KBS was instrumental in propagating the state’s anti-communist ideology and in creating a strong sense of national belonging. Program-wise, one of the most notable television genres of the 1960s was the “purpose-driven genre” (*mokchŏkkŭk*), which incorporated anti-communist narratives into its plots. Specifically, the state television network-produced *True Story Theatre* (*shirhwa kūkchang*; KBS 1964–1985) was one of the most popular television programs running from the 1960s to the 1980s, featuring anti-communist themes.

The Park regime also considered the homeless, the disabled, prostitutes, hippies, and mixed-race people as “internal enemies” whose existence deviated from what most in society considered the “social norm.” Park banned broadcasts portraying hippies in 1971, and in 1975, three national television networks—KBS, TBS, and

MBC—agreed to ban entertainers with long hair because they were seen as symbolizing a rock-and-roll spirit and resistance to the government. During this period, police also had the authority to cut men's hair in the street to control individual freedom (see KBA 1997, 514–515). To fit the social norm, one had to be a useful, diligent, and disciplined citizen who fits the state's modernization project of national economic development. As Park Sang Mi (2010) describes, “Through newspapers, television, fiction, photographs, and film, South Koreans were inundated with a cultural campaign urging them to become useful members of society” (82). Any group that did not fit an ideal model of modern subjectivity was considered “useless” and largely marginalized from Korean society.

Mixed-race people were one of these “useless” groups because they threatened national racial harmony. After the Korean War, all Korean males were required to serve in the military to preserve national security during the state's ongoing ceasefire with the North. However, Park Chŏnghŭi's government excluded mixed-race males from the draft and from voluntary service in 1972 because their racial otherness could disrupt the unity of the Korean army and cause internal conflict. This exclusion clearly reflects the Park regime's belief that mixed-race men were unfit to contribute to building the modern nation-state. Until 2010, mixed-race men were disallowed from service in the Korean army, even those who officially registered with the state and claimed citizenship. Their exclusion further illustrates the influence of the masculine nation-state and the total exclusion of mixed-race people from the modern national project. By preventing mixed-race males from serving as members of the Korean nation, state law simultaneously emasculated these men and reinforced monoracial ethnic nationalism.

Whereas Amerasians in the 1950s after the Korean War were seen as a *social problem* caused by a tragic national history of war, Amerasians in the Park regime were seen as an *individual problem* arising from Korean women's personal choice to enter interracial relationships with American GIs as camp town prostitution became more industrialized and systematic (Durebang 2003, 13). Interracial sex has long been taboo in Korea, placing a heavy social stigma on mixed-race children. Family members were ashamed of their mixed-race relatives and tried to keep them secret to avoid being shunned. Korean women who married American soldiers were seen as “prostitutes” due to the social stigma attaching to female

sex workers in camp towns (Kim 1998). Specifically, Korean sex workers in camp towns were referred to as “Western princesses” (*yanggongju*) or “yanki whores” and stigmatized as “disease carriers” who would destroy Korea’s “superior” ethnic purity through sexual contact with “others” (Westerners) (Moon 1997; Moon 2010).

This gendered social imagination of interracial sex/marriage was also linked to gendered national allegory. In the 1970s and 1980s, the Korean government considered the mixed-race population as proof of its failure to protect Korea as a “pure” nation from the foreign invasion symbolized by the US military camps in the heart of Seoul (see Lee 2008, 74). The flourishing prostitution industry for the US soldiers in particular was viewed as a symbolic site where Korean women’s bodies were conquered and abused by foreign men (Moon 1998). By marrying or having sex with “other men (other nations)” these women were considered to have disregarded “our men (our nation),” harming Korea’s masculine national pride (B. Park 2010). Furthermore, Koreans saw racial mixing and interracial sex as “contagious” and believed that ethnic purity had to be protected through communal efforts (Moon 1997), which isolated mixed-race people even more from society. As such, because of the social surveillance of female sexuality in general and of interracial sex in particular, Amerasians and their Korean mothers faced severe social discrimination and isolation not only systematically but also symbolically and emotionally.

Within this sociocultural context, it is not surprising that racial others and Amerasian issues were not considered serious topics for popular cultural forums, including television, film, and literature. However, one crucial mechanism that brought “Amerasian faces” into Korean popular culture was the development of the Korean popular music industry in camp town amusement districts. Since the 1950s, the US military’s long-term presence in Korea turned the camp town amusement districts into hubs for show business. The camp towns were populated with cafes, bars, nightclubs, and brothels catering to American soldiers. Bars and nightclub owners acted as entertainment managers booking acts for their establishments, and these amusement districts were precursors to Korea’s modern entertainment industry (Lee and Jung 2010). The most successful and popular camp town entertainment district was *Itaewon* near the eighth US Army in *Yongsan* district in Seoul. Scholars show that the eighth US Army in particular was a key site where the infrastructure of

the Korean popular music scene was established (Lee 2007; Lee and Jung 2010). Many underground singers who got their start in *Itaewon* eventually debuted on national television, including some mixed-race entertainers.

As the American GIs were the primary customers in the camp town entertainment district, the nightclub owners in the camp towns sometimes told Amerasian singers to (only) sing American songs to attract American GIs (Choe 2006). The most successful Amerasian singers who got their start in the *Itaewon* during the 1970s and 1980s were Park Ilchun, a black mixed-race man, Insooni, a black mixed-race woman, and Yun Suil, a white mixed-race man. Despite the harsh discrimination against mixed-race people of the time, these mixed-race singers were able to gain fame based at least in part on their exotic appearance. Insooni was famously “discovered” by the renowned manager and producer Han Paekhŭi as she performed as a part-time singer in a club in *Itaewon* because Han was looking for a new and fresh “face” for Korea’s first female band (Shin 2015).

Managers believed that “mixedness” produced popularity for singers like Insooni and Yun Suil, so much so that they persuaded the full-blooded Korean singer Ham Chunga to pretend to be white mixed-race to gain fame in the 1980s. Thus, even in an era where the discourse of racial homogeneity was dominant, biraciality was consumed as a part of popular culture. Yet biracial popularity was still the exception rather than the rule, and it was not without backlash. Even widely popular mixed-race singers faced a harsh social climate during the 1970s and 1980s. Koreans protested about the on-air performances of black mixed-race singers such as Insooni and Park Ilchun because of their dark skin color. These entertainers were put in thick yellow makeup and had their curly hair covered to mitigate Koreans’ repulsion toward black mixed-race individuals (Shim 2006; Sung 2010).

