SOUTH KOREA MANAGES GLOBALIZATION:

STRATEGIES OF SELF-DEFINITION AND CULTURAL

PRESERVATION

A Thesis

by

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Submitted to the Office of Graduate and Professional Studies of
Texas A&M University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

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May 2014

Major Subject: Anthropology

ABSTRACT

The nation of South Korea transitioned from being one of the poorest countries worldwide to becoming the 15th largest economy. South Korea has attempted to manage globalization by actively developing and supporting cultural based entertainment, such as film and music while also promoting cultural and historical preservation, such as elements of the *Han* brand and other traditional and national elements. This study counters views against theoretical frameworks of cultural imperialism and particularly media imperialism. Theories of cultural and media imperialism delineate globalization as the hegemonic takeover by American popular culture, which can lead to various forms of cultural demise in non-Western countries. However, this does not seem to be the case for South Korea. Instead, I argue that South Korea has successfully managed globalization, guarding against Western hegemony and has not succumbed to American cultural or media imperialism. This paper's methodology uses a combination of primary and secondary sources. As a result, two main strategies have been identified in this paper's thesis which account for South Korea's success, both of which are endorsed by governmental support and cultural policy: self-definition and cultural preservation. Self-definition entails the global and local proliferation of South Korea's cultural industry, which primarily encompasses South Korean film and music (K-Pop). South Korean films and K-pop are successful economic outlets and competitive alternatives to Western popular culture. Evidence of South Korea's successful cultural industry in film can be seen in the number of people attending the films, hold on its domestic market share, and

overall popularity for South Korean cultural content in films. K-pop has also exhibited much success due to its global sales and wide-ranging fans worldwide. Cultural preservation involves maintaining traditional elements of South Korean culture, particularly the continuation and preservation of traditional, and historical elements of the *Han* brand, including *hanok* (housing)*, hanbok* (dress)*, hansik* (cuisine, particularly *kimchi*), and taekwondo, as well as other traditional elements. Evidence of this can be found in South Korea's focus and promotion of Korean identity and nationalism. Anthropological theories such as cultural hybridization, nationalism, and cultural identity are thus believed better equipped to understand South Korea's success in managing globalization.

DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this paper to my mom. You always gave me great

encouragement and taught me to never give up.

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NOMENCLATURE

CHA   Cultural Heritage Administration

ICH   Intangible Cultural Heritage

KOFIC   Korean Film Council

KTO   Korea Tourism Organization

MCST   Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Tourism

UNESCO   United Nations Educational, Scientific, and

Cultural Organization

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The topics surrounding globalization have become a hotbed of academic discussion and contention throughout a wide range of academic disciplines, including political science, economics, environmental studies, linguistics, sociology, and international studies. These different disciplines reflect research of a wide variety of globalization topics such as the role of nation-states in a globalizing economy, disparities between first-world and third-world countries, economic/cultural/media imperialism, urban vs. rural, language acquisition/loss, resource allocation/destruction, and political hegemony. For example, are political statehoods shrinking due to the expanding global market or are nation-states still in control? Who or what groups of people are actively involved in globalization? How can third-world countries benefit or contribute to globalization? How do we maintain our different languages in the midst of a global *lingua franca*? Is everyone becoming culturally homogenized and cultures commodified? These are just some of the many questions that have been asked as the world becomes more interconnected and mixed. Moreover, anthropology seeks to understand the articulation and processes between the global and the local. Anthropologists are concerned with human agency, cultural flows, and how people navigate, negotiate, and mediate the processes of globalization.

Negative Stance Toward Globalization

Some of the most contested discussions in anthropology about globalization revolve around the issue of cultural demise or, in other words, the end game of what is known as cultural imperialism (Inda and Rosaldo 2002). Supporters of cultural imperialism (Schiller 1969, 1976; Fraser 2003; Germann 2005) take on a critical stance toward globalization, arguing that power and culture for the most part moves unilaterally (from Western countries to non-Western or developing countries) and involves the domination of one culture over others, possibly leading to peripheral cultural demise (Schiller 1976; Petras 1993; Fraser 2003; Germann 2005; Smandych 2005). For example, language, economic and cultural goods, social media, epistemological and ontological Western theories, and values have become focal studies for different branches of cultural imperialism studies (Schiller 1976; Smith 1990; Petras 1993). However, various shades of cultural imperialism fails to adequately capture the complexities of global and local forces within certain cultural contexts, primarily, how local subjects appropriate, reject, or customize outside cultural forces. The narratives of cultural and media imperialism assumes that subjects of non-Western countries are passive players in their national and cultural identities and that American cultural effects or its "soft power" will have a self-evident control on the people (Schiller 1976; Fraser 2003).

Background on Globalization

The world is changing. Countries and people are becoming more intertwined through trade and technology, and each respective country must use its own national strategies to cope with processes of globalization. Educational specialists Jane Knight and Hans De Wit (1997), suggested, "Globalization affects each country in a different way due to a nation's individual history, traditions, culture and priorities" (p.6). According to Samuel Kim (2000), a professor of political science and author of several books on East Asian studies, "The significance of contemporary globalization therefore needs to be assessed in a situation-and-actor-specific way; it varies according to actors' respective resources, skills, and strategic choices or policies…but also on the state's globalization strategy" (p.10). Therefore, it can be seen that a single definition or theory of globalization is difficult to equate without an adequate assessment of each country's strategic policy toward processes of globalization. Globalization refers to the increasing interconnectivity between different nations and people by means of technology, pop culture, transnationalism, trade, and political and economic relationships (S. Kim 2000; Lewellen 2002). Globalization, in terms of cultural flow, can best be exemplified through pop culture. For example, people in the US and in other Asian countries watch Japanese animé. Mexican soap operas have become popular and enjoyed by viewers in the Philippines. People in Vietnam and Mexico have greatly enjoyed watching South Korean soaps as well. The newest release of a musical group from any country around the world can be spread through a variety of video sharing websites like YouTube,

Facebook, or Twitter. It has become easier than ever before for people from different cultures to find common cultural interests in movies, TV, and music.

The connotations of globalization have both positive and negative consequences according to various sources. Some positive views suggest that globalization can bring about better international relations, economic prosperity for different nations and people, and development for poorer countries worldwide (Kulkarni 2012). However, the meaning of globalization can best be described as a double-edged sword with negative consequences as well. For example, a loss of cultural identity, language, and even culture itself has been identified as a primary cause for concern, as well as the silencing of new and different ideas or values, the takeover of multinational conglomerates, and concerns for local indigenous populations (Inda and Rosaldo 2002). All in all, the connotations and consequences (either positive or negative) that revolve around the issues of globalization can be debated according to a wide variety of disciplinary perspectives. I do not wish to make tactless generalizations about the ideas surrounding the discourse of globalization. I would much rather show that globalization is not entirely a force of omnipotence or domination and that South Korea, a non-Western nation, can benefit from globalization without imperiling its own culture.

Research Questions and Argument

The country of South Korea has undergone one of the most drastic changes of any nation, going from one of the poorest countries in the world to becoming the 15th largest economy worldwide in a very short amount of time (The Heritage Foundation 2014; Shim 2006; Ryoo 2008) What has accounted for South Korea's fast

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transformation and how have they attempted to manage forces of globalization? Is this a positive or negative transformation? My research questions will focus on:

1. How has South Korea attempted to manage globalization?

2. Has South Korea been successful in managing and navigating processes of globalization or have they succumbed to American cultural/media imperialism?

Based on my research and evidence, I argue that South Korea has attempted to manage globalization through governmental support and cultural policy and has in fact become successful by actively developing and supporting domestic cultural based entertainment, such as film and music (K-pop). It has also promoted the continuation of cultural and historical preservation, such as elements of the *Han* brand and other traditional and national forms. This is a counter-argument against frameworks of cultural imperialism and particularly the media imperialism thesis that delineates globalization as the hegemonic takeover by importing popular American cultural products such as TV, films, and music, leading to various forms of cultural and traditional loss. Main proponent of cultural and media imperialism, Herbert Schiller, proposed in his 1976 work *Communication and Cultural Domination*, the use of the term "cultural imperialism" to describe and explain the way in which large multinational corporations, including the media, of developed countries dominated developing countries. My paper's thesis goes against the arguments made by Schiller (1976), Matthew Fraser (2003), and Christophe Germann (2005).

Fraser (2003) argued that American "soft power," defined as American values (films, TV, music, fashions, lifestyles) have seduced cultures around the world into

conforming to American values, which in turn can lead to cultural loss. Germann (2005) argued that there is no level playing field in the audiovisual sector between Hollywood and motion pictures from other cultural origins. These lines of argument can be true in other nations around the world.

However, this does not seem to be the case for South Korea. South Korea seems to have created its own successful popular cultural industry, especially through film and K-pop, creating an alternative to Hollywood and American music industries. South Korea's globalization management in the cultural industry does not seem to conform to American values; instead it appears to reflect Korean values and experiences in film and music. As a result, South Korea's entertainment industry has received global and local success. Overall success for South Korea's cultural industry can be found in the number of people attending homegrown films, control of its domestic market share, global and local recognition for South Korean films and K-pop, wide-ranging fan base, global music sales, and through its own particular cultural content found in films and K-pop that emphasizes a "Korean experience" combined with high-level production and quality. South Korea has also been successful in preserving its history and continuing and preserving the use of unique traditional and cultural forms such as elements from the *Han* brand, which include *hanok* (traditional housing), *hanbok* (traditional dress), and *hansik* (traditional cuisine, particularly *kimchi*), as well as taekwondo (national sport), intangible cultural traditions, and promoting online information portals for Korean history and culture; and has set up cultural and language centers abroad. A major part of the cultural and media imperialism thesis suggests that the importation of American

media and culture would lead to non-Western cultural demise. However, this does not seem to be happening in South Korea. Instead, South Korea appears to be protecting and promoting traditional aspects of its culture and not allowing certain forms to disappear. A part of South Korea's globalization success is due to governmental support for its cultural industry and cultural policy. Thus some anthropological theories such as cultural hybridization, cultural identity, and nationalism may be better equipped to understanding South Korea's success in managing globalization.

Factors to Investigate

The factors that I investigate in order to demonstrate my argument is by means of a case study, which focuses on two main strategies used by South Korea. First, is the spread of South Korean pop culture as a means of self-definition in a growing interconnected world, termed *Hallyu* (Korean Wave). Particularly, Korean film and K-pop have become popular global phenomena throughout many regions of the world. These act as strategic maneuvers toward cultural promotion and global exposure for the country of South Korea. The second includes the safeguarding of South Korean cultural heritage and traditions, which acts as a means of cultural preservation through national projects and governmental support. Cultural policy enacted by the government has played a vital role for South Korea's globalization strategy for self-definition and cultural preservation. It has primarily focused on Korean identity and nationalism. South Korean cultural policy involves the support of its popular cultural industry and promoting and preserving traditional culture as well. In the context of South Korea, cultural and media imperialism does not seem to correspond with what is actually

happening in terms of globalization. Instead, anthropological views of cultural hybridization, nationalism, and cultural identity will be used to further analyze the strategies of self-definition and cultural preservation. The organization of this paper includes a methodology, literature review, background section, case study, conclusion, and bibliography.

Organization of the Thesis

The "methodology" chapter shows the reader exactly what kind of evidence was gathered for this paper. The methods applied for this project consist of both primary and secondary sources. The primary sources contain some quantitative and qualitative evidence by providing news articles that support the basis of my argument. Secondary sources include anthropological, historical, theoretical, economical, political, and experts on film and music.

The "literature review" chapter examines different perspectives and findings of globalization. A variety of research on cultural imperialism, media imperialism, cultural hybridization, nationalism, and culture identity are examined as appropriate approaches to globalization in the context of this paper's thesis project. The "literature review" section is meant to provide comprehensive commentary for the reader that is pertinent for this paper's thesis. The commentary provides the reader with academic perspective that consists of both critical and supportive claims for different anthropological works on globalization and how they fit into this project's framework.

The "background" on South Korea's cultural industry and cultural policy chapter

provides a historical context for South Korea's present situation. This chapter highlights

the launch of South Korea's globalization policy, which included economic

liberalization, governmental deregulation, and development and promotion for South

Korea's cultural industry. Moreover, this chapter focuses on the use of cultural policy as

a national priority and rationale for governmental support leading up to the "Korean

Wave" through the early stages of the film and music industry. This chapter also

highlights South Korea's turn to promoting traditional aspects of its culture as an

extension to the "Korean Wave." Furthermore, the government's role in supporting the

different cultural sectors is addressed.

The "case study" chapters are the bulk of the thesis. The evidence focuses on the

two main strategies of self-definition and cultural preservation. The strategy of self-

definition is analyzed in this chapter by providing evidence for the growing popularity

and spread of K-Pop and the South Korean film industry. This chapter includes an

analysis of cultural content in film and K-pop (i.e. how much South Korean content is in

film, global and local reception, who is watching and listening, the borrowing of

American style strategies of high-quality production value and musical elements, and the

idea of cultural hybridization of film and K-pop in South Korea.

The second chapter of the case study involves the strategy of cultural

preservation by means of national projects and governmental promotion. This chapter

examines South Korean traditional elements and identity. This chapter on cultural

preservation also serves as a critical review in order to understand efforts to revive and

preserve traditional elements of culture, which may involve some traditions over others,

and to see what elements of culture have become the standard for the nation's cultural traditions. It also serves as a way to understand factors such as identity and nationalism as foundations for cultural preservation. Also, South Korean traditional items listed on the United Nations Educational. Scientific, and Cultural Organization's (UNESCO) Intangible Cultural Heritage list are explored. Both of these strategies provide some evidence and show that South Korea has attempted to manage globalization and has had several successful outcomes.

The "conclusion" chapter reiterates my thesis statement for the reader and encapsulates the bulk of the evidence and discussion into a leading conclusion. It summarizes the major findings and anthropological concepts that contribute to the argument of my thesis. The "bibliography" section provided at the end of the thesis cites all works used in this paper.

Significance

The significance of this study is to contribute to the broader anthropological literature on globalization that trumps notions of cultural and media imperialism and supports other notions such as cultural hybridization, cultural identity, and nationalism. It is believed, this study contributes to existing anthropological knowledge by addressing some of the theoretical shortcomings and assumptions that cultural/media imperialism follows, particularly in the case of South Korea. The case study that goes into the main body of evidence provides some evidence that South Korea has guarded against cultural/media imperialism and that South Korea has successfully benefited from

managing globalization, without imperiling its culture. My paper's thesis addresses these issues and show that South Korea has not succumbed to American infiltration.

As a student of cultural anthropology this project is significant to me because in all of my travels I have never come across a culture that is not exceptional or significant to people living there. I lived in South Korea for one year, among other places, and I was fully aware of people's strong attachment to their culture, in regards to tradition, lifestyle, language, history, and homegrown popular culture. I believe some issues and theories surrounding cultural imperialism and media imperialism do not take into account deep-rooted cultural values and ignore some of the complexities of identity and culture and alternative processes of globalization.

CHAPTER II

METHODOLOGY

Preliminary Stage

In the early phases of this project I researched a variety of theoretical

perspectives on globalization. Helpful perspectives included those of David Harvey

(1989), Anthony Giddens (1990), Ulf Hannerz (1992, 1996, 1997, 2002), John

Tomlinson (1991, 1999, 2003), Herbert Schiller (1969; 1976), and Jan Pieterse (1994;

2009). These diverse perspectives included theoretical frameworks of modernity,

postmodernity, cultural imperialism, media imperialism, and cultural hybridization.

Also, ideas of nationalism, neoliberalism, hegemony, cultural identity, consumerism,

media texts, and advancements in technology were incorporated into preliminary stages

of my research to better understand the scope of globalization. In the context of South

Korea and this paper's thesis, I focused on more modern theoretical associations

between cultural imperialism, media imperialism, and cultural hybridization, which

continue to be debated in academic circles. These issues continue to revolve around

matters of popular culture, hegemony, traditional culture, nationalism, and cultural

identity.

Sources

Investigations of South Korea's globalization strategies require a wide range of

sources. These included an analysis of some qualitative and quantitative sources that

ranged from online newspapers, governmental online sites from the Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Tourism, the Korea Film Council, Korea Tourism Organization, the Cultural Heritage Administration. The Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Tourism is responsible for overseeing South Korea's cultural industry. The Korea Film Council gives news and statistics and box-office results for films. Korea Tourism Organization gives statistical data for tourism and overseas projects. The Cultural Heritage Administration deals with UNESCO nominations and selections. Other sources included blogs that focused on South Korean film and K-pop news, and other published works. In general, I relied upon the combination of news sources and historical and contemporary sources, such as political, economic, and film and music analyses particular to South Korea. I also relied on my own personal experience and interpretations living as an expat in South Korea from 2010-2011 where I saw first hand how popular K-pop and films were, as well as attending traditional and cultural events and festivals that highlighted the use of *hanok (*traditional housing), *hanbok* (traditional dress), and different types of *hansik* (cuisine).

The historical sources that I used highlighted South Korea's economic and political landscape from 1960s to early 2000s and provided background information for the development of its cultural industry and the focus on cultural policy. These time frames included military dictatorship, democratization, and neoliberalism policies.

Contemporary sources include previous works and analyses of South Korea's film and music industry, particularly, works from Doobo Shim (2002; 2006), Jee-Young Shin (2005), and Woongjae Ryoo (2005; 2008; 2009) that focused on South Korea's economic, political, and cultural areas through cultural industry development. Other

previous works included Hak-Soon Yim (2002) and John Tomlinson (2003) that focused on governmental and cultural policies toward culture and identity. I also researched recent film analyses that focused on Korean content portrayed in movies, particularly notions of nationalism and identity in Korean actions/espionage/war/dramas. Previous film analyses included works by Darcy Pacquet (2007), Chris Berry (2003) and JinHee Choi (2010), as well as personal observations for five films that are included in the case study on South Korean films. I watched the movies on Netflix and YouTube.

The majority of primary news sources that I used came from *Korea Herald* and Korea.net. *Korea Herald* is considered South Korea's top national English-language newspaper and is distributed in over 80 different nations. *Korea Herald*'s English-language edition is geared toward an international audience. Korea.net is an online news and information site promoted by the Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Tourism and the Korean Culture and Information Service. It is geared mostly toward an international audience, expats living in South Korea, and people looking to learn more about South Korea by providing information and developing news on aspects of its culture, history, traditions, and leading trends on popular cultural developments in K-pop and film. *Korea Herald* covers a wide range of topics including a heading on "Entertainment" (film, music, television, arts, and a section on Hallyu) and a "Life and Style" heading with a section on culture. Other South Korean news sites included *Chosun Ilbo*, *Yonhap News*, and *The Korea Times*. Non-Korean news articles that I looked into included *The Asia Times, The Economist*, *The New Yorker*, *New York Times*, *WSJ*, *Los Angeles Times*, and *The Sydney Morning Herald*. Some entertainment sources included *Billboard*,

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Noisey, and *Time*. I looked into these other news outlets because there is a lot of international attention for South Korea's cultural industry. I also visited a number of blog sites dedicated to South Korean film and K-pop like Allkpop.com, which is the fastest news breaker for K-pop with over 3 million users worldwide. Soompi.com is the oldest and most popular website for K-pop. It draws in over 1.4 million users a day and it can be viewed in different language like Spanish, Mandarin, Japanese, and English. Eatyourkimchi.com is a popular website for non-Koreans and expats. The website is ran by a Canadian couple who live in Seoul. Koreanfilm.org consists of yearly box-office results and film reviews.