Despite a handful of exceptional Amerasian entertainers, mixed-race people were almost entirely excluded from the national imagery in post-war Korea. The state enacted racism by treating Amerasians as *homo sacer* (sacred life), which Agamben (1998) defines as “a life that cannot be sacrificed and yet may be killed” (82). In other words, they were human beings but not political subjects, so their life or death was not secured by the sovereign power. Because they were not considered (political) citizens, mixed-race people in modern monoracial Korea were erased or rejected by the state law and in the national history.

MAKING SENSE OF THE TRANSFORMATION INTO A MULTICULTURAL GLOBAL KOREA

Ethnic purity was the primary engine driving the ethnic nationalism of the developmental state during the modernization period, but this discourse lost some of its force as neoliberal globalization changed the contemporary political landscape. Postwar Korea's ethnic nationalism did not disappear altogether; rather, it remodeled its politics into multiculturalism as Korea changed the way it imagines and presents itself in relation to the rest of the world.

The year 1987 is pivotal in Korean history. This is the year when the democratization movement abolished consecutive militant authoritarian regimes—Park Chŏnghŭi (1961–1979) and Chŏn Tuhwan (1980–1988)—and brought significant changes to various sectors, including the media and cultural industry. After the collapse of consecutive militant authoritarian regimes, Korea underwent political democratization, economic liberalization, and cultural diversification. Korea also gained global exposure during this period through media/sports events such as the 1986 Asian Games and the 1988 Olympic Games, both held in Seoul. The late 1980s and early 1990s therefore marked a transitional moment for Korea when the nation first enjoyed economic development and cultural amusement under a democratic regime.

Many studies show that economic development was a top priority for the Korean nation during modernization as well as in the contemporary era (Chang et al. 2008; Cho 2008; Kim 2000; Lee 2012; Pirie 2008). State-driven developmentalism is at the core of Korea's (modern) nationalism. The Kim Yŏngsam (1993–1998) administration was the first to implement globalization (*seggyehwa*) as a national policy and to mobilize the globalization discourse to carve out space for Korea in the global economy. In 1996, Korea joined the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), but only a year later, Korea experienced an economic crisis that placed it under the control of the International Monetary Fund (IMF). The IMF system fundamentally restructured the national economy in line with global neoliberalism.

After the national economic crisis of 1997, Korea had to remodel its developmental(ism) ethos by transforming the nation into a neoliberal state (Cho 2008). Succeeding Kim Yŏngsam administration's globalization policy, the subsequent four regimes from Kim Taechung (1998–2003) to Park Kŭnhye (2013–2017),⁹ regardless of their political

party affiliations, pursued globalization to different degrees as a way to upgrade national image and advance the national economy (Kim 2015).¹⁰ As I shall elaborate, contemporary Korean multiculturalism as a neoliberal racial project must be contextualized in this series of state policies/efforts to achieve a “global Korea.”

Throughout this history, the Korean media system has been a primary ideological apparatus shaping the discursive and ideological construction of Korea’s transition from a monoracial to a multicultural national identity. Importantly, the media system also underwent a transition between the postwar era and the contemporary period, changing from a strong statist apparatus to an increasingly liberalized and commercialized one. During the postwar modernization period, the government dominated the broadcasting system and exercised its power to effectively govern the nation. The state’s earnest passion for the modernization project led to the development of a national culture and spirit that eliminated cultural diversity and freedom of expression. In the modernizing Korea of the 1960s through to the 1980s, the state-driven media system was an engine for developing a single national identity through statist racism devoted to racial purity.

Starting in the late 1980s, however, the Korean media experienced democratization, liberalization, and commercialization, which resulted in the era of multichannel and multimedia outlets (Han 2011; Jin 2011; KBS 2011). In accordance with this rapid social change, the Korean nation struggled to search for a new Koreanness suitable to the era of globalization. Television and popular culture are increasingly powerful sites that mediate people’s imagining and practicing of this new Koreanness. Accordingly, the changed nature of the Korean media industry has altered the ways in which global Korea is imagined.

A race-nation-media framework helps capture Korea’s transition into a multicultural and global nation in the contemporary era just as it helped explain the construction of Korea as one-blooded nation in the postwar era. Specifically, I argue that the current version of Korean multiculturalism is a new national racial project that not only produces racialized subjectivities (e.g., the children of multicultural families) but also forges Korea’s transformation into a neoliberal state by mobilizing these (newly produced) subjectivities. Along the same lines, I also view globalization of Korean popular culture, as exemplified by the Korean Wave, as a national cultural program to rebrand Korea as a center of cultural imagination in Asia. My argument is that these two seemingly distinct programs are actually intertwined, and a race-nation-media framework

reveals a much more complex map of state and market coordination in both projects. Thus, my intention is to examine the conjunctures where the state and market collude or collide to produce neoliberal multiculturalism by emphasizing the persistent role of media in articulating state projects even under diffuse and indirect state control.

The Development of Korean Multiculturalism

Academic discussions of Asian multiculturalism are burgeoning due to an increase in global migration (Chang 2000; Chua 1998; Kymlicka and He 2005; Lim 2009). Scholars point out that multiculturalism was adopted in East Asian countries to envision a new national identity that is more inclusive of ethnic minorities (Bélanger et al. 2010; Graburn et al. 2008; Lee 2011; Wang 2004). In particular, Japan, Taiwan, and Korea have long been conceived as among the most racially homogenous countries in the world. Yet recent demographic changes in national ethnoscares initiated discussions of multiculturalism in these countries (see Iwabuchi et al. 2016). Whereas multiculturalism emerged as an anti-racist discourse/practice/movement in the West, the emergence of (East) Asian multiculturalism can be better characterized as a nation-building project that is “a complex form of nationalism, aimed at securing national boundaries in an increasingly borderless world” (Ang 2001, 16).

Korea is among these Asian nations that use multiculturalism as a national project to manage racial/ethnic diversity. The multiculturalism discussion first emerged in the late 1990s as humanitarian civil society built grassroots networks to assist in the social integration of migrant workers. Yet it was only after the mid-2000s that the Korean government officially used the term multiculturalism in relation to national policy under the Noh Muhyŏn administration (2003–2008). As an initial blueprint, the Noh government announced the Plan for Promoting the Social Integration of Migrant Women, Biracial People, and Immigrants in April 2006. The goal of the policy was to integrate Korea’s increasing population of diverse ethnic groups including Korean-Chinese, North Korean defectors, migrant workers, multicultural families, and mixed-race people while also solving the national (labor) crisis caused by the aging population and low birth rate. Simply put, Korea adopted multiculturalism as a mechanism to deal with the increasing population of ethnic others in Korean society through integration.

Ever since the government adopted the term multiculturalism in a national policy document to describe its initiative to develop a “multicultural society” (*tamunhwa sahoe*), the rapid rise of multiculturalism discourse occurred in multiple sectors including local governments, civic organizations, media, and academia. With no doubt, multiculturalism discussions have never been monolithic in Korea. Instead, Korean multiculturalism should be understood as a complex interplay among various actors (e.g., popular media, government, academia, and civil organizations) and vectors (e.g., political orientation and sources of funding).¹¹ Reaching well beyond the state’s policy agenda, multiculturalism has become a *mediated* discourse that is articulated through popular culture and public debate; hence, it may be more accurate to say that there has been a discursive explosion of multiculturalism in Korean society since the mid-2000s.

More specifically, the mainstream Korean press in the mid-to-late 2000s popularly proclaimed that “Korea is becoming a multicultural society.” A look at all published national daily and economic Korean newspaper articles in the database (Korea Integrated News Database System (KINDS)) reveals that the term “multicultural society” was entirely absent until 2001 when I searched it through using the “title only” function in the database. However, the number of newspaper articles that contained the term multicultural society either in the title of the article or in the body increased from 93 in 2005 to 9,649 in 2010.

This media rhetoric was produced, framed, and marketed in particular ways. Statistical data indeed show that diverse ethnic populations are growing in Korea, and numerous newspaper articles use these data to describe Korea’s changing “face” as increasingly multiethnic. These articles feature headlines such as “In the era of 1% foreign population” (*Seoul Newspaper*, December 20, 2005), “One of every eight newly-wed couples are international couples” (*Hankook Ilbo*, April 15, 2007), and “One of every twenty newborn babies are mixed-race/blood” (*Sekye Ilbo*, July 30, 2014). Thus, statistics have become almost idiomatic as a way to describe Korea’s transition into a multicultural society.

This transitional rhetoric, and the government and media’s use of statistics to characterize certain types of populations, follows a particular logic. The rhetorical shift from a monoracial Korea to a multiethnic Korea indicates the media’s construction of “multicultural reality” as a “social fact” through the endless (re)production of statistical data as evidence. Considering that rhetorical change is a discursive practice that formulates a particular subject position (Foucault 1973), the media

discourse on multicultural society directs the normative standards and attitudes toward a (soon to be) multicultural society. In other words, the explosion of multiculturalism discourse shapes a particular image of Korean society (that is global and multiethnic) and prescribes a racialized and hierarchical system of subject positions for all citizens.

In addition, Korean multiculturalism discourse becomes a cultural/political vehicle for renewing Korea's position in the global hierarchy. According to Nora Kim (2015), "multiculturalism in Korea is constructed as a means, indicator, and object of development" (729). In other words, Korea's national aspiration for global influence drives its multiculturalism policy. To meet a "global standard," Korea aspires to achieve social awareness and advancement in global citizenship. Put differently, being a world-class nation/citizen is not just about reaching a certain level of national economic growth as indicated by tangible statistical data such as GNP/GDP but it is also about being equipped with mature civic awareness and social responsibility. In the contemporary global context, the previous discourse of Korean ethnic purity seems outdated as the image of the "global citizen" is increasingly hybridized. Instead of a source of pride, national ethnic purity becomes an obstacle that must be "overcome" for Korea to become a "global" nation. In globalist discourse, cultural diversity and tolerance through multiculturalism are considered national virtues (Jun 2014; Kang 2014).

To consider multiculturalism as a renewed nation-building project in the era of neoliberal globalization, it is particularly useful to examine the content of government-initiated multicultural policies as they currently shape dominant form of multiculturalism discourse in Korea. Since the Noh administration first treated multiculturalism as a state policy, multiculturalism has been practiced in earnest by the two subsequent regimes of Lee Myōngpak and Park Kūnhye. Indeed, multiculturalism was one of the most high-profile governmental policies of both the Lee and Park administrations in the midst of these regimes' rigorous (economic) neoliberalization. In particular, two representative multicultural bills and their related policies—the Act on the Treatment of Foreigners in Korea (*chaehan oegugin ch'ōu gibonbōp*) and the Multicultural Family Support Act (*tamunhwa gajōng jiwōnbōp*)—were respectively enacted in 2007 and 2008 (see Table 2.1).

Drawing from these two policy documents and other related documents, Korean multiculturalism policy discourse is marked by two distinctive yet related characteristics,¹² which together demonstrate why

Table 2.1 Outline of multicultural policies

	<i>Act on the Treatment of Foreigners in Korea (2007)</i>	<i>Multicultural Family Support Act (2008)</i>
Proposed policy based on the act	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The First Basic Plan for Immigration Policy (2008–2012)• The Second Basic Plan for Immigration Policy (2013–2017)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The First Basic Plan for Multicultural Family Policy (2010–2012)• The Second Basic Plan for Multicultural Family Policy (2013–2017)
Policy goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• To help foreigners in Korea adjust to Korean society and reach their full potential• To create a society where Koreans and foreigners in Korea understand and respect one another with the aims of contributing to the development of Korea and social integration	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• To improve the quality of life of members of multicultural families• To contribute to social integration by ensuring that members of multicultural families enjoy a stable family life
Main policy actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Support economic stimulus and attract human resources from overseas (openness)• Promote social integration that respects shared Korean values (social integration)• Prevent discrimination and respect cultural diversity (human rights)• Ensure a safe society for Koreans and non-Koreans alike (public safety)• Promote co-prosperity with the international community (cooperation)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Build a “Multicultural Family Support Policy” system of organizations• Strengthen management of international marriage mediation and the system to verify foreigners before entry• Strengthen support for the settlement and independence of marriage migrants• Create an environment to foster the healthy growth of children in multicultural families• Enhance society’s understanding of multiculturalism