I primarily focused on articles related to film, music, arts, Hallyu, and culture from both *Korea Herald* and Korea.net. I attempted to view every published article from these online newspapers between 2010-2014 that included headline words like "Korean Wave," Hallyu, K-pop, film, cultural policy, culture, history, and tradition. I wanted to analyze recent news sources in order to compare them with past news articles and analyses made by other researchers who focused on South Korean film, K-pop, and efforts to preserve certain traditions, and economic developments between 2000-2009. In general, I wanted to see if films and K-pop continued to make economic gains after 2009 and if the number of people watching films and listening to K-pop had increased.

Information on the "Korean Wave" and Hallyu focused mostly on the global reception for South Korea's cultural industry particularly in other Asian countries, as well as in Europe, Africa, North and South America, and the Middle East. This type of global reception reflected people's desire for South Korean products such as cuisine,

style, fashion and love for K-pop music and film. The articles had interviews with fans and statistics on the growing size of K-pop fan clubs worldwide, and international festivals dedicated to South Korean culture. News sections dedicated to K-pop and films provided information on newly released albums, movies, economic revenue, sales, audience reception, and quarterly percentage marks for domestic market shares. It also gave information on directors who were receiving international film awards, K-pop concerts around the world, and synopses on music and film content. Articles that focused on cultural policy, history, and traditions were beneficial because the government seemed to be an active participant in keeping older traditional forms around like *hanok*, *hanbok*, and *hansik* as well as promoting its history and cultural artifacts online and through UNESCO. Overall, the articles provided me with interviews from key governmental officials, cultural experts, fans, K-pop stars, film directors, and artists. They also provided statistical data and surveys that tied to economic and cultural industries or other quantitative data significant to traditional cultural affairs or projects sponsored by the Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Tourism.

Self-Reflection

When coming up with the topic and direction of my project's thesis, I knew that I wanted to focus on certain cultural aspects of South Korea. I spent a year in South Korea teaching English to children and experiencing some of the many cultural flowerings that South Korea has to offer. Therefore, personal observations and particular stances about South Korean culture are reflected in this study. I cannot deny that South Korean culture

has helped shape my worldview about culture in general. Moreover, the tone and flow of this study can also be a reflection of my personal connection with South Korean culture and why I wrote a study coming to South Korea's defense in terms of managing globalization and countering perspectives on cultural and media imperialism.

Limitations

This study does possess limitations that should be considered. First, I only read online sources in English as opposed to Korean. *Korea Herald* and Korea.net also use an English-edition written by South Korean staff writers, but it is possible that some important words do not translate well into English and therefore, miss certain essential meanings that only those who understand Korean can fully comprehend. Second, It is also important to note that even though I lived and worked in South Korea for a year that does not make me a cultural insider, so my interpretations and findings may not represent an insider's representation, as opposed to an academic researcher's representation and perspective based on the data and sources that have been collected.

CHAPTER III

LITERATURE REVIEW

Since the 1980s, globalization has become one of the most contested and debated topics in academia (Inda and Rosaldo 2002). Many other disciplines such as political science (S. Kim 2000), sociology (Schiller 1976; Giddens 1990), and anthropology (Harvey 1989; Hannerz 1992; Appadurai 1996) have focused on both macro and micro levels of analyses in order to explain the phenomenon. Anthropology tends to focus more on the relationship between the global and local and how processes of globalization shape particular groups of people. According to anthropologist Robert Foster (1999), anthropology also deals with the experiences of people and how globalization works and mediates within people's everyday lives. Anthropologists tend to use the prism of the cultural, as opposed to the economic or political, when investigating cultural dimensions of globalization (Inda and Rosaldo, 2002).

What is Globalization

Globalization is quintessentially an economic, political, technological, and cultural process. In the broadest sense globalization refers to "the intensification of economic, political, social, and cultural relations across borders" (Sørensen 2004: 23). Journalist Thomas Friedman (1999) argued that "globalization involves the inexorable integration of markets, nation-states, and technologies to a degree never witnessed before" (p.7). Sociologist Roland Robertson (1992) defined globalization as "the

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compression of the world and the intensification of consciousness of the world as a

whole" (p.8). Anthropologist Ulf Hannerz (2002) defined globalization as a "global

ecumene," or as a "region of persistent culture interaction and exchanges" (p.137).

Anthropologist Arjun Appadurai (1996) viewed globalization in terms of disjunction

flows of people, capital, technology, images, and ideologies as different "scapes."

Sociologist Adam Smith (1990) viewed the world as developing into a global culture

that is "tied to no place or period" (p.177). Sociologists Mike Featherstone (2001) and

Ulrich Schuerkens (2003) simply noted that globalization could encompass many topics.

Globalization has been theorized as a historical phenomenon (Hannerz 1992, 1996;

Pieterse 1994). It has also been viewed as a condition (Appadurai 1996) or a process

(Friedman 1999). Globalization has been defined as logical (Robertson 1992), something

new or novel (Appadurai 1996), or disjunctive (Hannerz 1992, 1996). For the most part,

conceptualizing globalization is a difficult task. Nonetheless, based on these academic

perspectives there seems to be a connection with cultural contact, economics, and

shifting technologies.

The introduction of globalization to South Korea may have roots in historical

processes that have expanded over centuries. However, I do not see South Korea's

globalization as a process of Westernization or as a nation that is no longer tied to a

particular place (Smith 1990). Instead, effects of globalization have created new and

novel responses toward culture and global markets (Kang 2000; Sparks 2013). Clearly,

globalization is influencing their actions when it comes to economical, political, and

cultural issues in a global market (Shim 2006; Ryoo 2008).

Cultural Imperialism and Media Imperialism

Within the discourse of globalization, ideas of cultural imperialism have been defined in a variety of ways in the past (Smandych 2005). Definitions of cultural imperialism have been defined in narrow ways simply as the domination of other cultures by products of the US cultural industry (Tomlinson 1991, 1999; Pieterse 1994; Inda and Rosaldo 2002), as well as the inevitability that cultures will become homogenized (Tomlinson 1991, 1999; Inda and Rosaldo 2002). It has been argued that earlier definitions of the cultural imperialism thesis focused solely on political and economic dimensions of power, particularly military might (Stevenson 1999). Media specialists John Downing, Ali Mohommadi, and Annabelle Sreberny (1995) argued that the dimensions of cultural imperialism extended far beyond economic exploitation or military power. On the other hand, there are more formal and abstract definitions like Schiller's (1976), which argued that cultural imperialism included:

> "The sum of the processes by which a society is brought into the modern world system and how its dominating stratum is attracted, pressured, forced, and sometimes even bribed into shaping social institutions to correspond to, or even promote, the values and structures of the dominating centre of the system" (p.9).

In reference to identity loss, Schiller (1969) argued early on that American media and cultural dominance threatened cultural identities around the world. Cultural imperialism had also been used interchangeably with concepts like electronic colonialism, media imperialism, ideological imperialism, and communication imperialism (White 2001). Schiller (1976) saw American imperialism as the importation of Western communication software and mass media that has established a set of foreign norms and values in terms

of software and broadcasting, which can alter domestic cultures and socialization

processes. Sociologists Pierre Bourdieu and Loïc Wacquant (1999) have argued that

cultural imperialism rests on the power to universalize particularisms that become linked

to a singular historical tradition. Matthew Fraser (2003), who did not explicitly use the

term cultural imperialism in his book *Weapons of Mass-Distraction*, argued that "soft

power" historically has been a key strategic resource in the imposition of American

culture over non-Western subjects. It is seen as a seductive and persuasive force (Fraser

2003). "Soft power" can refer to the importation of American movies, pop music, fast

food, fashions, etc. (Fraser 2003). Cultural imperialism proponent Bernd Hamm (2005)

argued that American cultural flows are more subtle and coercive in nature. Some

business owners argued that cultural imperialism (particularly from the US) is beneficial

to the rest of the world (Rauth 1988; Rothkopf 1997). In another light, cultural/media

imperialism is argued to be part of the intensification of globalization processes as a

device that leads toward a set of westernized norms. Germann (2005) highlighted the

"totalitarian threat" to the freedom and expression of non-Western subjects because

marketed audiovisual content primarily flows from one single, largely homogenous

cultural origin, namely the United States.

Claims Against Cultural and Media Imperialism

On the other hand, anthropologist Arjun Appadurai (1996) viewed processes of

globalization as contested "scapes," in which there were no single principles, or

regulations. According to Appadurai, globalization included the global cultural flows of

people (ethnoscapes), capital (financescapes), images and representations (mediascapes), and ideologies (ideoscapes), all of which are accelerated and manipulated by rapidly changing technologies (technoscapes). Moreover, according to Appadurai's theory of "scapes" the nation-state itself has served as a "scape" influenced by changing technologies. These technologies of nationhood or nationality may carry powerful meanings of cultural and nationalistic resistance to the outside world. For example, national symbols (flag, historical heroes, folklore), language, religion, music, pop culture, and pride. If this were the case, then the full acquisition and adoption of another culture would most likely be faced with significant resistance. Appadurai viewed globalization as a deeply disjunctive and unpredictable process and more importantly non-deterministic. Thus, in his account, arguments about cultural imperialism failed to account for the diversity of the contemporary world and that Americanization cannot be the only carrier of cultural power.

Anthropologist Jonathon Friedman (1994) suggested that certain types of consumption were a broader form of establishing or maintaining selfhood. Friedman's work focused on the ways that the Congolese interpreted consumption as a part of their broader cultural strategies of self-definition and self-maintenance. For example, in the city of Brazzaville in the Democratic Republic of Congo, there are two kinds of Coca-Cola, one produced locally and the other imported from Holland. The consumption of Coke in Brazzaville is locally significant because it's a way to express one's social position in society by displaying either the local or imported Coke where people can see it. Friedman also focused on fashion in the Congo, in the sense that "you are what you

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wear." When it comes to interpreting processes of globalization and its effects on different cultures it is important to remember how complex each cultural system is.

Cultural imperialism has situated itself into a vast amount of interdisciplinary studies. These include effects of American cultural meanings in media, and the spread of imports such as Hollywood films, as well as advertisements, TV, etc., and how it affects those from other countries, as one of the most popular methods of research (Boyd-Barrett 1977; Golding 1977; Katz and Wedell 1978; Chadha and Kavoori 2000; Germann 2005). Film specialist and cultural imperialism proponent, Christophe Germann (2005) argued that Hollywood blockbusters for the most part have no competition in foreign markets, which basically makes the playing field uneven. This can be seen in the case of motion pictures for the European Union, in which a majority of the market share is controlled by Hollywood (Germann 2005). Germann (2005) also asserted that the notion of cultural content for box-office success should be rejected. Instead, it solely depended on immense investment in marketing and advertisement (Germann 2005). This approach has retained considerable echo within the discourse of cultural/media imperialism, especially with the rise of foreign television, marketing, distribution rights, and foreign media content in non-Western nations. However, this approach has been debated in academic circles (Chadha and Kavoori 2000; Morley and Robins 1995). Media researchers Kalyani Chadha and Anandam Kavoori (2000) asserted that the influx and consumption of American media in Asia was vastly overstated and found that regional media content had a higher number of viewership. Studies found in

the literature have tended to criticize the shortcomings of cultural and media imperialism

by doing research that refutes the theory's proposition.

> "Researchers have rejected the conspiratorial notion of Schiller's media imperialism by arguing that economics, audience preferences, government policies, and new technologies are important mediating or explanatory variables for the nature and direction of international program flow"
> (Ware and Dupagne 1994: 947).

In this light, cultural flows from West to non-Western nations do not necessarily

constitute domination (Tomlinson 1999; Chadha and Kavoori 2000; Inda and Rosaldo

2002).

Some media researchers have focused on American films as subjects of foreign

influence (Shin 2005). Many people believe that Hollywood is entirely American, but in

fact Hollywood films have appropriated many different types of foreign cultural content.

For example, the 2007 Academy Award Winner for Best Picture, *The Departed* was

actually a remake of the Chinese film *Infernal Affairs*. *The Girl With The Dragon Tattoo*

was actually originally a Swedish film remade by Hollywood for an American audience.

There are numerous examples. In fact, it is no longer the case that a one-way flow of

Western media content exists because of the flowing international media content

worldwide (Thussu 2000). For example, popular reviews of Indian films in Nigeria

highlights the circulation of media between non-Western countries (Larkin 1997). This

is an aspect of cultural flow that has largely been ignored in recent views of cultural and

media imperialism studies since the focus is usually on the spread of American culture.

According to anthropologists Jonathan Inda and Renato Rosaldo (2002), "The discourse

of cultural imperialism, in other words, relies on what is called the hypodermic model of

media effects" (Morley and Robins 1995) (p.15). This model presumes that media texts have direct cultural effects on those who watch them. However, the process of reading cultural texts is anything but simple.

According to media specialists Elihu Katz and Tamar Liebes (1990), foreign cultural texts become customized. They are interpreted, translated, and customized according to local conditions and cultural contexts. For example, Katz and Liebes (1990) study of the reception of *Dallas* in Israel, the United States, and Japan. They focused on four different ethnic groups (Arabs, Russian Jews, Moroccan Jews, and kibbutz members). Liebes and Katz concluded that the process of reception was not simply a straightforward imposition, but instead a creative encounter between "the symbolic resources of the viewer and the symbolic offerings of the text" (p.6). In other words, a great deal of interpretation and customization is at work according to particular cultural and psychoanalytical conditions from different localities around the world. Moreover, the importation of American cultural meanings on foreign subjects may be anything but simple or seductive. Cultural materials do not just transfer in a unilinear manner. They always entail interpretation, translation, and customization on the part of the receiving subjects. In short, they can only be understood in the context of their complex reception and appropriation (Inda and Rosaldo 2002). As a result, Fraser's (2003) notion of "soft power" (in other words American *values*) fails to sufficiently address micro-level analyses that focus on cultural subject's complex reception to outside cultural texts, values, and meanings. For instance, non-Western subjects can reject Western imports. In the case of Pentecostals in Ghana, there is a rejection of appropriating Western goods

because it signified the workings of the Devil (Meyer 1998). For Pentecostals in Ghana, commodities become fetishes because the Devil appropriated them before they appeared in the market, creating a connection between desire, commodity, and Satan.

Moreover, Germann's (2005) argument concerning Hollywood's dominance in foreign markets appeared inaccurate in some countries in terms of television media. Others have researched the television industries of non-Western nations such as India, Brazil, Mexico, the Middle East, Canada and Australia to show that cultural imperialism theory does not hold true in all situations (Sinclair, Jacka, and Cunningham 1996). For example, the Mexican based, Televisa produced 78% of all its programming and the Globo Network in Brazil produced 80%, managing to secure and dominate their domestic markets to a degree unmatched by any English-speaking market (White 2001). These new patterns in global television have been explained by communication scholar Joseph Straubhaar (2000) who hypothesized that "cultural proximity," a concept describing the way "audiences will tend to prefer programming which is closest or most proximate to their own culture: national programming if it can be supported by the local economy" (p.4), is responsible for media industries dominating a market and not necessarily "cultural imperialism."

Another major argument of cultural/media imperialism is that American cultural goods are interpreted as flowing mostly one-way (Schiller 1976; Fraser 2003; Germann 2005) According to Ulf Hannerz (1992), "The center mostly speaks, while the periphery principally listens" (p.219). Jonathan Inda and Renato Rosaldo (2002) responded by saying, "But this does not mean that the periphery does not talk back at all" (p.18). Take

the case of food: there are certain diverse cuisines around the world – such as Indian, Chinese, Korean, Thai, German, Italian, and Mexican. If this were not the case then we would only have Western cultural cuisine available. Appadurai's (1996) ideas of "scapes" do not flow primarily from Western nations; he shows that the periphery can also use these "scapes" to influence Western core areas. For example, the presence of immigrant communities (ethnoscapes) in most large Western cities has enriched food and music choices available.

Another example involves South Korea's entertainment production. According to media studies and communication professor Woongjae Ryoo (2008), "South Korea is the most wired country in the world and its entertainment products (e.g. drama serials, movies, pop music and online video games) are now consumed worldwide" (p.874). In Asia these popular trends are typically referred to as the "Korean Wave" (*Hallyu* in Korean), a term used to reflect the popularity of domestic cultural products that have hit neighboring countries including but not limited to Japan, China, Hong Kong, Singapore, Taiwan, Thailand, Malaysia, Mongolia, Vietnam and Indonesia (Shim 2006). Other cases, such as religion and music do not appear to be flowing in one direction. It is evident that not just Christianity and Judaism command the attention of the faithful but increasingly also non-Western religions such as Islam, Hinduism, and Buddhism. Or take music: the listening preferences of those throughout the world are not simply just westernized rock-and-roll or R&B but also samba, salsa, reggae, *rai*, juju, and many more. It is well known that various forms of martial arts such as *karate*, *jujitsu*, Muay Thai and taekwondo were not created in the West. There are countless examples of

cultural flows from many different parts of the world. It is difficult to acknowledge a one-way mode of cultural flow.

Ideas Behind Cultural Hybridization

On another level, anthropologists have come to conceptualize aspects of culture as re/territorialized. This term refers to the process of reinscribing culture in new time-space contexts and relocating it in specific cultural environments (Bennett 2001; Lull 2000). For example, *Hallyu* has been viewed as a way to spread Korean traditional culture and pop culture abroad despite South Korea's fixed geographical location. *Hallyu* is meant for all Korean people and those who enjoy Korean culture despite where they are located around the world. It is a concept that transcends geographical barriers (J. Kim 2007). Different cultural forms become resources that can be inscribed with new meanings relating to a particular local context within which such products are appropriated (Bennett 2001; Lull 2000). African American rap and hip-hop infused into the style of South Korean popular music can be seen as an example (Um 2013). The spread of religion is another example. Moreover, this concept of a re/territorialized culture can be seen throughout many localities around the world. Carved out cultural niches such as Korea Town and Little China can be visited throughout different metropolises in the USA, the Jewish quarters in the city of Fez, or vast amounts of different foreign restaurant located in different countries can all be seen as cultural dwellings that are re/territorialized.