Korean multiculturalism policy is a sign of neoliberal reform of the Korean nation-state. First, multiculturalism policy emerged as part of an *immigration policy* to regulate increasing numbers of migrants and multiethnic Koreans. It may seem odd at first that the conservative Lee Myōngpak and Park Kūnhye administrations, which were primarily supported (and elected) by older voters supporting national economic development, ardently embraced multiculturalism as a leading state policy. The primary values of multiculturalism—cultural rights and cultural pluralism—are typically embraced by progressive parties, not conservatives. But the Korean government did not embrace multiculturalism as a political philosophy or moral ethic. Instead, multiculturalism was introduced as an immigration policy to manage increasing numbers of various types of immigrants whose presence was meant to benefit Korea economically. Korea needed to import cheap labor from abroad due to a labor shortage in the industrial sector, and the government initially mobilized the multiculturalism agenda to fill this labor gap by recruiting cheap, dispensable, temporary migrant workers (Kang 2014). One media critic explains that the *Saenuri* Party—both Lee and Park administrations were based—took the advantageous position in the election by appropriating immigrant issues including multiculturalism policy as a way to reboost the national economy (Cho 2015).¹³ In other words, the conservative *Saenuri* Party supports the multiculturalism agenda because it is beneficial to national economic growth.

The market-driven rationale for Korean multiculturalism policy was informed by economic research. In particular, the Lee administration's First Basic Plan for Immigration Policy (2008–2012) (*che 1ch'a oegugin chōngch' aek kibon'gyehoek*) was heavily informed by the Samsung Economy Research Institute's 2008 report "Ten Economic Trends in Korea." The Institute's 2008 report described the potential national economic benefits of increasing the number of migrant workers in Korea. From the perspective of market-driven neoliberalism, the report suggested that multicultural policy is profitable as a source of low-wage migrant workers for corporations. As a part of immigration policy, multiculturalism is double-pronged, restricting the long-term residency of low-skilled laborers while supporting the residency of high-skilled professionals. More precisely, Korean multiculturalism policy functions as a social mechanism on whom to include or exclude in terms of labor and citizenship and how to (systematically) control their duration of residency in Korea.

Second, Korean multiculturalism policy is a *highly gendered policy of assimilation*.¹⁴ The government's multicultural policies heavily focus on female marriage migrants and multicultural families, marginalizing other types of racial/ethnic minorities (Ahn 2013; Han 2012; Kim 2011). Based on the Act on the Treatment of Foreigners in Korea, the Korean government produced the first and the second Basic Plan for Immigration Policy (see Table 2.1), which (re)defines the boundary of lawful (migrant) workers. The current immigration policy does not allow permanent residency for labor immigration; it only allows temporary residency. Yet marriage migrants are allowed permanent residency along with the acquisition of nationality. Through those policies, the nation established a flexible labor policy that attracts high-skilled labor while limiting the number of (il)legal migrants in low-skill jobs and encouraging the immigration of woman marriage migrants from Asia.

Oh Kyung Seok (2007) argues that the government exercises a “divide and rule policy” by treating different groups of migrants differentially. Whereas low-skilled migrant workers are treated as temporary labor (thus not a target of assimilation), female marriage migrants are treated as subjects of assimilation who will reproduce Korea's future laborers and undertake domestic care work for Korean men. In other words, government multicultural policy supports the assimilation of female marriage migrants and their (biracial) children because they offer a solution to a number of national crisis: the aging population, the lack of care workers, and the low birth rate. I have elsewhere argued that it signals a broader shift in the Korean multiculturalism policy's framework from the perspective of “labor” to that of “family” and “welfare” (Ahn 2013).

Female marriage migrants receive favorable treatment in a particular form of multiculturalism that is tied to Korea's patriarchal system in which patrilineal kinship is prioritized over all other familial relations. Between 2001 and 2014, there were 418,920 international marriages in Korea; nearly three-quarters of these were between a Korean man and a foreign woman. This type of international marriage is preferred because it is less threatening to patrilineal kinship. The enactment of the Multicultural Family Support Act reflects this gendered policy of assimilation toward female marriage migrants. According to the Act, state and local governments shall provide information on living in Korea and educational support for marriage migrants (Article 6); make efforts to prevent domestic violence in multicultural families (Article 8); provide

health care support before and after childbirth (Article 9); and provide childcare and education (Article 10). As these specific articles demonstrate, the Multicultural Family Support Act primarily aims to integrate female marriage migrants into Korean society, with a special focus on these women's participation in childbirth and childcare. In addition, the Act required the establishment of Multicultural Family Support Centers (Article 12) throughout the country in order to better support social integration of multicultural families on a local, community level. These centers provide classes on the Korean language, Korean culture, and Korean manners as well as professional legal support.¹⁵

Because the current multiculturalism policy primarily targets only a particular type of multicultural family—a family consisting of a Korean husband, a female marriage migrant, and their children (Kim 2011)—it has received significant criticism for marginalizing other types of multicultural families, such as unions between a Korean wife and a foreign man, especially a foreign man from an economically less developed country. It is not a coincidence that the programs offered by the Multicultural Family Support Centers target female marriage migrants and lack content targeting multicultural families with foreign husbands. A recent webzine interview with Udaya Rai, a Nepalese labor activist who married a Korean woman, vividly pictures how the state's multiculturalism policy has overlooked pairings like Rai's (Koo 2015). Rai says in the interview: "When a South Korean man marries a foreign woman, they receive support in the name of multiculturalism. But we [foreign men] are not like that. We are not considered 'multicultural.'" (Koo 2015). Rai's assessment is accurate in the sense that current Korean multiculturalism is highly gendered and assimilative, reinforcing the patriarchal racial order in Korea. All in all, the increase in multicultural families reconfigures the racial order in Korean society, but it does not fundamentally challenge the hegemonic familial relationship based in patriarchy, which (partially) explains why current state-led multicultural policies promote assimilation for female marriage migrants and their children.