With respect to certain cultural forms, hybridization is defined as "The ways in which forms become separated from existing practices and recombine with new forms in new practices" (Rowe and Schelling 1991: 231). In the simplistic view, cultural hybridization can mean the mixing of two or more cultures or forms. According to communication professor Marwan Kraidy (2005), cultural hybridization can refer to the fusion of distinct forms, styles, or identities that span across national or cultural boundaries. Global theorist Jan Pieterse (2009) argued that the interconnection and interdependence of all global areas occur in a less purposeful way and that globalization is also less coherent or dominant than imperialism. The idea of cultural hybridization offers an opportunity for local cultures and traditions to be highlighted. In this light, globalization can be interpreted as something constructed around local culture and local interpretation (Canclini 2001; Pieterse 2009). Globalization by means of hybridization can refer to the reinforcement of localism, as in "Think globally, act locally" (Pieterse 1994: 165). As such, hybridization discourse may provide a better theoretical alternative to cultural and media imperialism, since it accentuates the adaptation and active negotiation of global processes with local norms, customs, taste, and traditions.

The approach of cultural hybridization can refer to the methodology of montage and collage (Pieterse 1994). It is the "Cross-cultural plots of music, clothing, behavior, advertising, theatre, body language, or visual communication, spreading multi-ethnic and multi-centric patterns" (Canevacci 1993: 3). Therefore, cultural hybridization can refer to wide varieties of intercultural elements. Hybridization could refer to the fusion of religious forms. For example, early Africans transplanted in the Americas identified with

certain characteristics of Christian saints because they resembled similar characteristics of religious deities from their own culture. As a result, a different way of worship and ritual came about through the use of music and African cultural traditions.

Another way to look at hybridization is through the development and syncretism of music. In the world today we have unique mixtures of Japanese rap, Korean pop music, hip-hop, Cuban samba, gangsta rap, country rock, and so on. In this light, hybridization reveals itself as new practices of cultural and creative expression. For instance, South Korean hip-hop developed some distinct local characteristics by introducing elements of popular and traditional forms and by mixing Korean and English lyrics in ways that were considered meaningful to young audiences (Um 2013). In the case of Algerian *rai*, it developed as a hybrid blend of rural and cabaret musical genres. *Rai* musicians absorbed an array of musical styles such as Spanish flamenco, *gnawa* from Morocco, French cabaret, and rapid rhythms created by the Berbers, an Arabic nomadic tribe (Lavie and Swedenburg 1996).

In the example of Asia, there is a strengthening of their developmental routes by embracing and utilizing local and global strategies of appropriating and spreading popular culture in the context of the new global economic situation (Chadha and Kavoori 2000). For example, local cultures appropriate global goods and styles, including music, cuisine, cinema, fashion, and so on, and inscribe their everyday meaning into them (Bhabha 1994; Young 2003; Shim 2006). In the case of Shakespearian theatre, the play "Henry IV," set during the age of European feudalism, has been set in the age of the Japanese Samurai style in Japan (Kreidt 1987: 255). In this view, processes of

globalization pave way for different cultures to blend together certain elements and express creativity in new forms and influence people toward diverse cultural forms. This idea of cultural hybridization can be exemplified in South Korea's entertainment industry of film and music. The South Korean film industry emulated and appropriated modern production models from the U.S. media system with the mantra "Learning from Hollywood" (Shim 2006: 32), in which South Korean films were reshaped into better production valued films while maintaining distinctive South Korean cultural content and creativity. For instance, successful young film directors, in their creative use, appropriation, and adaptation of foreign cultural influences, construct new hybrid cultural forms (King and Craig 2002). Hybrid cultural forms provide an important means for self-definition against past authoritarian measures and American cultural hegemony (Shin 2005). For example, one film critic noted that South Korean films present an image of South Korean society as highly modernized but still reflecting Asian traits such as Confucian traditions and an emphasis on family and social hierarchy (Shin 2005). The music industry saw a movement of cultural hybridization with the syncretism of a wide range of international and local musical genres. The "Korean Wave" can be seen as an example of modern and traditional forms of culture combined (Chua and Iwabuchi 2008). This form of hybridization has found a common place in K-Pop music, which at times have fostered the blending of rock, rap, traditional song, dance, hip-hop, and pop into a single album (Shim 2006).

Cultural hybridization in the context of South Korean popular culture may offer a more widespread approach to understanding processes of globalization. Cultural

hybridization recognizes the increasing amount of diverse forms that are being created

through intercultural contact and the different ways cultures appropriate, inspire, and

reclaim diverse or distinctive cultural elements in new defining ways (Pieterse 1994;

2009; Shin 2005; Shim 2006). This type of hybridization occurs as local cultural agents

interact and negotiate with global forms, using them as resources in which local people

construct their own cultural spaces and styles, which can best be exemplified through

South Korean film and music. Therefore, cultural hybridization seems to be a fitting

approach to better understand some of the complex processes of South Korean

globalization and culture. Furthermore, the dimensions of cultural identity and

nationalism needs to be explored to better grasp the processes of globalization in

relations to better understand the reproduction and maintenance of culture and its

cultural forms.

Cultural Identity

Global theorist John Tomlinson (1999) pointed out that culture is widely

regarded as a key dimension to globalization. According to sociologist Manuel Castells

(2010), "Our world and our lives are being shaped by the conflicting trends of

globalization and identity" (p.2). For Castells, the primary push back of globalization is

in the "widespread surge of powerful expressions of collective identity that challenge

globalization…on behalf of cultural singularity and people's control over their lives and

environment" (p.2). From this perspective, it could be interpreted as the reinforced

power of local culture that offers some sort of resistance to the centrifugal force of

American cultural power. Some social movements based upon cultural identity may revolve around issues of gender, sexuality, religion, ethnicity, youth, and nationality as forces of resistance against authority and uniformity. In the academic underpinnings of sociology and anthropology, human agency is constructed and shaped by identity.

There are also considerable cultural efforts exercised by nation-states in binding local populations together (Tomlinson 2003). For example, in the case of South Korea, the evolution of cultural policy as a governmental priority has been primarily concerned with establishing cultural identity through the reinforcement and development of local culture and arts, as well as the promotion of the quality of cultural life and fostering cultural industries (Yim 2002). Before the 1990s, South Korea witnessed a negative impact from the inflow of American culture on national cultural identity, due to the influence of historical experiences such as Japanese colonialism (1905-1945) and the Korean War (1950-1953) (Yim 2002). However, these historical experiences that ranged from colonialism, resistance, civil war, to American cultural imports throughout the 1970s-1990s have been instrumental in developing cultural identity policy for South Korea. An emphasis on traditional culture and its cultural industry have become a major priority in South Korean globalization management, especially in its efforts to preserve and reformulate traditional aspects into a global and local sphere. Of course, characteristics and causes of the issue of cultural identity vary, depending on the characteristics of the countries in which cultural identity is formulated and transformed (Yim 2002). According to Tomlinson (2003):

> "The social-psychology of attachment to locality is a powerful phenomenon, but it is also a complex one, with different possible modes of articulation and

different consequent implications for people's sense of self and existential well-being. And these differences are all relative to cultural context" (p.272).

For example, notions of local identity, nation, or nationalism can be interpreted as an intensification of domestic institutions and cultural policies in which social units and nation-states act as nations to mediate between the local and global (Um 2013; Ho 2009) In other words, nations are directed by people's will or desire to adapt, change, or resist outside forces.

The idea of cultural identity is indeed, a powerful phenomenon, complex and with different outcomes. Religions and traditions are another example of cultural expression that proliferates unique identities like Muslim women who wear hijab or Aboriginals and African tribes who continue to re-create traditional tattoos, or any person who identifies with a certain ancestry, religion, or culture. Music can have a profound impact on identity. K-pop for example is geared toward a more youthful audience that expresses postmodern issues regarding generational differences, modernism vs. traditional, criticisms of Asian or Western cultures in a way that can rework cultural identities (Um 2013). South Korean melodrama films can illuminate cultural and historical expressions or events that are related to specific identities that are different from Western identities. For example, ideas of Confucianism, historical events, social hierarchy, family, fashion and so on are ways to cultivate and maintain identity (Paquet 2007). Cultural identity, much like language, history, and ancestry can be interpreted as a collective or individual treasure for different people.

Nationalism

The concept of nationalism can also be seen as a powerful tool that unites people together. In anthropologist Benedict Anderson's (2006) revised book *Imagined Communities* about nationalism; he defined nationalism as an imagined political community. "Imagined" in the sense that members from even the smallest nation do not know most of their fellow members personally, yet there still remains an image of community and fellowship. It is also "imagined" as a community, because, regardless of the actual inequality and exploitation that may happen in each nation, the nation itself is generally conceived as a deep comradeship, or fraternity. One of the most profound notions of nationalism is the willingness to die for such an imagined place. Anderson proposed that the origin of nationalism was in its cultural roots. This can be demonstrated through language, symbols, folk heroes, and religion. Anderson does not believe that nationalism is declining due to globalization.

One extreme example to the testament of nationalism can come in the expressive fashion of resistance against a ruling power. As Appadurai (1996) noted, the nation-state can serve as a type of resistance against outside forces. Throughout history there is an abundance of historical accounts where resistance to imperialist rule leads to an inevitable social movement against the ruling class. Accounts of European empire and colonialism have always depicted local opposition. Another example can be seen in the case of Japanese rule over the Korean Peninsula (1905-1945), where the Japanese were met with constant disobedience and rebellion from Korean nationalists forced to learn

Japanese or conform to Japanese culture (C. Kim 2007). Resistance against North

Korean ideology can be seen as a way to protect South Korean nationalism.

Another example of South Korean nationalism can be found in governmental

efforts to promote South Korea's national "brand" worldwide (R. Kim 2011). One of the

efforts made by the Presidential Council on Nation Branding was promoting taekwondo

(South Korean's national sport) in different countries in order to promote South Korea's

national sport. Other efforts can be found in the global promotion of South Korean

language through the King Sejong Institute (named after the famous king who invented

hangeul, the Korean alphabet) and South Korean government's campaign to globalize

hansik (cuisine) (Kim 2011). Other areas of South Korean nationalism can be found in

homegrown films. Some of the most popular films in South Korea have focused on

historical events such as Japanese colonialism, Korean War, and U.S. neocolonialism

(Gateward 2007).

Chapter Summary

To summarize this chapter: Globalization is defined in many different ways. It

has been interpreted as a historical phenomenon (Hannerz 1992, 1996: Pieterse 1994), as

a process (Friedman 1999), a condition (Appadurai 1996), new (Appadurai 1996). In the

context of South Korea, effects of globalization have created new and novel issues and

solutions toward cultural proliferation and self-preservation as a response to global

processes (Kang, 2000; Sparks, 2013).

Proponents of cultural/media imperialism (Schiller 1969, 1976; Bourdieu and Wacquant 1999; Fraser 2003; Germann 2005: Hamm 2005) saw a direct correlation between American power and peripheral cultural loss. Other terms have been used interchangeably for cultural imperialism (White 2001). Schiller (1969) saw American media flows as a destructive process on cultural identities. Cultural/media imperialism has viewed American popular culture (film, music, fashions, fast food) as a confirmation to conforming to American values by non-westerners (Schiller 1976; Fraser 2003). The inflow of American popular goods has been interpreted as seductive and persuasive (Fraser 2003) and coercive (Hamm 2005). Germann (2005) argued that the audiovisual industry is on an uneven playing field against Hollywood, which can lead to the depredation of domestic market shares and cultural loss.

On the other hand, cultural/media imperialism theory, in general, has been criticized by not taking into account audience reception to American popular culture (Katz and Liebes 1990; Tomlinson 1991, 1999). Cultural/media imperialism is criticized as too simplistic and not recognizing multiple directional flows of culture (Tomlinson 1991; 1999: Inda and Rosaldo 2002). Other studies have focused on the resistance to foreign media in regional locations and preference for local broadcasting (Chadha and Kavoori 2000). Tomlinson (1991, 1999) critiqued some notions of cultural imperialism as less receptive to empirical analyses. Appadurai's (1996) idea of "scapes" can show nationalism and the "nation-state" as a tool of resistance. Friedman (1994) saw consumption as a form of self-definition.

A counter-argument to cultural/media imperialism is called cultural hybridization or syncretism (Pieterse 1994; 2009). One aspect of cultural hybridization involves creativity, appropriation, and adaptation in music, fashion, or films (King and Craig 2002). One example can be found in the re/territorialization of the "Korean Wave" and the different meanings it can convey to different audiences around the world (Bennett 2001; Lull 2000). This can include the combination of Western, Eastern, and local genres reinscribed into new cultural contexts and everyday lives (Bhabha 1994; Young 2003; Shim 2006). Hybrid cultural forms provide an important means for self-definition against past authoritarian measures and Western cultural hegemony (Shin 2005). The idea of cultural hybridization offers an opportunity for local cultures and traditions to be highlighted and create new meanings (Pieterse 1994, 2009).

Tomlinson (1999) pointed out that culture is widely regarded as a key dimension to globalization. In many ways, cultural identity is constructed and protected through cultural policy (Yim 2002). Sometimes, historical and contemporary issues may have an impact on cultural identity and policy toward culture and identity (Yim 2002). Traditional culture still remains an important aspect of modern culture and identity (Yim 2002). Issues of cultural identity vary, depending on the characteristics of the countries in which cultural identity is formulated and transformed (Yim 2002). Some ideas of culture and identity through music have reshaped local identities (Um 2013). Ideas of culture and identity can be reproduced in films as well (Paquet 2007).

Anderson's (2006) definition of nationalism offers an important dimension to understanding culture and resistance to outside forces. It is defined as an "imagined"

community in which people conform under the same images, symbols, religions, language, folklore, etc. (Anderson 2006). Nationalism is rooted deeply into culture (Anderson 2006) In a global sense, national "branding" is a way to promote cultural industries in favor of national interests (R. Kim 2011). Nationalism can also be highlighted in homegrown films in which aspects of the past or present become important to people's national and cultural experiences (Gateward 2007).

In the context of South Korea, notions of cultural hybridization, cultural identity, and nationalism will be used as theoretical reference points that highlight South Korea's attempt toward managing globalization in their favor.

CHAPTER IV

BACKGROUND ON CULTURAL INDUSTRY

AND CULTURAL POLICY

This chapter focuses particularly on how the South Korean government has

sought to deal with issues of globalization by recognizing the value of its own culture.

Due to the competitive economic nature of globalization, South Korea recognized its

culture and national identity as the vehicle toward economic development, socio-

economic prosperity, and global recognition. Cultural policy has, therefore provided a

significant rationale for government promotion and subsidy to the cultural sector, which

includes aspects of popular culture and to some extent elements of traditional culture,

throughout the 1990s and into the 21st century. The substantive role played by the South

Korean government is one of the major factors explaining the nation's success in

managing globalization. Theoretically, studies of cultural policy assume that wide ranges

of policy tools are available to a government in developing and promoting its cultural

industries (Kwon and Kim 2013). Some of these may include legislation to support

particular industries through subsidies in relation to distribution, marketing, and

consumption of cultural products. Government, through the use of cultural policies, can

also act as a protective barrier for culture and domestic markets against foreign

companies.

Push Toward Globalization

President Kim Young-sam (1993-1998), the first civilian to take office in over 30 years, advocated the "Creation of the New Korea" as a political campaign slogan that focused on improving the status of South Korea in global society (Y. Kim 1995, 1996, 1997; Yim 2002). This became known as *segyehwa* (*segye* meaning "world" and *hwa* meaning "becoming/turning into") (S. Kim 2000; Shin 2005; Shim 2002, 2006; Ryoo 2005, 2008). This push toward globalization was an effort to eliminate governmental malpractice that stemmed from previous authoritarian regulations and control of public and private lives (S. Kim 2000). President Kim emphasized ideas of cultural democracy, the creativity of the people, regional culture, cultural industries and cultural tourism, unification, and the globalization of South Korean culture as being its main cultural policy objectives (Yim 2002). Moreover, Kim's government came to emphasize the importance of culture and the arts, as well as the significance of a national identity. President Kim outlined the importance of Korean identity and culture:

> Globalization must be underpinned by Koreanization. We cannot be global citizens without a good understanding of our own culture and tradition... Koreans should march out into the world on the strength of their unique culture and traditional values. Only when we maintain our national identity and uphold our intrinsic national spirit will we be able to successfully globalize (Y. Kim 1995: 273).

The quote emphasizes the importance of culture and nationalism as the primary vehicle leading toward globalization. Samuel Kim (2000) noted that no other nation in the post-Cold War has embraced globalization as publicly as South Korea. In previous years (1960s to late-1980s), South Korea was listed as one of the poorest and least developed

countries in the world, plagued by former military dictatorships, and governmental control on all industrial sectors, including the media. Political scientists Barry Gills and Dong-Sook Gills (2000) argued, "In any definition, globalization demands fundamental choices. A 'strategic choice' suggests a political decision taken about the basic structure and goals of the economy and society; which will determine the nature of its development" (pg. 30). So what was the new strategy?

Globalization Strategy

According to Gills and Gills (2000), South Korea's globalization strategy was based on a dual interpretation of globalization. One dimension involved a wide range of reforms, encompassing political, economic, social and cultural restructuring. The other focused on the rapid international competiveness of South Korea's economy through market liberalization. Regarding demands for market liberalization, it was also meant to improve South Korean corporations' competiveness with foreign companies in the domestic market (S. Kim 2000; Shin 2005; Shim 2002, 2006; Ryoo 2005, 2008).

The media industry was a primary market that had been dominated by foreign entertainment content, particularly in film and music. The media sector in the late-1980s and early-1990s had almost entirely faded out because of governmental censorship and protectionism. According to Media and communication researcher Doobo Shim (2002), "In a film market where only about five Korean movies a year could attract more than 100,000 viewers, several Hollywood films enjoyed Korean viewership of more than 1 million people in the early 1990s" (p.339). Films like *Ghost* (1990) drew an audience of

3.5 million, *Schindler's List* (1993) had 2 million, and *Jurassic Park* (1993) at 1.47

million (*Economic Report*, July 1994; Shim 2002, 2006). The popularity of foreign

entertainment almost led to the exclusion of the local film industry. Moreover, the South

Korean pop music market was not lively due to early authoritarian constraints. South

Korean youth preferred American pop songs to local ones. Live concerts were not

common and the Korea Broadcasting Systems (KBS) and Munhwa Broadcasting

Company (MBC) had a monopoly on music flow and controlled the distribution and

direction of music consumption. These early regulations deprived the country of the

opportunity for diverse elements of local pop music to grow (Shim 2006).

It was not until the conclusion of the Uruguay Round (UR) in 1994 at the

General Agreement on Trade and Tariffs (GATT) that the South Korean government

realized the importance of "copyright" industries such as the motion picture and music

business (S. Kim 2000; Shin 2005). It meant that all member countries of GATT,

including South Korea, were obligated to open their markets in media and culture (Shim

2002, 2006; Shin 2005). The importance of culture in the global economy was becoming

more and more significant (*Chosun Ilbo*, 7 January 1995). The South Korean

government's approach to globalization was triggered by recognition of culture as an

industry that could produce huge profits and popularity (Shim 2002, 2006; Shin 2005).