Children of the Multicultural Family as a Sign of Neoliberal Multicultural Korea

The neoliberal transformation is not just about projecting economic rationality in the national economy. It also transforms individual life style along with family relations and structure. The neoliberal transition

brought changes in existing familial types as familial life has been thrown to precarious status under the ever-changing flexible economic system. More specifically, as the movement of capital and labor becomes more and more flexible and mobile, the work/labor environment has been transformed: a life-long economic stability for nuclear families (along with health insurance and children's educational tuition) which used to be guaranteed for the workforce is not promised anymore and it is now individuals themselves that have to manage economic instability.

Foucault's analysis on neoliberalism is useful in this context as his analysis offers insights on how neoliberal governmentality reforms the ways in which we think of labor, capital, and individual freedom, all of whose interaction produces a neoliberal subjectivity. In his analysis of neoliberal governmentality, Foucault (2008) shifts the language of Marx's "labor power" to "human capital." In particular, family, as a basic unit of society, becomes the site where human capital is reproduced and transmitted to the next generation. Foucault explains:

Economic factors are still and always at work here inasmuch as people with high incomes are people who possess a high human capital, as is proven by their high incomes. Their problem is not so much to transmit to their children an inheritance in the classical sense of the term, as the transmission of this other element, human capital, which also links the generation to each other but in a completely different way. Their problem is the formation and transmission of human capital which, as we have seen, implies the parents having the time for educational care and so on. (Foucault 2008, 244)

Building upon Foucault, Susan Koshy (2013) furthers the discussion on the formation of the neoliberal family. She explicates: "The neoliberal understanding of human abilities as sources of potential income redefines child-rearing by treating a broader range of activities of care and cultivation, and not only educational and professional training, as potential 'investments' in the human capital of children" (Koshy 2013, 345). She demonstrates that Asian-American families, as exemplified by Amy Chua's "Tiger mom" syndrome in 2011, emerged as a model neoliberal family in the USA. As a new form of knowledge-migrant family, many Asian-Americans (after the Immigration Act of 1965) have successfully achieved high social status/positions by effectively transmitting and reproducing the high human capitals to their children through educational investment.

In Korea, the economic crisis in the late 1990s and control by the IMF significantly impacted familial life and produced a newer type of “mobile and dispersed family” that revised the modern nuclear family model. Because many fathers lost their jobs during the IMF period, patriarchal power in the family was greatly weakened (Moon 2002). Fathers became mobile labor, moving across the cities to earn money and mothers had to work as part-timers or maids, which led to the forced dismantling of family units, turning them into mobile and dispersed families. On the transnational scale, the emergence of the “wild goose family” (*kirŏgi gajok*) in post-IMF Korea captures the neoliberal making of the Korean family—particularly the (upper-)middle-class family—that is comparable to Asian-American families in neoliberal America. The wild goose family broadly refers to a family whose father stays and works in Korea while other family members such as wife and children live abroad to get their children educated in advanced and preferably English-speaking countries such as the USA, Canada, and Australia in order to acquire higher educational, cultural, and social capital. This newly emerging, globally dispersed family is a neoliberal remaking of the familial unit in that they choose to send their children abroad to gain better education and achieve higher linguistic capital in the hope of acquiring stable, high-income jobs in their future (Cho 2008). In this sense, the emergence of the wild goose family can be seen as a Korean (upper-)middle-class family’s strategy to overcome national economic crisis through reformulating familial relations so that they can more effectively transmit human capital from generation to generation.

Whereas wild goose family is a global restructuring of the (upper-)middle-class family whose racial/ethnic composition is unquestionably homogenous in the post-IMF period, the neoliberal restructuring of the familial unit today has taken place in even more transnational and transracial scale through international/interracial marriage in this era of global migration. The emergence of the new transnational and multiracial family complicates existing racial lines by transcending national and racial boundaries in making the neoliberal family.

In particular, the rise of the multicultural family through contracted marriage and mail-order brides lies at the opposite spectrum of the wild goose family in that it demonstrates how the female body from the developing nations is (transnationally) mobilized and (re)articulated in the lower-class family’s family-making process in Korea (Cho 2008). The neoliberal parenting practice that the upper-or middle-class family

conducts is not a viable option for the lower-middle-class, multicultural family because those families are mostly lacking in (already-accumulated) social and human capital that they can utilize for their children. Yet this does not mean that they are free from the neoliberal family transformation. Even though they may lack human capital, they also undertake similar yet different types of neoliberal practices in order to fit in and survive in the neoliberal Korea.

Because the number of multicultural families is rapidly growing, the social integration of such families' children on all levels including education, family and social life, and career has become a primary agenda in Korea's global multicultural transformation. Under the current policy, all members of multicultural families, but especially female marriage migrants and their mixed-race children, must relearn and readjust their individual duties and familial relationships. To facilitate this, the neoliberal government targets multiple aspects of multicultural family life with precision. This is best illustrated by the Life Cycle-Based Countermeasures for Enhancing the Support for Multicultural Family (*tamunhwagajok saengaejugibyoŭl match'umhyōng jiwōn'ganghwa daech'aek*) policy proposed in 2008. The document lists specific action points that multicultural families can follow throughout their familial life, including pre-marriage/pre-immigration, the early family stage, the childcare and settlement period, and the (self) empowerment period. The life of the multicultural family, particularly that of female marriage migrants and their children, is carefully "calculated" and "optimized" to adapt to Korean society as a useful human resource (Ong 2006). Female marriage migrants (mothers in multicultural families) are mobilized to educate and raise their (biracial) children as Korea's "future labor" that embodies global (cultural) competence (Jun 2012).

Whereas the Amerasian was a symbol of a *homo sacer* (Agamben 1998), existing at the edge of the (symbolic and imaginative) national boundary, the contemporary children of multicultural families represent a different type of state racism by forging a particular form of (racialized) subjectivity. In the current neoliberal multicultural era where racial/ethnic diversity is treated as a source of economic profit, the children of multicultural families are interpolated as "human capital" that is of potential benefit to national interests (Lee 2012). Their mixedness is considered the embodiment of the national development that connects Korea to other nation-states (see Chap. 5). In short, by locating multicultural families at the center of its policy documents, Korean

multiculturalism mobilizes female marriage migrants and the children of multicultural families as useful citizens/laborers who can help transform Korea into a neoliberal state, shaping a particular version of neoliberal governmentality that updates and reinscribes racial lines in contemporary Korea to align with Korea's transformation into a neoliberal multicultural society.

GLOBALIZING KOREAN MEDIA AND POPULAR CULTURE

In accordance with the rapid social change, popular media and culture have become more and more powerful and important forums that mediate people's imagining and practicing of Korea's transformation into a multicultural/multiethnic society. More specifically, the increasing number of multiethnic and multiracial representations in Korean television provide rich repertoires, narratives, and references for creating racialized discourses, leading to the rearrangement of the racial order in Korea. Accordingly, the changed nature of the Korean media industry has altered the ways in which the global Korea is imagined.

While the power of the state was absolutely critical in (re)structuring the media system and shaping public opinion during almost thirty years of military dictatorship in modern Korea, this power diminished after 1987 (though it never fully dissipated) due to the democratization movement and economic liberalization. Because of these structural changes, economic and technological factors—not just the state—have influenced the cultural geography of the Korean media industry, such as the rise of audience power, the expansion of the broadcasting market both domestically and internationally, the development of communication/media technology, the growth of the advertising market, and the economic reform after the crisis of 1997 (Kim 1996).

The Korean media is still not purely market-driven in the contemporary era, but economic neoliberalism increased the commercialization and globalization of the Korean media. This era witnessed the end of many governmental restrictions not only on foreign investments but also on media content. Korea was not the only Asian country to experience this change; influenced by the Asian economic crisis of 1997, Taiwan and Singapore also liberalized and commercialized their media industries (Tay 2009). In addition to the advent of media liberalization, the 1990s also ushered in the multichannel and multimedia era. The Korean government decided in 1989 to build a digitized, integrated cable television

infrastructure that allowed for the adoption of cable TV in 1995 and satellite TV in 1996 (Shim 2002). Other local and private broadcasting networks flourished, and channels were diversified. This explosion of television channels produced increasingly keen competition among broadcasting networks (Lee and Joe 2000). Simply put, the trend of cultural policy changed from preserving national/traditional culture in the 1960s–1970s to globalizing and commercializing Korean culture in the 1990s–2000s (Lee 2013).

The Korean Wave as a Neoliberal Project

It is not possible to fully figure Korea's national aspiration toward an "advanced society" (*sŏnjin'guk*) and "global leadership" without understanding Korea's race for soft power in the twenty-first century. Like many other countries as exemplified by "Cool Britannia" in the 1990s and "Cool Japan" in the 2000s (see Iwabuchi 2002), Korea employed the strategy of "nation-branding," or making national culture marketable as a brand image, to upgrade its national image on the global cultural map. The Korean Wave precisely exemplifies this transformation of the Korean media/cultural industry under neoliberal globalization. As the Korean media industry was increasingly commercialized and deregulated throughout the 1990s and the 2000s, Korean popular culture gained popularity in other Asian countries and across the globe. Reversing the unidirectional global flow from center to periphery (Hannerz 1997; McMillin 2007; Thussu 2007), the Korean Wave involved inter-Asian media/cultural circulation and regional consumption (Cho 2005; Cho 2011; Chua and Iwabuchi 2008; Huang 2009; Kim 2006). In its initial stage, scholars discussed the success of the Korean Wave in terms of cultural proximity within East Asia, and the phenomenon was considered a sign of cultural regionalization. However, the success of the Korean Wave later expanded to reach the USA, Western Europe, and the Middle East, despite a language barrier and differences in cultural background (Oh 2012).

Although the Korean Wave is primarily market-driven, its global success would not have been possible without supportive state policies. Under the Kim Taechung administration of the late 1990s, the government first announced a Five-Year-Plan for Promoting the Broadcasting Industry (1998–2002) (*pangsŏng yŏngsang sanŏp chinhaeng 5kaenyŏn'gyehoek*); the program has since been renewed every five years. Each

Five-Year-Plan, regardless of whether it was implemented by a conservative regime or a democratic one, includes specific strategies for mobilizing broadcasting and visual content to promote the national image and brand the nation. Established in 2003 under the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, the Korea Foundation for International Culture Exchange, for instance, has conducted various cultural festivals, organized academic conferences, and published research and policy documents regarding the Korean Wave to expand the global boundaries of Korean popular culture.

Scholars have argued that the Korean Wave is a national project that uses the cultural industry to achieve the national aspiration for global prominence (Cho 2005, 2011; Huang 2009; Kim 2006; Lee 2008, 2012; Shim 2006). More specifically, it is a *postcolonial* national project that rearticulates the image of modern Korea in the postcolonial and post-Cold War context, expressing Korea's cultural sovereignty and redefining/relocating the Korean nation on the global cultural map (see Lee 2012). As a national media project, the Korean Wave changed how Korea is imagined in the era of globalization, effectively transforming Korea's national image into that of a cool, modern, advanced society. In the process, some Korean Wave stars—actors, musicians, and sport celebrities—who gained regional or global popularity served as brand ambassadors of Korea. As cultural diplomats, these celebrities were able to accomplish more in foreign affairs than real politicians. For example, because of its huge popularity with Japanese audiences, *Winter Sonata* (KBS-2 2002) eased political tensions between Korea and Japan. Actor Pae Yongchun, who played a male protagonist in *Winter Sonata*, was able to elevate Korea's national image internationally in a way that political ambassadors never had before (Jung 2011; Mori 2008). Likewise, the popularity of Korean drama relaxed political tension in the Middle East when Korea sent troops to Iraq (Kim 2006, 53). Soft power propelled by the national cultural industry shores up the nation's hard power by making the national image more appealing and welcoming.

The cultural boundary of the Korean Wave is currently expanding to incorporate other East Asian forms of popular culture as well as Western (particularly American) elements. In other words, the content of the Korean Wave is becoming increasingly hybridized and globalized as producers grow more keenly aware of global markets and global audiences (Hong and Lee 2010; Jin 2016; Kim 2013). This global hybridization renders Korean pop culture “odorless” (Iwabuchi 2002) and easily transferrable to other regions that share few cultural similarities. The robust

success of the Korean Wave in the global market directly influenced the rise of multinational, multiethnic casting in contemporary pop groups, television drama, film, and reality TV to establish broad cultural appeal.