At about the same time, the Japanese company SONY's acquisition of Columbia

Pictures and CBS Records and Matsushita's buyout of MCA Studios were seen as a

potential strategy for South Korea's economy to enter the cultural industry (Shim 2002,

2006).

Cultural Industry Development and Governmental Support

In May 1994, the Presidential Advisory Council on Science and Technology reported to President Kim Young-sam an astonishing statistic showing that profits from the Hollywood blockbuster *Jurassic Park* (1993) equaled the export revenue of 1.5 million Hyundai cars, urging the government to promote the high-technology media industry as a strategic national industry (H. Kim 1994; Shim 2002; Shin 2005). Hyundai Motors' annual foreign revenue numbered only about 640,000 cars meaning that a quality-made film could be worth more than two years of Hyundai's car exports (*Chosun Ilbo*, 18 May 1994).

The Kim Young-sam government set out to promote and support the media industry as the strategic industry leading into the 21st century (M.B. Kim 1994). The government created the Basic Motion Picture Law in 1995. The law aimed to establish basic conditions to assist in the advancement of local media culture and the promotion of the media industry by allocating governmental funds and providing tax incentives for film production (Shim 2008). The law also allowed entertainment companies such as SM Entertainment to cultivate its musical talent, triggering local conglomerates (*chaebol*) and investment capital into the cultural entertainment sector. These included Samsung, Hyundai, LG, and Daewoo (Shin 2005; Shim 2006, 2008; Ryoo 2008). One of the most notable features of the law was in the creation of a Film Promotion Fund, which repealed regulations requiring official approval from the Ministry of Culture and Sports in advance for exporting films or co-producing films with other foreign companies (Shin 2005). In 1996, Kim abolished state censorship protocols in the film and music industry.

As a result, South Korean film directors and musicians enjoyed greater freedom of expression and creativity. These deregulations and support for the media industry encouraged the globalization of South Korea's cultural industry. In addition, it should also be noted that since 1967 the government has had an enforced screen quota that limited the number of days per-year non-domestic movies could be shown (Shin 2005; Shim 2006; Ryoo 2008). The screen quota has contributed to the rapid increase in its film market. As mentioned before, the film industry prior to the 1990s lacked the ability to raise capital for films. However, since 2006 the government reduced its screen quota for domestic films from 146 days to 73 days (Shim 2006). However, with the increase in the number of local films made each year, most films do not remain in theatres more than three or four weeks. It mostly depends on their popularity and reception.

The entry of large local corporations (*chaebol*) into the cultural sector played an important role in enhancing infrastructure and direction in the media industry. Some aspects included better marketing and distribution strategies, financing, production quality, and fresh talent (Shin 2005; Shim 2006, 2008). However, *chaebol*'s involvement was short-lived because of the financial crisis in 1997-1998 in which big businesses had to pull out of the cultural sector. Venture-capital companies soon replaced *chaebol*. Even though *chaebol* had to pull out of the cultural industry they helped pave the way for South Korean cinema and music in terms of technical qualities, hiring knowledgeable young talent, and by promoting efficiency.

South Korean pop music (K-pop) made a major turn after the government lifted its control and regulation on the music industry in the early-1990s. These governmental

initiatives transformed the local music industry into a lively scene. The band Seo Taiji and Boys is credited for the creation of modern Korean pop music and the expansion of the domestic music industry (Shim 2006). The band formed in the early-1990s, developing and appropriating local and Western blends of music. Seo Taiji and Boys' popularity was based on an innovative hybridization of music. The band creatively mixed genres like rap, soul, rock and roll, techno, punk, and so on (Shim 2006). Seo Taiji was also chosen as one of fifty people who had changed Korean society since 1945 (Shim 2006). Seo Taiji and Boys arguably revolutionized the Korean music industry and inspired future generations. There has been an endless crop of imitation groups since their disbandment in 1996. Due in a large part to the government's deregulations in the music industry, the growth and popularity of K-pop has become a major aspect of South Korea's cultural industry in globalization.

Objectives of Cultural Policy

The objectives of cultural policy such as the economic importance of culture, identity, and arts continued to be the driving forces for promoting cultural development into the Kim Dae-jung government (1998-2003), especially in the wake of its financial crisis. Kim stressed the promotion of the cultural industry as a top priority (*Korea Herald*, 26 February 1998) and saw the 21st century as the "Century of Culture" for South Korea (*Korea Herald* 1999). For instance, the Basic Culture Industry Promotion Law (1999) was created. This law further established the promotion of film, animation, music, and multi-media and established the Korean Culture and Contents Agency (1999)

to support animation, music, and video games (Shin 2005). As part of Kim's cultural policy reform effort, the Ministry of Culture and Tourism (1998) was responsible to promote cultural events, regional culture, arts, history, tourism, religion, and funding cultural industries (www.mcst.go.kr). Notable programs for the Ministry of Culture and Tourism included the preservation and modernization of the nation's traditional and artistic legacies by promoting local artists, constructing computer networks for cultural and historical information, and publicizing the cases of successful artists (*Korea Herald* 1999).

In 1998, the Korea Record Center Network (KRCNet) was established for the music industry as a joint investment between the government and smaller-sized record companies in order to promote and cultivate local musical talents. Additionally, the Korean Film Council (KOFIC) was created under the Basic Culture Industry Promotion Law to strengthen efforts to promote and globalize South Korean cinema. For example, the KOFIC set up pavilions at major international film festivals, promoted homegrown films, encouraged young professionals to enter the film industry, targeted overseas markets, and provided financial incentives to successful filmmakers. Between 1999 and 2003, the government created more than 60 investment companies to finance the film industry. By 2011, this number has increased to a total of 551 (MCST 2011). The Kim Dae-jung government also relied on more advanced technologies such as ICT (Information Communication Technology) and the Internet as a way to promote and globalize South Korean music and culture. In fact, ICT infrastructure established under governmental initiatives and cultural policies maximized its competiveness in

international markets. For example, the major entertainment agencies, such as SM Entertainment, have used ICT infrastructures like YouTube as a primary marketing tool to promote K-pop. This has become a major strategy utilized to overcome distribution barriers formerly controlled by multinationals in the global market. The success of the Kim Dae-jung government cannot be overstated. It marked the expansion of South Korea's cultural industry in both domestic and global markets.

Under the Roh Moo-hyun (2003-2008) government, "The Korean Wave" was in full swing due to the policies enacted by the Kim Dae-jung government. The Korean Wave simply refers to the popularity of South Korean popular culture in other Asian countries, as well as in other continents (Ryoo 2009). Moreover, the success of South Korea's popular cultural industry such as film, TV, and music prompted Roh to extend its nation's cultural policy to promote and reinvigorate South Korea's traditional past and identity home and abroad. For instance, in 2005, former Minister of Culture and Tourism, Chung Dong-chae stated, "The committee will globalize such traditional cultural content as *hanji* (mulberry paper), *hanbok* (traditional dress), and *hanok* (traditional housing) to enhance Korea's cultural image and support globalization of the *Han* brand" (*Korea Herald* 2005; Ryoo 2008: 881).

Roh also outlined a plan for the creation of South Korean Centers abroad through the Korea Tourism Organization. The centers abroad would be an equivalent of Germany's Goethe Institutes in order to offer wide-ranging services on arts, cultural industry, history, traditional culture, tourism and sports (Ryoo 2008). Other efforts to promote traditional elements of Korean culture included campaigning to be inscribed on

UNESCO's Intangible Heritage list. Between 2008-2013, there have been 16 Korean elements inscribed on the list. Since 2003, the governments of South Korea (Roh Moo-hyun, 2003-2008) (Lee Myung-bak, 2008-2013) (Park Geun-hye, 2013- Present) have focused on extending South Korea's cultural industry to allow more traditional forms related to living spaces, diets, and clothing. Policies have also shifted to focus on Korean cultural education abroad through South Korean cultural centers. South Korea's efforts to be included on UNESCO's Intangible Heritage list represents a symbolic importance and as a necessary measure to preserve outdated forms of culture. These efforts have contributed to the sustainable expansion of the "Korean Wave" and its culture, which had previously only focused on pop culture, through expanding the interest and recognition of traditional culture, which can be considered the cradle of Korean culture.

Chapter Summary

Since 1993, the different governments of South Korea established laws and financial support to its cultural industry in order to enhance economic prosperity and global awareness. This was also a way to protect domestic markets against foreign companies. Cultural policies were established not only as a means of resisting outside forces, but also as a tool for globalizing national culture and the arts. As a result, cultural policy that focused on national identity and its cultural industry became a rationale for government promotion and subsidies. Kim Young-sam's government focused on globalization as a means to enhance South Korea's position within international and domestic markets. This was done by nurturing and enriching its cultural industry through

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market liberalization, abolishing the state censorship protocols on media, and creating governmental subsidies for the film and music industry. Moreover, the government continued to enforce a screen quota as a way to build up South Korea's film market.

Kim Dae-jung's policies focused on increasing subsidies for the cultural industry by creating legislation that would invest and assist in film and music production and the creation of various groups like the Korean Culture and Contents Agency, KRCNet, KOFIC, and the Ministry of Culture and Tourism. The use of ICT technology and the Internet also assisted South Korea's globalization in film, music, and cultural information by reaching a global audience. With the success of the "Korean Wave," particularly in Asia and also in other continents, President Roh Moo-hyun extended its cultural policy to include traditional elements as part of its cultural industry and national interests, which continue to this day.

CHAPTER V

HYBRIDIZATION OF FILM AND K-POP AND

THE SPREAD OF POPULAR CULTURE

The aim of this chapter is to explore South Korean film and music as aspects of broader cultural strategies of self-definition in a local and global context. Cultural hybridization acts as a theoretical framework to help explain how South Korea has been able to manage and benefit from globalization by developing and spreading aspects of its own popular culture, which serves to promote South Korean pop culture and acts as a strategy of self-definition. As mentioned in the previous chapter governmental support and cultural policy for South Korean cultural industry has helped it reach its current state.

Herbert Schiller (1969; 1976), an acclaimed proponent of cultural/media imperialism has claimed cultural institutions from the United States (music, TV, film, media, fast food, etc.) primarily influence social thinking in non-Western nations, which reproduces American values. Matthew Fraser (2003) followed up on this key theme raised in Schiller's critical analysis of cultural institutions that influenced social thinking by pointing out the role played by "soft power," which reinforces common American norms, values, beliefs, and lifestyle.

However, I would argue that both Schiller and Fraser failed to acknowledge that aspects of American popular culture could in fact influence non-Western values by taking elements of American popular culture like film production and musical forms and

customize or inject them into local expressions, thus creating a hybrid form. Moreover,

Christophe Germann (2005) argued that most countries around the world cannot

compete with Hollywood blockbusters because of their huge investments in marketing

and dominance in foreign market shares, and that cultural content was not a factor in

movie choice. I argue that a combination of cultural content and high-level film

production has played a major part in South Korea's film success.

A major component of South Korea's self-definition strategy involves the

appropriation and articulation of global popular cultural forms as a way to express local

sentiment, creativity, tradition, and culture through hybridization of film and K-pop.

Hybridization found in South Korean films involves the mixing of American popular

cultural forms found in blockbusters and dramas, which amount to high-quality

production and special effects combined into local and regional cultural context that are

responsive to political, national, or historical subject matters. Also, South Korean films

have gained global prominence in international film festivals and even by Hollywood. I

will show evidence of South Korea's success in the film industry found in its control

over the local market share, the increasing number of film attendees and films produced

each year, success in international film festivals, Hollywood's attempts to buy

reproduction rights and most importantly cultural content. Furthermore, K-pop has

incorporated a variety of genres such as pop, pop ballad, rock, rap, hip-hop, techno, and

dance music, which are largely derived from Western popular culture that have been

appropriated and transformed into a popular local expression.

K-pop has gained an enormous amount of popularity around the world, particularly

through information communication technology (ICT) channels such as YouTube and other social networks. Evidence of K-pop's explosive popularity is found in the number of sales and its ability to appeal to a wide-ranging audience around the world and by fans that proliferate and spread K-pop through social networking services and YouTube. The hybrid cultural forms found in South Korean films and K-pop provide an important means for their self-definition that can challenge Western cultural hegemony.

South Korean Cinema

In 1999, the South Korean action thriller *Shiri* paved way for films as the beginning of the "Korean Wave" in cinema. The movie attracted 5.8 million viewers (2.44 million in Seoul alone) in South Korea and surpassed the local viewership for Hollywood's *Titanic* (Shim 2006). The film was shown in Japan, Hong Kong, Taiwan, and Singapore and received critical acclaim. It grossed $14 million at the Japanese box office alone (M. Kim 2000). In February 2001, a military-themed film entitled *Joint Security Area* broke the box office record set by *Shiri* with 2.5 million in Seoul. *Shiri* and *Joint Security Area* became the first Asian imports into Japan to be shown on as many as 280 screens (M. Kim 2001). *My Tutor Friend*, a gangland saga, released in the summer of 2001 again beat the box office record and sold 8.2 million tickets nationwide (Leong 2003; Shim 2006). The turn of the century brought about an alternative to Hollywood in South Korea, steered by better film quality, cultural content, and creativity.

As proof of the first-class quality and creativity of South Korean cinema, a number

of South Korean movies have been invited to compete in top-tier international film festivals around the world each year. South Korean films and directors have even won awards. In 2002, South Korean film director Im Kwon-taek won the Best Director award at the Cannes Film Festival for his film *Chihwaseon*, and Lee Chang-dong won the award for Best Direction at the Venice Film Festival for *Oasis*. In 2004, director Park Chan-wook won the Grand Prix for the film *Old Boy* at Cannes. Kim Ki-duk won the Best Director award at both the Berlin International Film Festival and Venice (Shim 2006). Additionally, South Korean directors have won Best Director awards at the three most prestigious international film festivals. In 2013, Hong Sang-soo won Best Director at the Locarno International Film Festival in Switzerland for the film *Our Sushi.* Hong is considered one of the most-respected directors in the field of international film and has also won previous awards at both the Berlin International Film Festival and Cannes (*Korea Herald*, 18 August, 2013). The South Korean government's support of the cultural industry in terms of film led to the creation of the Busan International Film Festival, now considered the best of its kind in Asia (Shin 2003; Shim 2006).

Directors such as Kim Ki-duk, Kim Ji-woon, Park Chan-wook, Bong Joon-ho, Lee Chang-dong, and Hong Sang-soo have become the big names that represent the South Korean film industry. According to blogger Cheon ji (2011) who posted in Advanced Technology and Design Korea, an online blog project of the Presidential Council of Nation Branding and Ministry of Knowledge Economy.

The CEO of M-Line Distribution, Michelle Son, who focused on the foreign sales of South Korean films, addressed South Korea's market share situation in foreign

markets. Son said North American and European markets consider South Korean films to be top quality among Asian films and the fact that they continuously come out with new and various genres that appeal to audiences worldwide. In the same blog, CEO Youngjoo Suh of Finecut said foreign buyers prefer South Korean films to Japanese films due to production quality. Gloria Fan of Mosaic Media Group, a production company of Hollywood, believed that South Korean films' success originates in powerful storylines (Cheon 2011).

Powerful stories of South Korean films have become an influential channel for Hollywood as well. South Korean films such as *Tell Me Something* (1999), *My Wife is A Gangster* (2001), *Let's Play Dharma* (2001), *Jail Breaker* (2002), *Teacher Mr. Kim* (2003), *Sympathy For Lady Vengeance* (2005), and *Seven Days* (2007) have been sold to Hollywood (Cheon 2011). *A Love Story* (2000) was remade into *The Lake House* (2006) with Sandra Bullock and Keanu Reeves. *Into the Mirror* (2003) was remade into *Mirrors* (2008), which starred Kiefer Sutherland. *A Tale of Two Sisters* (2003) was remade into The *Uninvited* (2009) (Shim 2006; Cheon 2011). Moreover DreamWorks SKG bought the remake rights of *A Tale of Two Sisters* for $2 million, which is twice what the studio paid for the Japanese horror movie, *The Ring* (Shim 2006).

In the February 2013 edition of the *Washington Post*, foreign affairs blogger Max Fisher predicted that South Korea's top directors would come to dominate the Hollywood stage because of popular recent releases such as *The Last Stand*, *Snowpiercer*, *Stoker*, and *The Host* (*Washington Post,* 25 February 2013), all of which South Korean directors. South Korean movies and directors are becoming popular

among Hollywood movie stars and directors as well. Recently, more and more celebrities are making visits to South Korea. Hollywood stars like Hugh Jackman, Tom Cruise, Arnold Schwarzeneggar, Mia Wasikowski, and Leonardo Dicaprio. (Korea.net, 13 March 2013).

In 2003, South Korean cinema broke the box-office record once again. *Silmido*, the film about a South Korean plot to assassinate the North Korean leader Kim Il-sung in the early 1970s attracted 10 million viewers. Also, in 2004, the movie *TaeGukGi* featured two brothers who were torn apart during the Korean War. The film drew an audience of 11.09 million (B. Kim 2004; Shim 2006). South Korean films came to occupy 53.5 percent of the market share in terms of admissions in 2003, up from 15.9 percent in 1993. South Korea exported 164 movies that earned a total revenue of $30,979,000 in 2003 which was a huge profit gain compared to 1993 when only 14 movies were released into the international market (Korean Film Council 2004).

According to *Asia News*, South Korea is currently ranked as the seventh largest film industry worldwide at $45.1 billion (50.8 trillion won[1]). The U.S. entertainment and media sector was valued at $498.8 billion, which held the top spot. Japan came in second with $191.6 billion, followed by China with $115.3 billion and Germany with $97.4 billion (*Asia News*, 18 June 2013). South Korean cinema has also been especially popular in other parts of Asia. In 2003, sales to the Asian regions constituted more than 60 percent of its total foreign sales (Leong 2003). South Korean filmmakers have emulated and appropriated American cultural industries into their own image and local

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[1] South Korean currency

context. According to Shim (2006), "South Koreans have provided their own twists to the foreign styles and forms, by blending and adding their own indigenous characteristics in unique and innovative ways" (pg. 35). Even in more recent years, South Korea's film recognition and audience membership have drastically increased. In October of 2013, South Korean films attracted more than 100 million people to box offices for the second straight year. According to the Korean Film Council (KOFIC), which monitors ticket sales in the country, "…the numbers translate into an average Korean seeing at least two locally made movies this year. South Korea has a population of 50 million." It added that the figure is significant because the 100 million mark was breached 47 days earlier than in 2012 (*Korea Herald*, 5 October 2013). The report added that the overall number of people watching films, both domestic and foreign, reached 165.6 million in the first nine months in 2013, up by more than 22.6 million from the year before (*Korea Herald* 2013). Furthermore, it can be interpreted that South Koreans watched more locally homegrown films than foreign films since it was reported that 100 million South Koreans saw local films alone in South Korea compared to 65.5 million who watched foreign films.

According to a report by the KOFIC, attendance for South Korean films in 2009 was 68,367,797 for 118 local films. In 2010, it was 65,695,522 for 140 local films, a slight decrease. However, 2011 showed a huge jump in attendance at 77,941,654 for 150 local films. In 2012, there was an even higher jump at 112,958,723 for 175 local films, showing the growing popularity and the increasing number of South Korean films made (*Korea Herald*, 29 August 2013). Moreover, by December 2013, the 200 million mark

for moviegoers was broken (Korea.net, 23 December 2013). By the end of 2013, the

Screen Digest reported that South Koreans watched an average of 4.12 films, the most in

the world, followed by Americans with 3.88 films, Australians with 3.75, and the French

with 3.44 (*Korea Herald*, 22 December 2013).

According to Korean Film Biz Zone, a website that monitors the yearly box-

office in South Korea, *Miracle in Cell No. 7*, a South Korean film, topped the chart at

12.8 million. *Iron Man 3,* a Hollywood film came in second at 9 million. *Snowpiercer*,

The Face Reader, *The Berlin File*, *Secretly Great*, *The Terror Live*, *Hide and Seek*, and

Cold Eyes ranked third through ninth in order, all South Korean films. The tenth spot

was respectively Hollywood hit *World War Z* (KOBIZ 2013). It is also noteworthy that

The Face Reader (2013) was reported to be the number one film worldwide for the

weekend of September 22, 2013. It was estimated at $22.3 million for the weekend

(*Benzinga*, 22 September, 2013). Rentrak Corporation, the global leader in box-office

measurements, made the finding. The domestic films' market share was at 59 percent in

2013, up 7 percentage points from the previous year (*Korea Herald* 2013). According to

Kim Young-gi from the Korean Film Council, "I'd have to say the box-office success of

domestic movies really has to do with their substance and quality" (*Korea Herald* 2013).

The reasons for success of domestic films' substance and quality can be found in the

content and context of South Korean culture and lifestyle. For example, the film *The

Berlin File* is a spy thriller about North Korea and *Cold Eyes* highlighted the competitive

nature of the South Korean education system. Both subjects are regarded as hot topics in

the context of South Korea's geopolitical, culture, history, and educational institutions

(*Korea Herald* 2013).

Much of South Korea's success in the film industry is linked to the quality of production, characters, and storylines used to define elements of Korean history and lifestyle, especially when making a blockbuster. During the 1990's, South Korea launched its campaign to improve film quality by using the slogan "Learning from Hollywood" in which South Korean filmmakers emulated and appropriated aspects of Hollywood production quality into their own image and local context by blending and adding their own indigenous characteristics and creativity (Shim 2006). The movie *TaeGukGi* (2004) featured high quality special effects, CGI (computer-generated imagery), and Hollywood-like cinematography found in action/war movies that enhanced the production quality level of the film. However, it was not solely the production quality that made this movie attractive; success also likely lay in the cultural content and subject matter. The film focused on the relationship between two Korean brothers during the Korean War. This type of story and plotline with good quality effects held powerful connotations for the people of South Korea because of the nature of the film's storyline which focused on the Korean War, much like *Saving Private Ryan* (1998) did for Americans and especially for those who had lost family members during war.

The production quality of Hollywood-made films combined with Korean cultural content has continued to define the South Korean film industry as another unique source of innovation for film. In essence, it is the hybridization of high-level production quality combined with Korean characteristics and cultural elements..

Another major trend found in South Korean blockbusters is the reliance on historical events (Choi 2010). For example, movies like *Silmido* (2003), *TaeGukGi* (2004), *The King and the Clown* (2005) and *Masquerade* (2012), are ranked among the top 10 films with the highest number of tickets ever sold in South Korea (Korean Film Council 2014). The adaptation of a historic event into a blockbuster can further function as a marketing strategy to target a film to a larger audience (Choi 2010). In this sense, the South Korean film industry relies on the historical circumstances of Korea, and the people's familiarity with historical events or national concerns. Some of these historical events have incorporated genres like action, espionage, war, and drama.

Hollywood has been argued to rely on presold properties like remakes, best sellers, comics, plays, etc. (Choi 2010). This means that a target audience has already been established. Moreover, Hollywood marketing strategies usually target a younger audience, while South Korean marketing strategies target a multigenerational audience (Shin 2005; Choi 2010). South Korean blockbusters attempt to appeal to as broad an audience as possible by referring to familiar historical events because in the past some South Korean blockbusters' box-office failures were attributed to catering toward mostly young audiences (Choi 2010).

Shiri (1999), directed by Kang-Je-gyu, was considered the first South Korean blockbuster to incorporate Hollywood-like structures. *Shiri* is about a North Korean special agent Lee Bang-hui, who assassinates South Korean politicians. She later undergoes plastic surgery and changes her identity. She eventually falls in love with a South Korean intelligence agent named Yu Jong-won. Later in the movie, North Korean

terrorists infiltrate a research facility in the South to steal a liquid bomb called CTX in order to blow up a soccer stadium during a North vs. South soccer match. Yu foils their attempts to overthrow both governments and ultimately kills Lee in the end. South Korean film specialists like Shin Chi-yun and Julian Stringer (2007) noted that many of the narrative devices and premises referenced the action films of other national origins (Hollywood and France) like the training of a female assassin (*La Femme Nikita*, France) and the dismantling of a bomb (*Speed* and *Die Hard*). *Shiri* employs a variety of Hollywood inspired techniques like special effects and high-quality CGI. Some of the special effects are seen in numerous car chases, shootouts, and multiple explosions: trademarks of Hollywood blockbusters. The combination of Hollywood inspired techniques and a story that focuses on South Korean issues like North-South relations are arguably more popular and relevant to South Koreans than Hollywood blockbuster films. For example, *Shiri* surpassed the South Korean box-office record held by *Titanic* (1997). The name *Shiri* refers to a small fish found in Korea's freshwater streams. At one point in the movie, North Korean commander Park Mu-young delivers a monologue referencing the fish, which can be found in freshwater streams on both sides of the DMZ not knowing to which side it belongs (Leong 2001).

Film specialist Chris Berry (2003) dubbed the concept "blockbuster strategy" as a way to draw upon Hollywood's model and indigenize blockbusters by injecting movies with local concerns and subject matter. For instance, *Shiri* came out right around the time of the "Sunshine" policy created by President Kim Dae-jung to encourage better relations between North and South Korea. The film infused historical and political

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themes about the ongoing threat of North Korea but also evoked a social compatibility between the lovers. Film reviewer Anthony Leong (2001) characterized the film as one of the most influential films for South Korean blockbusters, signaling the moment when South Korean filmmakers finally learned how to compete on the world stage.

Shiri may have set the stage for South Korean blockbusters but *Silmido* (2003) was the first South Korean film to surpass 10 million viewers, as well as overtake *The Lord of the Rings: Return of the King* (2003) for the number one best selling film in 2003 (Korean Film Council 2004). *TaeGukGi* (2004) held the number one spot in 2004, attracting 11.4 million viewers, which beat out Hollywood's blockbuster *Troy* (2004) (Korean Film Council 2005). *Silmido* and *TaeGukGi* both involve Korean historical events that concern the North-South conflict.

Silmido (2003) directed by Kang Woo-suk, focuses on a true story and is considered one of the most unflattering wrinkles in South Korean military history. The film's story begins in 1968 when 31 North Korean commandos infiltrate South Korea in a botched attempt to assassinate then-President Park Chung-he. In efforts to retaliate, the South Korean government assembled Unit 684, a group of men comprised of social outcasts and criminals. Unit 684's mission was to assassinate North Korean leader Kim Il-sung and, if successful, win back their freedom and identities. Unit 684 is taken to the island called Silmido to undergo specialized military and guerilla training. Within several months seven recruits die from the brutal training. During their time on Silmido, a bond between the instructors and the recruits begins to form. At the end of their training the recruits are sent to North Korea to carryout the mission; however, they are

recalled shortly after their departure because of a political decision to attempt peace talks in favor of reunification. The government decides to have Unit 684 killed to keep the plot to kill Kim Il-sung unknown to the public and outside world. The government orders the instructors of the unit to carry out the killings or they would be killed themselves. However, one of the members of Unit 684 hears from one of the instructors that they will be killed regardless, and ends up escaping with the other members from the island; ultimately, seizing control of a school bus full of civilians. The remaining 20 members of the unit engage in a firefight with South Korean soldiers in Seoul. The army fires on the unit despite having civilians on board the bus. Eventually, the remaining members of the unit release the civilians that are still alive and ultimately commit suicide by pulling the pins out of their grenades. At the end of the movie, you see a government official slipping the report into storage with the intentions of it never being discovered. Ultimately, the secret was discovered in the 1999.

Silmido cost 8 million USD and was filmed in multiple countries like Malta and New Zealand (Leong 2004)). Often considered the "Dirty Dozen" of South Korean military films, but actually true (Leong 2004). There are some Hollywood-style techniques that are visible: the use of fast-cut editing in action scenes, high-quality special effects for explosions and a captivating soundtrack that reminds you of Michael Bay's movies like *Transformers* (2007) or *The Rock* (1996). However, the draw of the movie can be found in its sensitive subject matter. JinHee Choi (2010), a film studies expert on South Korean cinema noted, that the subsequent success of South Korean blockbusters lay in the subject matter and themes that appeal to its audience. For

instance, director Kang Woo-suk focused on a very controversial theme in South Korean history. The recruits of Unit 684 were promised to have their identities restored but were double-crossed by the government and ultimately erased from national memory until the story was released in 1999. Kang's underlying theme focused on the nature of Koreans killing Koreans and not just North Koreans killing South Koreans, but the South Korean government killing its own to protect a dirty secret. *Silmido* was the most viewed film in South Korea until the release of *TaeGukGi* the next year.

TaeGukGi (2004), directed by Kang Je-gyu (also directed *Shiri*), focused on the distancing relationship between two brothers, Jin-tae and Jin-seok, during the Korean War and the tragedies associated with it. The name *TaeGukGi* refers to the Republic of South Korea's flag used during the Korean War. The movie showcases more special-effects-driven spectacles with massive explosions compared to *Shiri* and *Silmido*, mostly because of their production costs and the idea of espionage vs. war films (Choi 2010).

TaeGukGi is the most expensive movie ever made in South Korean film history at 12.8 million USD (Choi 2010); still a fraction compared to Hollywood budgets for blockbusters. The movie uses some conventional styles found in war movies like *Saving Private Ryan* (1998). For instance, Kang attempts to create an impression of subjective immersion in the action by propelling debris and human remains out toward the viewer with massive bomb explosions and an abundance of gory images like mutilated limbs and bodies (Choi 2010), which are very similar to the combat scenes in *Saving Private Ryan*.

However, the subject matter is very different from *Saving Private Ryan*. The

protagonists of the film are two brothers, Jin-tae and Jin-seok. The opening scene takes place fifty years after the Korean War when an archaeological team believes they found Jin-tae's remains and calls Jin-seok to inform him. Jin-seok goes to the battlefield where the excavation team is and starts to cry when he sees his brother's skeletal remains. The movie then flashes back to when they were younger, right before the War began. The Republic of South Korea conscripts Jin-seok while Jin-tae volunteers, in response to serve in order to protect his brother. The war continues and each battle signifies increasing casualties and tragedy. Jin tae makes a deal with the commanding officer in order to send his brother home without Jin-seok's knowledge. Jin-tae must go on the most dangerous missions in order to win the South Korean Medal of Honor, which would ensure his brother's release. However, Jin-tae becomes obsessed with his legendary status and buys into the war propaganda created by the South Korean military and media. The war makes Jin-tae hateful toward North Koreans in their treatment and Jin-seok begins to distance away from Jin-tae more and more. When Jin-tae and Jin-seok are allowed to return home temporarily they find anti-Communist groups rounding up suspected Communist supporters. Among the suspected communists was Jin-tae's fiancée Young-shin. We find out that Young-shin was accused of attending Communist rallies, though North Korean soldiers forced her to before the South Korean forces liberated the town. An enraged Jin-tae tries to free her, but the anti-Communists shoot her. Jin-tae and Jin-seok begin firing against the anti-Communists but Jin-seok is captured and Jin-tae is led to believe his brother is dead. Shortly after, Jin-tae defects to the North Korean side to get revenge against the South. Jin-seok is found and freed by

South Korean soldiers who inform him of his brother's action to defect. Ultimately, Jin-tae and Jin-seok find each other on the battlefield and engage in hand-to-hand combat. Jin-tae, who appears brainwashed and driven with rage, is unable to recognize his brother. Another soldier bayonets Jin-tae in the shoulder and Jin-seok carries him away from the battle only to get wounded. Once this happens Jin-tae recognizes Jin-seok. Jin-tae decides to stay behind to cover the South and his brother's retreat and promises Jin-seok that he would meet him at home. Jin-seok runs off and within a couple minutes Jin-tae is killed by machine gun fire. Fifty years later Jin-tae is found in the same place on the battlefield where he was last seen by Jin-seok. Jin-seok breaks into tears.

In 2004, *TaeGukGi* dominated the box-office for several weeks and was the most viewed movie up until that time in South Korean film history (Shin 2005; Shim 2006; Choi 2010). The movie highlighted the nadirs of the characters and the war. It showed the cruel and unjust nature of both sides during the war and the personal loss that came with it. "Historical" events and even personal national concerns have become a major component for South Korea's blockbuster success. In the case of North/South relations, it is a subject that appeals to a wider audience, who share common values, sentiments, or familiarity with its content. Concerns about the Korean Peninsula still exist.

Other examples of successful South Korean blockbusters have focused on the Joseon Dynasty (15th-19th century) as historical dramas, which seem to attract a wider multigenerational audience. The Joseon Dynasty is considered one of the most important times in Korean history in which the Korean alphabet (*Hangeul*) was established and Confucius ideology was strong. It was also a time when Korea enjoyed an

unprecedented flowering of culture and art with traditional outfits (*hanbok*), kings, and limited social mobility.

South Korean blockbusters like *The King and the Clown* (2005) and *Masquerade* (2012) took place during the Joseon Dynasty and were more than well received. *The King and the Clown* drew in 12.3 million moviegoers, more than *Silmido* and *TaeGukGi* at that time. It is the second highest grossing movie in South Korean film history at 72.6 billion Won (67 million USD). It held the number one spot in 2005 beating out *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire* and *King Kong* (Korean Film Council 2006). *Masquerade* became the third most watched movie of all time in 2012 with 12.32 million moviegoers in South Korea (*The Hollywood Reporter*, 13 December 2012). The movie beat out Hollywood blockbusters like *The Avengers*, *The Dark Knight Rises,* and *The Amazing Spiderman* (Korean Film Council 2013) in South Korea. *The King and the Clown* and *Masquerade* differ from previous hits like *Shiri*, *Silmido*, and *TaeGukGi*, which use special effects, CGI, and other Hollywood inspired techniques. Instead the films are filmed almost entirely in present-day royal palaces that use more aesthetic charms like traditional percussion music, traditional clothing, and folk performances.

The King and the Clown, directed by Lee Jun-ik, focuses on a pair of male clowns, Jangseung and Konggil, who perform comic plays, songs, and acrobatic tricks. This Korean traditional art is known as *Jutagi*. The movie uses sources of traditional arts, great narrative structure, choreography, and aesthetics with an underlying theme of homosexuality (Paquet 2008). The clowns go to the capital city and perform a skit that satirizes the king. The king has them chained for treason. Ultimately, a deal is reached

between the king and the performers. The clowns must perform another skit in order to make the king laugh; if they fail they will be executed. However, they succeed and the king makes them a part of his court. The king becomes infatuated with Konggil and they begin a relationship. Jangseung becomes jealous and the king banishes him. However, Jangseung leaves and walks on a tightrope above the palace, loudly ridiculing the king. The king shoots Jangseung off the tightrope with an arrow and Jangseung is ultimately blinded as punishment. Later, the king forces Jangseung to tightrope walk blind and out of compassion Konggil joins him in an effort to defy the king and be with his friend. Ultimately, both jump off the rope together during a peasant rebellion against the king. At the end of the film, Jangseung and Konggil are reunited in the afterlife performing together.

Masquerade, directed by Chu Chang-min and inspired by Mark Twain's *The Prince and the Pauper* focuses on a similar aesthetic quality such as tradition and history from the Joseon Dynasty. The film is based around a real historical figure, king Gwanghae, but otherwise is completely fictional (Elley 2012). The king receives numerous threats of assassination and orders his Chief Secretary to find a lookalike Ha-seon, to take his place at night. Later, the real king is poisoned and becomes critically ill and Ha-seon must step in as full-time king. Ha-seon is a part of the lower class and begins making major legislative changes in favor of the poor and wins over the hearts of his staff and servers. Throughout the film, Ha-seon is seen as a more compassionate ruler with sound judgment compared to Gwanghae, the actual king. However, in the end, Ha-seon is seen as the true king.

Ultimately, historical drama pieces like *The King and the Clown* and *Masquerade* offer audience members a glimpse into their own past. In this sense, aspects of Korean identity, history, and culture are much more attractive to moviegoers than foreign films such as *Harry Potter* or *The Avengers*. South Korean blockbusters have focused on historical and national circumstances as a way to appeal to a wider audience base in South Korea. These historical drama piece films are also popular in other Asian countries due to cultural proximity and close cultural affinities. In this sense, South Korean dramas typically deal with family issues, love, and filial piety that often reinforce values of Confucianism. Movies like *Shiri*, *Silmido*, and *TaeGukGi*, which focuses on North-South relations were all box-office successes that beat out Hollywood movies like *Titanic*, *Lord of the Rings*, and *Troy* in South Korea. Moreover, cultural content appears to be a significant factor in South Korean movies along with film style and production quality.

South Korean cultural content in films contribute to the affinity of film culture worldwide just like Indian, Chinese, Japanese, French, German, and Australian films have. The affinity of film culture does not primarily belong to Hollywood. Moreover, Hollywood's high-level production value has become a norm for film quality in terms of special effects, CGI, and cinematography worldwide, especially in action/war/drama movies. However, production quality does not solely create viewership. Rather the draw may truly lie in the cultural content that is created in which people from backgrounds can relate.

Korean Pop-Music

  When discussing features of culture and globalization and the different flows or exchanges of cultural elements, music is certainly part of that discussion. K-pop blends together various forms of musical styles that represent a new type of musical expression, which appeals to different people's tastes around the world. Culture, in general, is not a finite or a static concept; it also can be dynamic and innovative. In the context of South Korea, musical elements like American rap, rock, hip-hop, pop, ballad, etc. may have spread due to their popularity from the West, but it did not lead to the degradation of South Korean popular culture through American "soft power" or cultural imperialism. In fact, because of hybridization, South Korea has created its own successful musical industry by fusing together some of those musical elements into their own expressions, values, and style that is popular to many people around the world (Shim 2006).