Coloring Korean TV

As Korean media and popular culture have globalized, contemporary Korean television has become more racially and ethnically diverse, reflecting the struggle for racial reconfiguration. During the early 1990s, television networks began to produce programs featuring foreigners and foreign countries, expanding Korean television beyond the boundaries of Korea. For example, *Go, Earth Explorers* (*tojŏn jigu t'ambŏmdae*; KBS-2 1996–2005) explored the cultural eccentricities of countries around the world. A follow-up program, *Amazing Asia* (*nollaun Asia*; KBS-2 2005–2007) described peculiar customs and mysteries throughout Asia. Capturing a similar interest in foreigners, the program *Exclamation Mark!* (*nŭkkimp'yo!*; MBC 2001–2004, 2004–2007) aired a segment titled “Asia! Asia!” that told the stories of Asian immigrants and migrant workers in Korea and accompanied them on trips to their home countries. These programs indirectly reflected the rise of inter-Asian migration.

Programs with an outward focus showing foreigners and cultures abroad emerged in the late 1990s and the early 2000s, but programs featuring different racial groups *in* Korea did not appear on television screens until the mid-2000s. After the government adopted the term multiculturalism as part of its immigration/assimilation policy, multicultural TV programs proliferated. These programs incorporated the state's narrative of multiculturalism, and they achieved some popularity with Korean audiences.

In 2005, a single-episode television drama—*Bride from Hanoi* (*Hanoi shinbu*; SBS 2005)—was the first to deal with inter-Asian migration to Korea, just at the time when multiculturalism began to be publicly discussed as a social agenda (see Ryu 2009). After seeing audiences' positive response to the show, Seoul Broadcasting System (SBS) aired a longer version of a similar story in *Golden Bride* (*hwanggŭm shinbu*; SBS 2007). These popular and successful dramas told the story of a romance between a Vietnamese bride and a Korean man. Though both dramas featured Vietnamese brides, Korean actresses played these female protagonists. One might assume that this casting was based on nothing more than a lack of Vietnamese actresses who speak Korean. Yet producers' avoidance

of casting “real Vietnamese” in the *leading* role requires further attention because it could signify their belief that a particular type of racial other is undesirable for inclusion in a national television network drama.

By contrast, whites and white mixed-race individuals are cast in a number of dramas. According to Ju Hye Yeon and Noh Kwang Woo’s (2013) study of the visual representation of non-Korean characters in Korean television drama between 2005 and 2012, white or white biracials from either America or European countries were cast in leading and/or supporting roles whereas other ethnic characters, especially those from Southeast Asia, mostly appeared as extras and rarely appeared even in supporting roles (345–346). In terms of characters’ occupation or class status, the white or white biracial characters work in professional, high-paying jobs such as doctors or lawyers, portraying this group as what Ju and Noh (2013) call an “adoration group.” By contrast, the dramas presented Southeast Asians as underprivileged, low-paid workers, constructing them as a “sympathy group.” Strikingly, these dramas include no black (or black mixed-race) leading characters, locating black as the least desirable and visible race in television drama.

Though whites are popular in the entertainment genre, entertainment shows tend to have more diverse casting. Talk shows, human documentary shows, reality shows, and survival audition programs actively incorporate multiethnic members to illustrate Korea’s global relevance and to maximize the shows’ appeal. To list a few emblematic multicultural programs: *Love in Asia* (KBS1 2005–2015), *A Chat with Beauties* (*minyŏdŭrŭi suda*; KBS-2 2006–2010 & KBS-1 2010), *Now on My Way to Meet You* (*ije mannarŏ kamnida*; Channel A 2011–present), and *Non-Summit Meeting* (*pijŏngsang hoedam*; JTBC 2014–present).

Entertainment shows featuring non-Korean cast members can be categorized into four sub-groups depending on the content of the show and the ethnic makeup of the main cast members. First, one set of programs tells the stories of ordinary female marriage migrants and portrays their familial relationships with their husbands, mixed-race children, and/or parents-in-law. *Love in Asia* is the most representative show of this category, as are *Nice to Meet You, In-Law* (*pan’gapsŭmnida sadon*; SBS 2007–2009) and *Mother In-Law and Daughter In-Law Story* (*tamunhwa kopuyŏlchŏn*; EBS 2013–present). These shows put an entertaining twist on the reality-documentary format, and they aim to show the familial relations and dynamics of multicultural families.

Shows in the second category are commercial entertainment programs featuring (ordinary) foreigners living in Korea. *A Chat with Beauties* and *Non-Summit Meeting* are two of the most successful shows in this category. Taking a talk show format, *A Chat with Beauties* casts 16 “beauties” from around the globe who now work/study in Korea. Each week, the 16 “beauties” discuss various topics regarding their lives in Korea with a Korean guest star. *Non-Summit Meeting* follows similar format but with male cast members. The discussions on *Non-Summit Meeting* address a wider range of topics, including foreign affairs and sensitive social issues such as (global) terrorism, intergenerational conflict, the (global) economic recession, and job market competition. As Iwabuchi (2010) astutely argues in his analysis of how a Japanese talk show that primarily casts ordinary foreigners reinforces *multinationalism* to accomplish the national aspiration to be acknowledged as multicultural and global, these Korean talk shows mobilize the “ordinariness” and “globalness” of the foreigners and their comments on Korean society in a highly gendered and commercial manner.

It is important to note that the first and the second category demonstrate two contrasting streams of (gendered) global migration today. The first group of shows focuses on female marriage migrants from the Global South who undertake care-labor/service-labor in the Global North in global labor circuits (see Ehrenreich and Hochschild 2003). In contrast, the second group signifies the stream of global migration involving cosmopolitan, flexible citizens (from the Global North) who work as professionals or pursue well-paid careers in Korea. For this reason, previous studies have compared and contrasted representative shows from each category—e.g., *Love in Asia* and *A Chat with Beauties*—to examine how they differently visualize female migrants in Korean television (see Kim et al. 2009).

Along with these two streams of global migration, a third category of shows represents a migration trend unique to Korea by casting North Korean defectors—a large group that has been growing in recent years (for example, approximately 27,000 North Koreans live in South Korea as of 2014). Featuring a similar format to *A Chat with Beauties*, the show *Now on My Way to Meet You* casts female North Korean defectors to talk about their lives in the North to foster understanding between the two societies. Another show featuring North Korean defectors, *Love Between a South Korean Man and North Korean Woman* (*nam-nam-puk-nyō*; TV Chosun 2014–2017) is a reality show that tracks

the daily experiences of two South Korean male entertainers and two North Korean defector females who are brought together in virtual “marriages.”