  Other notable aspects of K-pop include flashy video art in music videos, fashionable outfits, and teasing sexuality mixed with synchronized dance moves and catchy melodies (Russel and Choe 2012). K-pop may be regarded as the most popular aspect of South Korea's cultural industry. According to the Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Tourism[2], the growing popularity of K-pop hit the 100 billion won ($92 million) mark in 2013 for S.M. Entertainment (*Korea Herald*, 8 September 2013). In 2012, S.M Entertainment grossed 103.6 billion won. In 2011, the company brought in just 48 billion won. Y.G. Entertainment, home to K-pop sensation Psy, earned 53.4 billion won in 2012, up from 31.8 billion won in the previous year (*Korea Herald* 2013). *Nightline*

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[2] The Ministry of Culture and Sports and the Ministry of Culture and Tourism merged into the Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Tourism in 2008.

reported that global sales for Korean Pop music now top $3 billion a year. The industry was ranked as the world's 33rd largest in 2005; in 2012, it became the 11th largest (*Nightline*, 15 October 2012).

Since the late-1990s, K-pop had largely been situated in Asian markets, particularly in Japan and China (Russel and Choe 2012). Before the proliferation of global social networks, attempts by K-pop stars to break into the Western markets, including the United States, had largely failed (*New York Times*, 4 March 2012). South Korea is one of the most wired countries in the world and because of the rise of music sharing software; digital piracy plagued its music scene. According to the International Music Industry Association, sales of CDs dropped 70.7 percent from 2000 to 2007 in South Korea (*New York Times* 2012). The percentage drop in CD sales amounted from 21.5 million USD in 2000 to 6.3 million USD in 2007 (Russel and Choe 2012). Ultimately, South Korea needed to switch to digital distribution rather than CD distribution to curb piracy. As a result, the South Korean music industry shifted its focus on digital distribution and touring (Russel and Choe 2012). Now, YouTube, Facebook, and Twitter make it easier for K-pop bands to reach a wider audience in the West and throughout the world (Russel and Choe 2012). South Korean artists and music companies started to move away from local social networking services (SNS) to more open and global SNS. One industry expert said it went from "fad to phenomena" (*Korea Herald*, 24 August 2012). K-pop acts typically have few solo artists and more group bands. K-pop bands usually have four to six members, but there have been some like Girls Generation that consists of nine girls and Super Junior with thirteen young men

(Russel and Choe 2012).

In 2010, K-Pop videos were viewed on YouTube 800 million times. In 2011, 2.2 billion times and in the year since Psy's "Gangam Style" was released, they have been viewed globally more than 7.7 billion times (Trykowski 2013). South Koreans are producing the most highly refined music videos of any industry in the world right now. According to the report by *JoongAng Ilbo*, a newspaper agency in Seoul, acquired information from YouTube company records about K-pop. The report indicated that in 2011, K-pop music videos were viewed 2.2 billion times from 235 countries. The most clicks came from Japan with 423 million views, followed by the US with 240 million. Thailand came in third with 220 million, with Taiwan and Vietnam with 180 million and 170 million (Soompi.com 2012). Other countries included United Arab Emirates, which brought in 4.8 million views and Kuwait with 4.8 million (Soompi.com 2012).

Psy, the K-pop star, released the hardly forgettable "Gangnam Style." It has been the world's most watched and most liked music video on YouTube with nearly twice the numbers of views as the current runner up, Justin Bieber's "Baby" (en.wikipedia.org 2014). Psy received over 3 billion views on YouTube in 2013 (*Billboard*, 11 July, 2013). "Gangnam Style" refers to wealth, prestige, and living in the city of Gangnam, which is where all of the South Korean stars lived. "Gangnam Style" fuses together musical elements such as rap, techno, and flashy dance moves; and it has become one of the most imitated dances around the world (Alloca 2012). For example, US forces from all branches of the military have performed the dance and students from university campuses around the globe have performed it as well. Texas A&M University's Pre-

Med Society performed the dance, as well as a flash mob on campus (both can be viewed on YouTube). In fact, Texas A&M's University President R. Bowen Loftin can be seen dancing "Gangnam Style" at a Texas A&M pep rally (*Yahoo Sports*, 25 September 2012).

Its dance imitation and parodies have also been performed in China. According to online news source Korea.net, the popularity of "Gangnam Style" is explosive among Chinese students and entertainers. Chinese celebrities danced to the song on television while students have been reported performing the dance at welcoming parties for freshman (Korea.net, 29 October 2012). In 2011, 70 K-pop fans from the United Arab Emirates gathered for a flash mob in order to attract K-pop groups to perform in Dubai (Korea.net, 8 November 2011). In 2012, Psy became the first South Korean musician to top the UK charts (*NY Dailey News*, 1 October 2012). Also in 2012, Psy's "Gangnam Style" became the runner-up to music group Maroon 5 on the Billboard Hot 100 song list for multiple weeks (*Billboard*, 26 September 2012). In 2013, Psy's second biggest hit "Gentlemen" topped YouTube's music video list again. It was viewed nearly 600 million times (*Korea Herald*, 12 December 2013).

Psy's breakthrough has created numerous K-pop fans around the world in recent years, which contributes to K-pop's growing fan base. However, Psy is not unique in K-pop's popularity. Other K-pop sensations like Girls Generation, SHINee, and Big Bang have made it to the global stage. In 2011, SHINee's "Hello" hit the top of Germany's VIVA Online Clip Chart followed by other K-pop groups that made the top 100. VIVA is a German music TV channel and its rankings are based on the number of downloads

and music video hits the song received online (Korea.net, 5 August 2011). *Time Magazine* named Girls Generation No. 5 on its list of "Top 10 Songs of 2013" with "I Got A Boy" (*Korea Herald,* 5 December 2013). In November 2013, Girls Generation beat out big names like Lady Gaga, Justin Bieber, Miley Cyrus, and even YouTube sensation Psy to take the "Video of the Year" award at the first-ever YouTube Music Awards (*Korea Herald*, 28 November 2013). Music video "I Got A Boy" accumulated 78 million views with 449,000 likes on Facebook (*Korea Herald*, 2013). The girl group also topped the Japanese weekly album charts for the first time in two and a half years (*Korea Herald*, 17 December 2013). Y.G. Entertainment CEO and producer Yang Hyun-suk has been recognized by *Billboard* as an "international power player" for bringing about significant changes in the dynamics of the world music market (*Korea Herald*, 20 January 2014). The music magazine not only introduced Yang but also spotlighted Y.G. artists who have become K-pop's most popular acts globally, including Psy and Big Bang, whose world tour attracted more than 800,000 fans in 12 countries (*Korea Herald* 2014).

K-pop fans range among different nationalities, religions, and cultures. According to an announcement made from the Korean Culture and Information Service, under the Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Tourism, the number of K-pop fan clubs has reached 182, with a total combined membership around 3.3 million in 2011 (Korea.net, 2 November 2011). According to an analysis made by the Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Tourism, there were 84 fan clubs in eight Asian countries, including Japan, China, and Vietnam with a total membership of 2.3 million. In the Americas, there were 25 fan

clubs with a total membership of 500,000 and in Europe there were roughly 400,000 fan

club members. Among all of the 182 fan clubs, those centered on K-pop singers made up

the largest proportion (Korea.net 2011).

A major component to K-pop's success that is often overlooked is how organic it

has all been through SNS sharing by fans. South Korea's three big entertainment

companies (SM, YG, and JYP) have done their part by making deals with YouTube and

exporting their concerts around the world, but much more of the spread and promotion

of K-pop is because of devoted fans (*WSJ*, 14 August, 2012). Many fans create clubs,

websites, and blogs that have garnished fans around the world. For instance, the website

Allkpop.com is the fastest news breaker for K-pop with over three million users

worldwide (*Korea Herald*, 27 February 2011).

Soompi.com is the oldest and most popular website for K-pop. It draws in over 1.4

million users a day and it can be viewed in different languages like Spanish, Mandarin,

Japanese, and English (*Korea Herald*, 2011). Eatyourkimchi.com is a popular website

for non-Koreans and expats. The website is run by a Canadian couple who live in Seoul

(*Korea Herald* 2011). In Spain for example, the foundation for K-pop's growing

influence can be traced to an active Internet community. According to Jang Jin-sang,

director of the Korean Cultural Center in Spain, "An estimated 2,000 fans follow K-pop

within the country, and most are active on the fan sites of various Korean artists"

(Korea.net, 2 November 2011). Latin American fans from South America have posted

hundreds of videos on YouTube showing flash mobs emulating K-pop dance moves and

urging their favorite stars to visit the continent (*AFP*, 19 June 2012). Some fans have

created services that teach fans how to dance like their South Korean idols; others handle online tools like publishing lyrics, translations of lyrics, or spreading news about K-pop stars (*WSJ* 2012).

Park Han-woo, an Associate Professor in Yeungnam University's Media and Communication department found that amateur fans strengthened the viral power of K-pop (*Korea Herald* 2012). Park's analysis tracked the Twitter network of K-pop from November 2011 to February 2012 and found that regions including Asia, America, and Europe had their major hubs for K-pop created by ordinary Twitter users and bloggers. In Europe, a German Twitter user was the most powerful in spreading K-pop news and a Japanese Twitter user was the major hub of K-pop information for Japan (*Korea Herald* 2012). SNS through ICT portals like YouTube and Twitter have become major outlets for spreading K-pop globally. Obviously, K-pop has a dedicated fan base around the world and its popularity seems to be visibly expanding.

As a result of K-pop's global popularity, K-pop concerts and contests have been held around the world. For instance, in 2011 a K-pop singing contest was held in Egypt, the first of its kind ever. The event attracted forty participants (Korea.net, 29 July 2011). In 2012, SM Entertainment extended global auditions to Canada and the United States as well as many Asian and European nations for K-pop labels. South Korean talent scouts were mesmerized by the number of non-Korean participants, which made up 60 to 70 percent of the participants (Korea.net, 22 October 2012). SM started global auditions in 2006 and in 2012 had 30,000 participants audition. Kim-Eun-ah, a spokeswoman at SM, told *Chosun Ilbo* in an interview, "Not only non-Korean Asians but also white, black,

and Hispanics sometimes account for nearly 70 percent of all participants in an audition"
(Korea.net, 22 October 2012). In 2013, more than 20,000 K-pop enthusiasts packed the
Los Angeles Memorial Sports Arena to support South Korean culture and Hallyu at
KCON (Korean Convention). Other activities prompted visitors to learn more about
South Korean culture by participating in dance lessons and food and fashion courses.
The main attraction was the K-pop concert. According to CJ Group, a leading food and
entertainment giant, eighty percent of the attendees at the concert were non-Korean
(*Korea Herald*, 26 August 2013). The K-Pop World Festival 2012 in South Korea
attracted 15,000 K-pop fans across the world (Korea.net, 30 October 2012). The festival
is a world K-pop contest that consisted of 50,000 contestants hailing from thirty-two
different countries (Korea.net 2012).

Factors such as beauty, fan obsession, and peculiarity can also be attributed to K-
pop's global appeal and popularity. For instance, a thirty-year old American was
obsessed with the K-pop group Girls Generation and drove over 12 hours to watch them
live. He said in an interview with John Seabrook, a writer for *The New Yorker*, "You
think you love them, but then you see Tiffany (member of Girls Generation) point
directly at you and wink, and everything else that exists in the world disappears" (*The
New Yorker*, 8 October 2012). A Japanese fan of the group TVXQ commented that
"They were tall and had small faces and they're good and singing and dancing-
everything" (*The Sydney Morning Herald*, 2 March 2013). K-pop website Soompi.com
had a headline entitled "Netizens Love Seohyun's *Aegyo* Mark," regarding one of the
members of Girls Generation's beauty mark, which created a whole forum page

dedicated to her beauty mark (*The New Yorker* 2012). Clearly, good looks are a quality

found in K-pop stars. Plastic surgery can alter a star's facial appearance to appear more

chiseled and sculpted. According to *The Economist*, double-fold-eyelid surgery, which

makes eyes look, more rounded, is a popular reward for children who get good marks on

school exams. The popularity of the K-pop idols has also brought Chinese, Japanese, and

Singaporean "medical tourists" to Seoul to have their faces altered to look more like the

Korean stars (*The Economist*, 26 April 2011). A member of the twelve-person boy band

Super Junior was asked how they always manage to have an explosive reception

worldwide. He answered, "Maybe it's because of our great good looks?" (*The New

Yorker*, 2012). Some obsessed fans have become known as *sasaeng* (literally, "private

life"), or known as celebrity stalkers. One wrote on *PopAsia's* Facebook page "They'd

probably literally murder a girl if they found out they were dating their idol" (*The

Sydney Morning Herald* 2013). Some have described themselves on Tumblr or Facebook

as having a strong desire to marry their idols. Some actually post that they are married to

them on their profile pages (*The Sydney Morning Herald* 2013). In other cases, some

comment on the peculiarity and ludicrousness of their music videos as a reason for

enjoying them. K-pop music videos have plenty of appealing features other than their

catchy tunes. Fashion, flashy lights, and an abundant use of color or exaggerated

gestures can be found appealing. One person commented on SHINee's music video,

"Ridiculous... But I like it" (*Korea Herald*, 2013). There is a wide fascination for fans

that revolve around K-pop songs and idols. Whatever the reason, fans love K-pop stars

and their music.

Chapter Summary

South Korea's popular cultural industry has managed to shape itself into a self-defining and prominent force that can to a certain extent compete with Hollywood and reshape American "soft power" into their own cultural values. In the case of film, South Korean blockbusters have outdone Hollywood hits in terms of market share and admissions in South Korea. Globally, South Korean films have not become as mainstream compared to Hollywood films. Nonetheless, South Korean films and directors constantly win awards and continue to be invited to prestigious international film festivals. Hollywood often looks to South Korea as a source of quality films. In South Korea, there is a mainstream moviegoer preference for South Korean films and blockbusters over Hollywood blockbusters. This is primarily because Hollywood blockbusters tend to target younger audiences while South Korean movie directors and producers target a multigenerational audience familiar with Korean historical events and culture (Choi 2010). Evidence can be found in South Korean subject matter. In some cases South Korean blockbusters that use genres like action/espionage or war incorporate Hollywood-inspired techniques that have been used before that are found in big budget films with special effects, CGI, big explosions, fast-cut editing, and captivating musical scores. South Korean filmmakers have learned to incorporate Hollywood-like structures into South Korean films. Movies like *Shiri* (1999), *Silmido* (2003), and *Taegukgi* (2004) beat out Hollywood hits for the number one spot in the box-office for each year in South Korea. On the other hand, movies like *The King and the Clown* (2005) and *Masquerade* (2012) were low budget movies that focused on

traditional culture and events during the Joseon Dynasty. For these movies, their success can be attributed to their explicit cultural subject matter and fine details of the period. Despite being low budget films they still beat out Hollywood blockbusters in the box-office in South Korea.

K-pop, on the other hand, has received global acclaim. It is considered the powerhouse of South Korea's cultural industry in terms of global proliferation. K-pop has been influenced by a variety of Western musical genres like pop, ballad, rock, rap, hip-hop, and techno. In essence, it is the hybridization of Western and South Korean music in which Western musical styles have been appropriated by South Korean musicians and customized into local values, sentiments, and expressions. South Korean music companies have seen success in global sales for K-pop content. ICT channels like YouTube, Twitter, and Facebook have taken K-pop to a digitalized global stage. K-pop sensation Psy's "Gangnam Style" is the most watched YouTube video of all time. His popularity helped pave the way for other K-pop stars to emerge in the spotlight. Girls Generation was awarded the first ever YouTube award for Best Video and beat out American stars like Miley Cyrus and Lady Gaga. Other K-pop groups have received fans from all over the world. As of 2011, 3.3 million fans make up 182 fan clubs around the world. Dedicated fans have helped push K-pop into the mainstream by creating websites, Facebook pages, Twitter accounts, and blogs devoted to K-pop. As a result of K-pop's popularity, concerts, festivals, and contests have been held in different countries. There can be other explanations for the appeal of K-pop stars such as their appearance or peculiar music videos. All in all, K-pop has become a global sensation.

South Korea's cultural industry in terms of film and K-pop do not appear to conform to American values but instead appear to boost and conform to South Korean values. Theoretical assumptions of cultural and media imperialism do not seem to adequately explain how processes of globalization are navigated in the context of South Korea, or how South Koreans customize and retain local and global forms, or how people negotiate between local and global values.

CHAPTER VI

THE PRESERVATION

OF TRADITIONAL AND NATIONAL CULTURE

It is important to note that the spread of popular culture like film and K-pop are not

the sole aspects of South Korea's cultural industry. Promoting traditional culture has also

been a vital part of South Korea's policy toward its cultural industry and preservation.

The "Korean Wave" is led by film and K-pop, but it is important to make its effects a

long-lasting cultural phenomenon beyond exclusively pop culture (Korea.net, 3 January,

2012). Issues of South Korean identity and nationalism in the context of globalization

are a main focus in this chapter. This chapter will also serve as a critical review in order

to see how the South Korean government has managed to preserve and promote certain

traditions and how traditional culture functions for people in terms of identity and value.

Additionally, identity and nationalism have been key components in maintaining values

and culture in globalization (Yim 2002; Tomlinson 2003; Anderson 2006).

Some theoretical aspects of cultural and media imperialism involve the loss of

cultural identity and values in non-Western countries (Schiller 1969, 1976; Fraser 2003).

However, South Koreans take great pride in their culture, as such cultural policies that

focus on traditional culture tend to reinforce identity, nationalism, and values (Yim

2002). Cultural identity and nationalism serve as theoretical constructs in dealing with

and reacting to processes of globalization and cultural preservation.

According to a recent "mindset and values of Koreans 2013" survey conducted by

the Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Tourism (MCST) that involved 2,537 people

between 19 and 79, 93.1% showed pride in cultural heritage and 92.7% enjoyed the

traditional costume *hanbok* and Korean food (*Korea Herald*, 18 December 2013).

Moreover, it is likely that some motivations toward preservation and promotion for

certain traditional aspects of culture are geared toward commercial and international

recognition. For instance, there are efforts to preserve and globalize aspects of the *Han*

brand and taekwondo to enhance South Korea's national brand. The Cultural Heritage

Administration (CHA) also played a key role in selecting aspects of Korean heritage for

consideration to be inscribed onto UNESCO's list of Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH).

The MCST has also promoted South Korean culture worldwide through international

cultural centers and language institutions. On the other hand, other traditional aspects of

cultural heritage have been promoted and preserved for the public. For example, MCST

and the CHA promote regional and national festivals for certain aspects of culture, and

art and history exhibitions through online visual information portals.

South Korea's determined efforts to preserve its culture and improve its national

image could yield some positive results. For instance, it can have a positive economic

effect, boost tourism, maintain a national and cultural identity, and increase the value

and flow of exports from the country. In addition, a successful national brand can

translate into a greater status in the international community. According to Keith Dinnie,

a professor at Temple University's Japan campus, a nation's image is "a form of self-

defense in which countries seek to tell their own stories rather than be defined by foreign

media, rival nations, or the perpetuation of national stereotypes" (R. Kim 2011). On the

negative side some aspects could lead to the commercialization and commodification of certain traditional forms (Yim 2002), or the preference of certain traditional forms over others (Anderson 2006). In fact, there has been a significant increase in global media exposure on traditional South Korean cuisine and culture such as *hanbok* and *hanok* (Korea.net, 21 January 2014).

Traditional elements of South Korean culture and history have been maintained and promoted through national projects and festivals led by the Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Tourism (MCST). The MCST widely deals with areas of sports, tourism, cultural conservation and heritage, supporting traditional arts, and promoting South Korean cultural content locally and globally. Since the 1990s, the government's cultural policy for the 21st century has focused on strategies to boost the nation's cultural standards and national brand worldwide in order to maintain cultural values and national identity. Among the most notable programs for the MCST are the preservation and modernization of the nation's traditional and artistic legacies, the training of specialized manpower in culture and the arts, expanding cultural facilities in local villages and to other countries, and constructing nationwide multimedia networks for cultural information (*Korea Herald* 1999; Ryoo 2008).

Historical Issues of Cultural and National Identity

The issue of cultural and national identity first appeared in political discourse because there was a sense of a cultural cutoff between Korean traditional culture and contemporary culture due to the previous occupation of Japanese colonialism (1910-

1945), the Korean War (1950-1953), and the rapid industrial path toward modernization

(1960-1990). Given these circumstances, South Korean traditional culture from 1910 to

1990 was eroded and almost forgotten by younger generations due to Western popular

culture (Yim 2002). However, cultural policies throughout the 1990s and 2000s began

reviving traditional elements of South Korean culture and identity. In 1990, the Roh Tae-

woo government (1980-1993) established a "ten-year master plan for cultural

development," coining the phrase "culture for all people" (Ministry of Culture 1990).

The primary goals were to establish cultural identity, promote the excellence of the arts,

improve cultural welfare, promote regional culture, facilitate international cultural

exchange, and develop cultural media (Ministry of Culture 1990). Similar goals were

addressed and practiced by the Kim Young-sam (1993-1998), Kim Dae-jung (1998-

2003), Roh Moo-hyun (2003-2008), and Lee Myung-bak (2008-2013) administrations

(Ministry of Culture and Sports 1993; *Korea Herald* 1999, 2005; Ryoo 2008).

Efforts to Promote and Preserve the Han Brand

In 2005, traditional cultural elements such as *hanok* (traditional house) and *hanbok*

(traditional dress) were reinvigorated to enhance South Korea's traditional cultural

image and to support globalization of the *Han* brand (*Korea Herald*, 23 November,

2005). *Han* style refers to the source of Korean culture representing and symbolizing

Korea, and the branding of Korean traditional cultures including *hangeul*, *hansik*,

hanbok, *hanji*, and *hanok*, which can be commercialized, globalized, and used in

everyday life (Han-style.com 2009). In 2012, a pamphlet promoting South Korean

culture provided information in English on the country's five key cultural assets: The Korean alphabet (*hangeul*), traditional dress (*hanbok*), traditional houses (*hanok*), traditional cuisine (*hansik*), and traditional paper (*hanji*). The pamphlet was meant to educate visitors and foreigners on traditional aspects of South Korean culture just not on content such as popular culture. According to Public Relations expert and professor at Sungshin Women's University in Seoul, Seo Kyuong-duk, "Amid the growing popularity of K-pop, I felt there was a need for more materials introducing Korean culture" (*Chosun Ilbo*, 24 July, 2012). Some 50,000 copies were distributed to foreign visitors in South Korea and 30,000 were handed out in London for the Summer Olympic Games and another 20,000 were distributed to leading universities around the world (*Chosun Ilbo* 2012). Son Bo-mi, an administrator at the Korean Culture Preservation Institution in South Korea, viewed traditional culture such as food, clothing, and housing as the strongest essence of South Korean culture. In order to preserve such traditions, she believes it is important to maintain, spread, and globalize unique aspects of culture using modern methods of public relations (Gobalization101.org 2013).

The Seoul Metropolitan Government in 2008 announced a set of plans to conserve and develop a total of 4,500 *hanok* style buildings by 2018 by creating "*hanok* villages." *Hanok,* a Korean traditional house, has been traced back to 1392 and was the primary style of housing for the upper class until 1910. The major materials of traditional houses were made out of clay and wood with a built-in under floor heating system generated from low-lying kitchen stoves, channeled through flues built under floors. *Hanok* were built without any nails and were assembled with wooden pegs (www.korea.net). *Hanok*

style also has beautiful gardens surrounding the buildings, which adds to its distinctiveness and aesthetic quality and craftsmanship. In 2012, Peter Bartholomew, former president of the Royal Asiatic Society and a long time advocate for the preservation of *hanok*, was presented a culture award for his contribution to raising awareness of the value of Korea's traditional house. He campaigned for years against policies that threatened the traditional architectural heritage (Korea.net, 2 November 2012). The government declared *hanok* as a basis of national identity and as a rediscovery of traditional culture (*Korea Herald*, 12 April, 2013).

Revived *hanok* style has become particularly popular among retired baby boomers in South Korea that grew up in *hanok* housing as children, but lived in Western-style apartments until retirement. Now, retired South Koreans crave going back to living in a more traditional setting. According to a 2009 study by the government, 41.9 percent of those surveyed hoped to live in *hanok* and about 35 percent of female respondents in their 20s were interested in living in the traditional *hanok* housing as well (*Korea Herald* 2013). Although, these numbers are below average, it still shows that some people still have a desire to live in *hanok* villages. Also, according to the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, and Transport, the number of *hanok* rose to 89,000 in 2012, about a 60 percent jump from 55,000 in 2008 (*Korea Herald* 2013).

Hanok is not only for living but also for running a business, such as a café or art gallery. Rhee In-sik, a business owner in Seoul, renovated an old *hanok* style building and turned it into a café. She said that she was inspired to do so because of the attractive qualities in the traditional architecture. Since opening in 2005, her customers have

enjoyed its traditional qualities and its close relationship to nature (*Korea Herald* 2013).

Hanok style has also inspired artistic creativity and is considered an elemental export for

hallyu, incorporating the mixture of Korean traditional architecture with modern hip

factors. For example, Tongin Market in central Seoul near Gyeongbokgung Palace

incorporated both wooden pillars, which held up traditional-style wooden rafters, with a

glass roof, a modern touch. It received the Korean Public Design Award in 2012 (*Korea

Herald,* 12 April, 2013). Bang Sun-kyu, a ministry official for the Ministry of Culture,

Sports, and Tourism, stated:

> "We will keep supporting Korean traditional design because in the era of hallyu,
> the Korean popular culture wave, we believe it is something Korea can be
> internationally competitive in and can be helpful in bringing up the national brand
> image" (*Korea Herald* 2013).

However, there have been concerns that the government's promotion of *hanok* could

lead to its commercialization due to influxes of tourists visiting some of the different

hanok villages. For example, in the Bukchon Hanok Village many experts in art,

architecture and cultural properties have expressed deep concern that the village could

be the next Insa-dong, which many lament as lacking Korean culture and overrun by

commercial establishments (*Korea Joongang Daily,* 16 November 2012). Insa-dong is a

popular area in Seoul that is heavily commercialized and a major tourist location. Some

have argued that the "Korean Wave" has been the catalyst for the influx in tourism. A

popular South Korean TV show called *1 Night 2 Days*, which is consumed throughout

Southeast Asia, was shot in Bukchon and since then there has been a significant rise in

tourism to the area. Also, the TV drama *Winter Sonata*, which is a historical period

drama filmed in *hanok* villages has attracted many Japanese and Chinese fans. In 2007, there were only about 30,000 visitors and in 2012, 600,000 visited because of shows like *1 Night 2 Days* and *Winter Sonata* (*Korea Joongang Daily* 2012).

Nevertheless, *hanok* remains an important aspect of national and cultural identity. The government has taken steps to preserve and promote *hanok* as a viable source of tradition and nationalism. *Hanok* continues to serve as a base of inspiration for architectural designs and artistic style. Though there are few people living in *hanok* villages due to the high costs, these areas are still considered a national treasure and attractive to many people. However, it is important that the government maintains the integrity and traditional qualities of *hanok* by preserving them, or they may fall prey to being overtly commercialized.

Hanbok (traditional garment) has been a treasured tradition in Korean society for over 1,600 years. For the people of South Korea, *hanbok* is a part of the country's national history and cultural heritage that represents Korea's distinctive style with its unique designs and elegant colors. *Hanbok* is one of the more successful traditional products of the "Korean Wave" that has received global acclaim, but more importantly it continues to serve as both a cultural and national treasure. *Hanbok* is weaved fabric with hemp and arrowroot and raised silkworms to produce fine silk. It is divided largely into daywear and ceremonial wear, with differences between ages, gender, and season (Korea.net, 20 August, 2012). *Hanbok* is usually worn on special occasions such as family celebrations, weddings, birthdays, and holidays like Seoullal (Lunar New Year) and Chuseok (Harvest holiday). Recently, there has been a widespread campaign to

revitalize *hanbok* with new designs and variations being sold nationwide and in international markets (Korea.net 2012). Foreign media outlets have expressed admiration for the traditional garb, including France's *Le Monde*.

The popularity of Korean historical dramas like *Winter Sonata* overseas has also helped people appreciate the traditional attire even more (Korea.net 2012). Famous *hanbok* designer Lee Young-hee is one of the pioneers of modern *hanbok* design. Lee has contributed to familiarizing the world with innovative *hanbok* designs. She was the first South Korean to win numerous prestigious fashion awards worldwide (Korea.net 2012). Korean-Canadian actress Sandra Oh, who gained popularity for her role in Grey's Anatomy, arrived at the 2008 Screen Actors Guild Awards ceremony sporting *hanbok*. Other international celebrities who have modeled *hanbok* include actor Nicholas Cage who wore *hanbok* at his 2004 wedding ceremony and also actress Jessica Alba in her 2012 visit to South Korea (Korea.net, 13 January, 2012).

In 2013, The Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Tourism hosted a fashion show and lecture on the beauty and history of *hanbok* called "*Hanbok Meets Design*" in Seoul to promote variations of *hanbok*, including traditional and modern takes of the attire. About 150 people, including *hanbok* experts and designers, were in attendance (Korea.net, 28 January, 2013). According to Culture Minister Choe Kwang-sik, "We are planning to step up the government support to make *hanbok* a global clothing worn by more people all around the world" (Korea.net 2013). Prominent *hanbok* designer Lee Hae-soon emphasized in her lecture at a fashion show in Seoul, "*Hanbok* has taken deep roots in Koreans' lives from cradle to grave and it is our duty to keep the beauty and tradition of

hanbok active and alive" (Korea.net 2013). In 2012, MCST created a project called "Making Hanbok a Way of Our Lives" in an effort to entice more people to wear the Korean traditional clothing in schools and raise public awareness about *hanbok*. As of now, students from six different school chains wear some form of *hanbok* as school uniforms (Korea.net 2013).

The beauty and traditional element of *hanbok* has also inspired revitalization for wedding ceremonies in which both the bride and groom use the traditional garment of *hanbok* instead of Western-style gowns and tuxedos. For example, Kim So-jeong chose to use *hanbok* over a wedding gown as well as having the ceremony in a traditional South Korean palace called Unhyeong Palace. She stated, "I wanted to show my children, my grandchildren later in my life, that I married their father not in a conventional wedding hall, but in a historic place where tradition is alive" (*Korea Herald*, 3 May, 2013).

The Korean traditional wedding ceremony is called *honrye*, which signifies the biggest event for many men and women. Nowadays, the traditional ceremony has become simplified and reduced to a one-day ceremony from a previous three-day event due to the complicated procedures. Though many of the wedding traditions have become Westernized and simplified due to the high costs of having traditional ceremonies such as *honrye*, most mothers still wear *hanbok* at their children's wedding and newlyweds tend to wear *hanbok* at the banquet to greet the guests. When I lived in South Korea, I was invited to a friend's wedding and she and the groom both wore *hanbok* when greeting their guests, as did their families. In many cases, hired professional experts in

honrye wedding ceremonies lead newlyweds and parents through the complicated ceremony even at Westernized wedding ceremonies, so as to keep the tradition alive (*Korea Herald*, 3 May, 2013).

Although, *hanbok* and modern designers have received international recognition and commercial success in the fashion world for innovative and beautiful designs, the traditional roots have also been recognized and preserved in South Korea. *Mosi*-weaving is a traditional cultural practice handed down from generation to generation by middle-aged women in the Hansan region. The weaving technique is characterized by its method of inheritance through female family members in which the mother transmits the tradition to their daughters or daughters-in-law (Korea.net, 15 June 2012). The MCST helped organize the annual Hansan Mosi Cultural Festival in which audience members had the opportunity to travel to the region and enjoy the traditional beauty of *hanbok* and *mosi*-techniques (Korea.net 2012). *Mosi* was added to UNESCO's Intangible Cultural Heritage list and there are approximately 500 people in the region who still practice the technique (Korea.net 2012). Thus, it is clear that *mosi*-weaving in *hanbok* remains a significant cultural asset, possessing a strong tradition and ritual for family members in the region. In general, *hanbok* still remains a popular traditional garment that can be found at a variety of ceremonial or traditional events. Its artistic legacies are still practiced and continue to serve as an important aspect of identity and nationalism.

South Korean cuisine (*hansik)* such as kimchi, a traditional fermented vegetable dish also has an indispensible place in Korean culture. In fact, in 2008, when the first South Korean astronaut ventured into space, three government research institutes spent

millions of won to develop bacteria-free kimchi to send with him into space. "If a Korean goes to space, kimchi must go there too," one scientist told a reporter (*Los Angeles Times*, 3 November, 2008). Historically and culturally, Korea had always been considered an agrarian society and ancient Koreans relied on vegetables to provide needed nutrients for survival in the harsh winters. Since green vegetables could not be preserved during the winter seasons they began the practice of storing salted vegetables, mostly cabbage underground. This practice evolved into *kimjang*, now known as the practice of making kimchi (*Korean Heritage* 2013). There is a common Korean saying, "if you have kimchi and rice, you have a meal" (*On the Gas*, 12 June, 2013). Just like bread and butter in the Western culture, kimchi and rice play a vital role in the Korean diet and has done so for many centuries as far back as 2,500 to 3,000 years ago. Over time, kimchi has slowly evolved into its current form with the inclusion of additional ingredients like garlic, chili pepper, and salted seafood (*On the Gas* 2013; Chon 2002). According to US magazine *Health*, South Koreans eat so much of this super-spicy condiment (40 pounds of it per person each year) that they say "kimchi" instead of "cheese" when getting their pictures taken (*Health*, 1 February, 2008). As an icon of Korea, South Koreans take great pride in this culinary cultural asset. It goes beyond the food in their day-to-day lives; as it has evidently turned into the national identity and South Koreans goes to great lengths to protect its authenticity.

In 1996, the "Kimchi Debate" ensued between Japan and South Korea, in which Japan proposed designating *kimuchi* (a Japanese version of kimchi) as an official Asian delicacy. Kimuchi does not undergo the fermentation process and is also less spicy and

garlicky in nature; however, it does have a lot of similarities with kimchi (*On the Gas* 2013). South Koreans became outraged and accused Japanese food makers of copying and marketing their own version of South Korean kimchi, failing to produce kimchi in a traditional manner. At that time, 90 percent of South Korea's export of kimchi went to Japan (*New York Times*, 5 February, 2000). Robert Kim, assistant manager for the overseas sales team at the Doosan Corporation (South Korean food manufacturer that operates the world's largest kimchi factory), said, "This debate is not just about protecting our market share. We are trying to preserve our national heritage" (*New York Times* 2000). Ultimately, it triggered South Korea to file a case with Codex Alimentarius, an organization associated with the World Health Organization, to establish an international standard for kimchi. In 2001, the Codex Alimentarius published a voluntary standard defining kimchi as "prepared with Chinese cabbage as a predominant ingredient and other vegetables which have been trimmed, cut, salted and seasoned before fermentation," which clearly distinguishes kimchi as a type of fermented food (CODEX STAN 223 2001).

People around the world have started to recognize kimchi as a health food. With the rapid economic growth and unique pop culture of South Korea, Korean products have gained tremendous popularity worldwide. In fact, in 2009, the government started a campaign to globalize *hansik*. The main goals were to make Korean food more accessible in other countries and raise awareness of its health benefits (R. Kim 2011). In 2011, according to the Ministry of Food, Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries the exportation of kimchi grossed $105 million, a 6.7 percent increase from $98.4 million in

2010 (*Korea Times*, 13 January, 2012). Nowadays, consumers are more health conscious and often concerned about food nutrition. Various research findings about the health benefits of kimchi are slowly reaching to an international audience. For example, kimchi was rated among the world's top-five healthiest foods by the US magazine "Health" in 2006, serving as a firm recognition for kimchi from the international market (*On the Gas* 2013). *The Independent*, a British newspaper, noted that British demand for kimchi and Korean cuisine has hit a "phenomenal record" (Korea.net 2014).

According to a 2013 press release made by the MCST, the Cultural Heritage Administration, a subsidiary body of the UNESCO Intangible Heritage Committee in South Korea, recommended *kimjang* (the making and sharing of kimchi) be inscribed as an intangible heritage item (Korea.net, 25 October 2013). According to the press release, UNESCO took into account that kimchi, an iconic Korean food with its long history, was an important cultural asset that has "served to nurture the Korean people's identity" (Korea.net 2013). Later in 2013, UNESCO recognized *kimjang* as an intangible cultural heritage item (Korea.net, 11 December 2013). A 2011 survey by the CHA found that 95 percent of South Koreans eat kimchi everyday, and 64 percent answered that they eat the side dish with every meal (Korea.net 2013). Also, in 2013, it was reported that 83% of respondents out of 500 said that they make kimchi themselves. This shows that people still consume and make kimchi and that it still continues to serve as a significant factor for culture and identity.

Picking and Choosing which National Sport to Promote

The MCST has also gone to great lengths to promote and globalize taekwondo. Taekwondo is one of South Korea's most popular national sports. It consists of various kicking techniques and fast movement. It was estimated in 2011 that 70 million people around the world practiced taekwondo within 205 national member associations, spanning five continents (World Taekwondo Federation 2013). In 2000, taekwondo became an Olympic sport, debuting at the games in Sydney (World Taekwondo Federation 2013). The MCST assists the Korea Taekwondo Association by sending taekwondo performances to different countries each year to promote taekwondo (R. Kim 2011). South Korea's efforts to globalize taekwondo have been successful due to its popularity and commercial success worldwide; however, South Korea has other national sports that have not received the same attention as taekwondo has by the government.