Fourth, some broad entertainment shows that cast many ordinary Koreans also include mixed-race figures. For example, some ordinary mixed-race people participated on audition programs such as *K-Pop Star* (SBS 2011–2017) and *The Great Birth* (*widaehan t’ansaeng*, MBC 2010–2013); some ordinary mixed-race people have also appeared on human documentary shows such as *Human Theatre* (*in’gan kŭkchang*, KBS-1 2000–present). It is worthwhile to note that *Rainbow Kindergarten* (tvN 2011) and *Cackling Class in Vietnam* (tvN 2013) are two commercial television shows whose main cast members are mixed-race children living in Korea. Whereas *Rainbow Kindergarten* focused on biracial children whose fathers mostly come from Western nations, *Cackling Class* primarily casts the children of multicultural families whose mothers are from Vietnam. These shows utilize the observational reality format with the entertainment genre and demonstrate how different types of racial mixing become visible in the realm of reality TV (see Chap. 6). If mixed-race metaphors and media figures are easily co-opted by the mainstream media as a marker of post-racial society in the West (see Dawkins 2012; Elam 2011; Mahtani 2014; Squires 2014), mixed-race discourse in Korea, especially in conjunction with multiculturalism, serves as a marker of multiethnic, global Korea, presented as a national asset for an open and multicultural society.

All four sub-categories of “multicultural TV programs” utilize a casting strategy best characterized as “niche-market casting” or “multiethnic casting.” These shows rely on ethnic diversity as a major driving force. The shows materialize ethnicity in a visible way, mobilizing visible differences in costume, language, food, or appearance for the purpose of increasing audience ratings. The existence of multicultural/multiethnic TV programs demonstrates not only that ethnic diversity is profitable but also that Korean society is required to promote social awareness of the increasing population of multiethnic Koreans and foreigners.

In the era of neoliberal capitalism, culture is commodifiable, and cultural diversity as well as racial/ethnic difference serve as (cultural) resources to maximize profit. In considering the rise of (new) nationalism in Japanese cinema in relation to global capitalism, Ko Mika (2010) uses the concept “cosmetic multiculturalism,” first introduced by Tessa Morris-Suzuki, to demonstrate how multiculturalism

is co-opted by mainstream films to reshape Japanese national identity. Ko (2010) argues that multiculturalism is mobilized to reinforce (new) Japanese nationalism in the era of globalization, though the cultural site of cosmetic multiculturalism also provides a limited space for racial others to resist and raise their voices. In other words, to (re)vitalize nationalism, Japanese cinema utilizes visual representations of racial/ethnic others (the oppressed) to make nationalism more politically correct while sustaining hegemonic ruling ideologies toward the racial ethnic others. Similarly, the recent increase of multiethnic representation on Korean TV offers space, although limited, for us to rethink the modality of Korean ethnic nationalism. Thus, what becomes important is how nationalism reformulates its logic, articulating other competing ideologies such as multiculturalism and neoliberalism through visual representations.

CONCLUSION

The ideological construction of Korea as a racially homogenous nation has been significantly challenged by domestic and international pressure on Korea to reshape its national identity as a more open, diverse, and global society. The rise of the multiculturalism discourse and media representations of racial others on Korean television is a national project to imagine Korea as a multicultural, global Korea under its current neoliberal social transformation. This rhetorical shift in imagining Korea from a modern monoracial Korea to a multicultural, global Korea is used to redefine the nation internally and to aggressively upgrade its national status on the global cultural and economic map.

In this chapter, I examined the sociohistorical conditions of the (discursive) transformation from a modern monoracial Korea to a multicultural, global Korea using a race-nation-media framework. This analysis showed that the Korean developmental state's nationalist desire for global prominence in the neoliberal era motivated the discourse of cultural diversity, racial politics, and multiculturalism in Korea's televisual landscape. More specifically, I argued that as part of a (new) statist developmental impetus, Korean multiculturalism maintains the ethos of the developmental state while remodeling it by appropriating racial/ethnic diversity as a way to imagine a global Korea.

The discursive shift in Korea's treatment of mixed-race groups including Amerasians and Kosians (or the children of multicultural families)

illuminates historical changes in state racism as the nation transitioned from a modern monoracial Korea to the contemporary multicultural, global Korea. In postwar Korea, Amerasians symbolized state racism in a discourse that excluded racial others from the national imagery to maintain racial purity. This discourse was articulated by militant authoritarian regimes that were allied with a strong statist media complex. In the contemporary period, the children of multicultural families (with an Asian migrant foreign parent) emerged as part of the neoliberal restructuring of the labor system to attract a low-wage labor force. These children have been embraced by contemporary governmental policies on multiculturalism, bringing racial issues to the forefront of contemporary Korean discourse.

The social meanings and boundaries of both the Amerasians and children of multicultural families are always contested and reshaped in conversation with the dominant society's norms. Whereas Amerasians reminded Koreans of the legacy of US imperialism, the newly formulated category of children of multicultural families illustrates a different racialization that calls into question the meaning of Asianness (specifically, Southeast Asianness). Put differently, contemporary mixed-race discourse is a discursive space where the notions of Asianness and Koreanness are contested in a transnational context, producing hierarchical racial lines. Just as Amerasians in postwar Korea were central to the modern state formation of monoracial Korea, discourse around mixed-race children (especially those with one Korean parent and one parent from another Asian country) in contemporary Korea is the cultural arena for configuring Korea's transition into a neoliberal global state.

Acknowledging that the historical memories and ruptures inscribed into the (racialized) body of mixed-race figures are crucial to understanding the current national reshaping of racial order, it becomes important to look at how the cultural meaning of biraciality is rearticulated and reimagined in a contemporary Korean media landscape. We see more mixed-race representation in the media today, yet even in this context, some types of racial mixing are more or less visible than others. This chapter argued that mixed-race visibility and mixed-race discourse should be linked to a larger map of state policy and media practice. The remainder of the book will explore which specific historical memories of mixed-race are highlighted or obscured and for what purpose, and it will locate the televisual genres and grammars that produce the biracial discourse. The following four chapters investigate particular televised racial

moments, complicating our understanding of the current racialization process under the national racial project of neoliberal multiculturalism.

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