For instance, other national sports like hapkido (martial art) and ssireum (traditional wrestling) have endured fewer efforts of support and promotion by the government. The government does recognize and support traditional national sports like hapkido and ssireum, but not to the level of taekwondo. Moreover, non-governmental organizations like the Korea Hapkido Federation (KHF) and the Korean Ssireum Association (KSA) have taken on this responsibility in efforts to maintain, adapt, and globalize their sport. Although hapkido has received some global attention and has become successful in other parts of the world like Europe and North America it is nowhere near that of taekwondo. Additionally, ssireum is still considered a traditional national folk sport in South Korea, but its number of practitioners seems to be dwindling

(Sparks 2013). The KSA has gone to great lengths to modify and promote ssireum in South Korea and worldwide. For instance, in 2003 the KSA created the Korean University Ssireum Federation in order to reinvigorate the traditional sport and create a semi-pro league since the professional league had previously dissolved. Furthermore, the KSA had to modify its rules and arena in order to generate greater audience reception and interest. Currently, there are over 150 players from the university (Korean Ssireum Association 2013). In 2013, the first Korean Cultural Festival was held in Germany to celebrate 130 years of diplomatic relations between Germany and Korea. The Korean community in Germany organized the fourth World Ssireum Championships. Some 100 athletes and officials from 20 countries attended the event in order to promote the sport at an international level (The Association For International Sports for All 2013). Although, ssireum is not as popular as it once was. There is still effort to preserve and promote its traditional legacy. Ssireum serves as a unique identity for those that participate in it, even though it may not have a large following.

Interestingly, *taekkyeon*, a traditional martial art, and the root and inspiration of taekwondo and to some extent hapkido, was endorsed by the CHA and MCST to be inscribed onto UNESCO's Intangible Cultural Heritage list in 2011 (Korea.net, 29 November 2011). What is even more interesting is that ssireum has not yet been selected as a UNESCO ICH despite its traditions, rituals, and basis for Korean identity.

Promoting/Preserving History and Culture via the Internet

The MCST has also used the Internet as a way to promote and preserve important

cultural assets such as history, art, fashion, film, language, and heritage through online catalogues, databases, and ICT channels. In 2013, The Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Tourism teamed up with Google to support the development of special programs where people can learn more about the Korean culture (*Korea Herald*, 30 October, 2013). According to Eric Schmidt, executive chairman of Google: "Our goal is to share Korea's rich culture with the world" (*Korea Herald*, 2013). About 10,000 content sources, including sources from the National Museum of Korea, Korean Art Museum Association, and Korea Database Agency, will be made available to Internet users around the world. The MCST has also started releasing comprehensive information about the country's cultural heritage through its portal site, giving the public wider and easier access to traditional cultural assets (*Korea Herald*, 11 September, 2013). Currently, about 300,000 photos and details on cultural artifacts are available and the CHA and the National Museum of Korea will share their database to provide a broader range of information. In 2014 information on 850,000 items will become available to the public (*Korea Herald* 2013). For example, more than a thousand ancient Korean books were made available online (*Korea Herald*, 17 April, 2013). In 2014, the South Korea government established an online integrated management system called the Korea National Heritage Online, which stores and manages digital content on culture at one location (Korea.net, 7 January 2014). The Korean National Heritage Online gives access to a complete range of digital content collected from existing subsidiary websites run by the CHA. In addition, 1.8 million new pieces of data were created about Korea's national treasures and culture (Korea.net, 8 January 2014). The website is broken up into four

sections: the Cyber Heritage Tour Service, National Memory Heritage Service, Cultural

Heritage Exhibition Service, and Cultural Heritage Learning Service (Korea.net 2014).

The use of the Internet has created an alternative means to preserve Korean history and

heritage and as a learning tool can help spread Korea's traditional legacies and culture.

UNESCO as a way to Promote and Preserve Traditional Forms

      The South Korean government has worked to increase Korea's status in the

international community by cooperating with multilateral organizations such as

UNESCO. South Korea is an active member of the UNESCO Executive Board (R. Kim

2011). In 2008, South Korea became a board member of the Intergovernmental

Committee of Intangible Cultural Heritage (R. Kim 2011). In recent years the

preservation of non-physical heritage such as local traditions, cultural expression, and

their practioners has emerged as an urgent priority for South Korea in light of

diminishing traditions in modern times (Korea.net 2012). In fact, South Korea has had

sixteen intangible items added to UNESCO's ICH list (CHA 2013). These items range

from traditional dances and rituals to traditional songs and art. For example, *pansori* (a

genre of traditional Korean opera), *ganggangsuwollae* (a traditional all-female group

dance), *gagok* (traditional vocal music), *Daemokjang* (traditional wooden architecture),

falconry, *taekkyeon* (traditional martial art), *jultagi* (tightrope walking performance),

*mosi (*weaving) have been added to the UNESCO ICH (Korea.net 2011). Recently,

kimchang (the making of kimchi) was added (Korea.net 2013).

      The criteria for UNESCO's ICH defines intangible culture as forms of popular

and traditional cultural expressions that take place in cultural spaces (UNESCO,

Intangible Cultural Heritage 2014). ICH assets must demonstrate their outstanding

values as masterpieces of the human creative genius and be able to give wide evidence

of their roots in cultural tradition or history. It must be a means to affirm cultural identity

of a community and provide proof of excellence in the application of the skill displayed.

It must also be a unique testimony of living cultural traditions. Furthermore, it must also

be at risk of degradation or disappearance (UNESCO 2014). Once an ICH asset is

selected and nominated for UNESCO's ICH list it must be approved by board members

on the Intergovernmental Committee of Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICICH). What I

find interesting about the ICICH is that it is comprised of a selective group of nations

that make decisions on other country's intangible cultures. What is even more interesting

is that South Korea has the third most ICH items listed. China and Japan have the most

ICH items listed (UNESCO 2014). Furthermore, *kimjang* (the making of kimchi), which

was added to the list in 2013, does not seem to be disappearing since many people in

South Korea still continue to make kimchi. Moreover, since the inception of UNESCO's

ICH, South Korea has had various items added while other countries did not (UNESCO

2014). It is possible that there is a level of subjective politics involved in the selection

process. South Korea's policies toward cultural heritage have been criticized as a way to

create "soft power" and aimed at generating national pride overseas (Maliangkay 2009).

Regardless of the government's motivations toward its cultural heritage, it has remained

steadfast in safeguarding certain traditions that have seen evidence of fading away like

gagok (traditional vocal music), *Daemokjang* (traditional wooden architecture), falconry,

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taekkyeon (traditional martial art), *jultagi* (tightrope walking performance), and *mosi* *(*weaving). These types of traditions seem to fit UNESCO's ICH criteria, but I do believe that *kimjang* may be questionable since it is still widely practiced today.

Language Schools and Cultural Centers Abroad

South Korea's cultural industry has even prompted foreigners to learn more about South Korean culture and language. For example, at Inlingua School of Language in Singapore, the number of students learning Korean increased by 60% in from 2001 to 2003 because of the interest generated by South Korean popular culture (Shim 2006). According to a survey conducted by the Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Tourism, of 2,089 people who enrolled at the King Sejong Institute, a Korean language school with 90 branches in 44 countries, about 33.7 percent of the respondents said they started learning Korean because they were interested in K-pop (*Korea Herald,* 15 May 2013). The number of international students who attended the King Sejong Institute rose steadily from 740 in 2007 to 2,906 in 2008, growing to 4,301, then in 2009; 6,016 in 2010; 9,348 in 2011; a major jump to 16,590 in 2012 (*Yonhap News*, 29 April, 2013). Also, the Korean language proficiency test topped the one million mark in 2013 for international students. In 2007, a total of 82,881 people applied for the Test of Proficiency in Korea (TOPIK) for non-Korean natives interested in school admissions and employment. In 2012, that number jumped to 151,166 (*Korea Herald* 2013). Park Young Su, former assistant bureau chief at the Korea National Tourism Organization (KTNO), said "Thanks to the success of shows like *Autumn in My Heart* and *Winter*

Sonata, we've had 130,000 tourists from China, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Singapore,

Malaysia, and Thailand coming to visit the locations where the dramas were filmed"

(Lee 2003). In 2003, the number of Taiwanese who visited South Korea totaled 180,000,

a 50 percent increase from the previous year's figure of 120,000 (Y. Park 2004).

According to the Korea Tourism Organization's tourism report from 2004 to 2012; in

2004, 5.8 million visitors arrived in South Korea. In 2005, there were 6 million, 6.1

million in 2006 and 6.4 million in 2007. 2008 had 6.8 million visitors and the number in

2009 jumped to 7.8 million. 2010 had 8.7 million, 2011 increased to 9.7 million, and in

2012 there were 11.1 million people who visited South Korea (Korea Tourism

Organization 2013).

In 2013, the Korea Festival was created by the MCST due to the significant

amount of people interested in South Korean culture in Southeast Asian countries. The

Korea Festival was held in Indonesia, Singapore, the Philippines, Vietnam, Myanmar,

and Thailand from May 16 to August 23. The festival featured art exhibitions, music

concerts, and dance performances that showed a blend of traditional and contemporary

features (*Korea Herald,* 12 May 2013). In 2011, South Korean cultural centers opened in

Indonesia and the Philippines. All cultural centers run various programs for people,

including language classes, culture classes, tourism attractions, and film showings. Also,

the centers in Indonesia and the Philippines held taekwondo, food, and K-pop contests

(Korea.net, 21 July 2011). As of now, there are twenty South Korean cultural centers

around the world, with three in Southeast Asia. The MCST praised South Korean

popular and traditional culture for the significant success of the cultural centers, which

spurred interest in learning the language and more about South Korean culture

(Korea.net 2011).

Chapter Summary

    South Korea's approach toward cultural preservation seems to be an effective

strategy to promote local values by focusing on elements of identity and nationalism. It

has also been a way to promote global recognition for South Korea's national image.

South Korea's cultural policy toward traditional culture is a twofold system in which

traditional culture continues to reinforce local values through cultural expressions and it

generates international attention by actively commercializing and globalizing certain

elements like the *Han* brand (*hanok*, *hanbok*, and *hansik*) and taekwondo as national

symbols. However, efforts to globalize certain elements have taken priority over other

elements that are considered commercially weaker like *hapkido* and *ssireum*, which can

be problematic for people that continue to practice those activities, yet there are still

efforts made by participants to maintain and adapt their sport with globalization.

Agencies like the MCST and CHA actively promote regional traditions like *mosi*

through festivals. The MCST and CHA have used online tools like the Korea National

Heritage Online to promote and preserve cultural content, history, and information. The

CHA is responsible for selecting cultural assets in South Korea to be inscribed on

UNESCO's ICH list; South Korea currently has 16 items listed. However, the selection

process seems subjective and political in nature. Regardless of politics, South Korea has

actively supported many cultural traditions. As a result of South Korea's successful

cultural industry, awareness and interest has spawned people around the world to learn more about Korean culture and its language. Furthermore, South Korean traditional and cultural forms and assets appear to contribute to South Korean identity and nationalism, which continue to reinforce South Korean values. There are still efforts made by the government and the public to maintain certain forms and elements that represent South Korean values as opposed to what Schiller (1969; 1976) and Fraser (2003) would lead us to believe. It does not seem likely that American cultural or media imperialism is a self-imposing force, or that traditional culture is completely fading away. Instead, it appears that elements of traditional and historical culture are still maintained and promoted as a rationale for identity and nationalism.

CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSIONS

This project contends that the frameworks of cultural and media imperialism fail to

adequately explain South Korea in the context of globalization. Theories of cultural and

media imperialism suggest that American imports like popular culture or "soft power"

into non-Western countries undermine local values and identity (Schiller 1969, 1976;

Fraser 2003; Germann 2005). However, this paper's thesis holds that South Korea has

successfully managed globalization by spreading its own popular culture and

safeguarding certain aspects of its traditional culture and not succumbing to cultural or

media imperialism imposed by the West. Two main strategies have been identified in the

success of South Korea: self-definition and cultural preservation. Self-definition entails

the global and local proliferation of South Korean pop culture, which primarily

encompasses the spread of South Korean film and music (K-Pop). Cultural preservation

involves the preservation of traditional and national elements of South Korean culture

such as architectural style, fashion, food, and history and intangible heritage.

Anthropological theories such as cultural hybridization, cultural identity, and

nationalism are much richer theoretical concepts which help explain the complexities of

South Korean globalization, instead of cultural and media imperialism.

Schiller (1969; 1976) saw American media flows as a destructive process on

cultural identities. Cultural/media imperialism viewed American popular culture (film,

music, fashions, fast food) as a confirmation to conforming to American values by non-

Westerners (Schiller 1976; Fraser 2003). The inflow of American popular goods is interpreted as seductive and persuasive (Fraser 2003) and coercive (Hamm 2005). Germann (2005) argued that the audiovisual industry is on an uneven playing field against Hollywood, which can lead to the degradation of domestic market shares and cultural loss. On the other hand, cultural and media imperialism theory has been criticized by not taking into account audience reception to American popular culture and how content is translated and customized (Katz and Liebes 1990; Tomlinson 1991, 1999). Other studies have focused on the resistance to foreign media in regional locations and preference for local broadcasting over foreign content (Chadha and Kavoori 2000). There are countless examples of how aspects of culture can influence different regions of the world such as religion, music, fashion, film, food, martial arts, art, history, and so on. Moreover, there are countless examples of ways cultures blend or appropriate different flows of culture in many ways. For example, musical forms like Japanese rap, gangsta rap, Mexican rap, American hip-hop, South Korean hip-hop, *reggae*, Cuban samba, Brazilian samba, Cuban *salsa*, Argentinian *salsa*, Algerian *rai*, and French *rai*, All of which have different cultural expressions and meanings for people in different localities around the world. In the case of South Korea, American values or "soft power," in terms of film and music do not seem to adequately support what has happened in the development of South Korean film or K-pop. Instead, aspects of American popular culture like high-quality production found in film and certain musical genres found in K-pop seem to contribute to non-Western or Korean values, instead of conforming to American notions of value.

Tomlinson (1999; 2003) pointed out that culture is widely regarded as a key dimension to globalization. In many ways, cultural identity is constructed and protected through cultural policy (Yim 2002). Nationalism is rooted deeply into culture (Anderson 2006) and in a global sense, national "branding" is a way to promote cultural industries in favor of national interests (R. Kim 2011). Nationalism can also be highlighted in homegrown films in which aspects of the past or present become important to people's national and cultural experiences (Gateward 2007). Cultural policy toward South Korea's cultural industry development served as a rationale for government subsidies and support. President Kim Young-sam (1993-1998) outlined his globalization strategy and cultural policy for the 21st century that focused on developing South Korea's cultural industry, specifically its entertainment sector, minimizing governmental regulations. President Kim Dae-jung (1998-2003) further enhanced governmental subsidies to its cultural industry. President Roh Moo-hyun (2003-2008) extended its cultural policy to promote and globalize traditional elements like the *Han* brand. Since 2008, both the Lee Myung-bak (2008-2013) and the Park Geun-hye (2013- Present) administrations have extended their predecessors' cultural policy toward intangible cultural traditions and international recognition.

Aspects of cultural hybridization can be found in both South Korean films and K-pop. South Korea's film industry improved its production quality by adopting technical features from Hollywood, such as CGI (computer-generated imagery), enhanced special effects, fast-cut editing, and cinematography. Since 1999, South Korea's film industry has been booming. South Korea's success in films can most importantly be attributed to

its cultural content, substance, and subject matter. However, this line of argument goes against Germann (2005), who argued that Hollywood films for the most part dominate foreign markets because of increased marketing and advertisement and that cultural content did not play a role in a film's success. Based on my case study about South Korean film, it seems that Germann (2005) underestimated the power of local and national culture. For instance, movies like *Shiri* (1999), *Silmido* (2003), *TaeGukGi* (2004), *The King and the Clown* (2005), and *Masquerade* (2012) all dominated Hollywood films in the South Korean box-office; South Korean films still do. This is because successful South Korean blockbusters that focus on historical events or national concerns are way more familiar and appealing for a multigenerational audience in South Korea than Hollywood films that tend to focus on Western subject matters that cater toward a predetermined and younger audience (Choi 2010). South Korea continues to dominate its local market share and has out "Hollywood" Hollywood. South Korean directors continue to have great success in international film festivals and gain international recognition, and in many cases Hollywood producers are looking to South Korean directors for new and creative ideas (Shim 2006; Ryoo 2008). K-pop has created an alternative source of popular music that finds itself with new expressions and meanings. K-pop blends together musical styles such as pop, ballad, rap, and techno with flashy dance routines. K-pop is considered the heart of the "Korean Wave" with increasing global success and popularity. South Korea currently has the eleventh largest music industry worldwide with global sales topping 3 billion USD in 2013 due to digital distribution. Psy helped roll out the global red carpet with "Gangnam Style," the most

watched music video on YouTube for K-pop. Psy is not the exception; K-pop groups like Girls Generation and SHINee continue to grow in popularity worldwide. There are millions of fans that are members of K-pop fan clubs around the world. Dedicated fans have actually helped propel K-pop into numerous localities by using social networking services like Facebook and Twitter and by creating blogs and websites devoted to K-pop news.

South Korea has taken an active role in safeguarding aspects of its traditional culture through methods of cultural preservation and promotion. Protecting cultural identity and promoting nationalism play significant roles in doing this. The Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Tourism supports and promotes the *Han* brand and taekwondo as a means of cultural and national identity. It supports the traditional legacies of the *Han* brand, but also seeks to commercialize and globalize them as a way to enhance their national image and brand, though some traditional and national aspects of culture receive more governmental support than others. The MCST and Cultural Heritage Administration have taken steps to preserve traditional and historical aspects of culture through online portals like the Korea National Heritage Online site that offers information about Korean culture. The MCST has also partnered with Google as a way to promote Korean history and culture. The CHA has taken a proactive role in UNESCO's Intangible Cultural Heritage program and sixteen items have been included on its list. However, it may be considered subjective and political in nature since South Korea is a leading board member on UNESCO's ICH panel. The MCST has also expanded language institutions and cultural centers abroad and they have been met with

great success. Tourism to South Korea has drastically increased as well. Ultimately, South Korea has been proactive in safeguarding and promoting traditional elements of its culture.

South Korea's management of globalization that involved strategies of self-definition and cultural preservation has been successful in their own developmental path in the context of globalization. These strategies have contributed to the ways that South Korea has reacted to, navigated, and negotiated with processes of globalization. Moreover, South Korea has maintained its cultural niche in the world and has not succumbed to American cultural or media imperialism.

South Korea is truly a remarkable case study, serving as a fascinating focal point of research for the discourse of globalization. Once known to be one of poorest countries in the world, South Korea has grown to become the fifteenth largest economy. South Korea has managed and benefited from globalization by proliferating aspects of its culture through the nurturing and spread of its popular cultural industry, while maintaining a stronghold on some its own traditional elements of culture. In this light, cultural and media imperialism hypotheses need to be adjusted or updated to better support their claims. Moreover, further analyses should focus on the complex correlation between globalization and cultures through micro-level lenses as opposed to a macro-level examination because every cultural system remains multifaceted and would most likely yield different results for different cultures.

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