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LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

What defines a country or the identity of a country? That is a question that academia tries to answer through various lenses. While some scholars look at the history of a nation, others look at the media representations of the country. Another path is looking at the cultural tint of a country, its ethnicity, and where its people come from. Politics are also involved: how does a country behave with its neighbors? Who are their allies, and how their political system behaves within the international community? Are their policies liberal or not? How are women treated in the country? While these are not the only questions made by researchers, these are the questions that our authors did during this YJIS Fall/Winter Issue. Up next is a brief introduction of our authors and their research.

The first paper of this issue is “The Fight for Korean Abortion Rights through Social Media Activism” by Veronica Coffey. This article examines which strategies and frameworks were used by pro-choice social media activists to promote legal change regarding women’s abortion rights in South Korea. The author takes an original approach by focusing on social media activists to understand the role of online feminist activism in the recent advancement of Korean women’s reproductive rights.

Our second paper is by Man Fung Yeung, called “The Change and Continuity of the US Asia-Pacific Policy: From Obama to Trump.” This paper compares the similarity and differences between Obama and Trump’s Asia-Pacific policy through John J. Mearsheimer’s Offensive Realism theory to conclude that even though both Presidents have different political ideals, the policy implemented by both administrations was similar and their goals were the same.

“K-pop, Affect, and Intimacy in Transnational Social Mediascapes During the COVID-19 Pandemic: A Case Study of BTS and Participatory Online Fandom” is our last paper. Written by our senior editor Simone Liew, this article focuses on the normalization of emotional interaction through digital spaces and innovative technology in K-pop under the COVID-19 pandemic. Using BTS as a case study, the author performs a quantitative analysis of BTS increasingly intimate online activities throughout the pandemic.

For our only essay and special literature analysis, we have two articles by graduate students from GSIS, Korea University. Overall, this mini collection examines communities and concepts often left out of the discussion of national identity. Author Bridgette Ellise Han looks at the chronological-historical emergence of multiculturalism. The essay called “The Presence

of Diverse Cultures in South Korea: Redefining South Korea's Multicultural Society" takes us through a journey of multiculturalism across Korean history starting from the Goryeo dynasty until modern South Korea Society.

"Encountering the Ghosts of Gwangju: Tragedy and Trauma in Ch'oe Yun's *There, a Petal Silently Falls* and Han Kang's *Human Acts*" by Chelsea Proctor is a unique piece that we are proud and grateful to publish since we mostly do not receive submissions of this nature. This literature analysis seeks to understand the presence of ghosts in both novels as representations of the dead of Gwangju and as a historical burden that extends beyond characters into the language of grief and trauma.

Lastly, but certainly not least, this issue closes with an interview made to Philip Turner, New Zealand ambassador to South Korea. He has extensive experience as a diplomat and a business leader in North Asia, with a particular focus on the Korean Peninsula. He speaks fluent French and Japanese, conversational Chinese, and enjoys becoming acquainted with the Korean language. In this interview, he discusses New Zealand's position as a middle power, the impact of Korean soft power, and AUKUS.

I am incredibly grateful to a team of extraordinary women and editors who dedicated their time and efforts to this issue's success. Their diligence, excellent work, and incredible support are highly appreciated. Thank you to Julie Aase, Hannah Kim, Amanda Herath, Simone Liew, and Gabrielle Magnuson for being the motor behind YJIS. I would also like to extend my high appreciation to professor Sung-Eun Thomas Kim and TA Chelsea Proctor from GSIS Korea University for reaching out to the YJIS. We are moved and touched that our journal reaches other GSIS around Korea.

To our readers, I am grateful for your interest in this journal. In the name of the whole editing team, we wish you good health, safety, and happy holidays. Thank you and enjoy this Fall/Winter issue.

Grecia Dominique Paniagua Garcia

Editor-in-Chief

MEET THE CONTRIBUTORS

Veronica Coffey

vecoffey@iu.edu

Veronica Coffey is an exchange student from the United States majoring in International Studies with a focus on human rights on the Korean Peninsula and Italy. She has been studying Korean history and culture for over three years and is now conducting independent research on Korean women's rights in time of the Coronavirus Pandemic. Her past research has concentrated on the abortion rights movement in South Korea, Italy, and Ireland, and produced a literature analysis of Kim Jiyong Born 1982, focusing on the rise of feminist literature in South Korea. She hopes to work in the field of human rights after she graduates.

Man Fung Yeung

608270053@gms.tku.edu.tw

The author graduated from the Graduate Institute of China Studies, Tamkang University, Taiwan.

Simone Liew

simoneliew@gmail.com

Simone Liew is a recent Korean Studies graduate from the Graduate School of International Studies at Yonsei University. Her Master's thesis, which explored how Korean popular culture empowers ethnic identity re-kindling in transnational Korean American adoptees succinctly describes her academic interests in digital media and the cultural industries, identity, transnationalism, and diaspora/immigrant studies. These interests, which stemmed from her passion to understand the workings and popularity of the Korean cultural industries, were the initial motivation for undertaking graduate studies in Korea and is further reflected in her submission for this issue. Delving further into this topic of transnational digital media and fandom communities, Simone has recently co-founded a community start-up project based in her hometown of Melbourne, Australia, which aims to build tech platforms and management solutions for interactive and affective fan-artist communication.

Bridgette Ellise Han

bridgettegallander95@gmail.com

Bridgette Ellise Han is currently attending the Graduate School of International Studies at Korea University as Master Candidate of Korean Studies. She acquired a Bachelor of Arts degree in International Studies from Texas A&M University in College Station, Texas, USA. Her areas of interest are gender roles, social issues, and multiculturalism. Her favorite hobby is traveling around Korea and weekend adventures with her husband and children.

Chelsea Proctor

cproctor@korea.ac.kr

Chelsea Proctor is a graduate student at Korea University GSIS, majoring in Korean Studies. She received her B.A. Critical and Visual Studies from Pratt Institute with her thesis work centering around South Korean women, dramas, and online discourses of national identity. Her work at Korea University GSIS is focused on female literature of the 1980's and 1990's in South Korea. She is the Editor-in-Chief of the Korean entertainment editorial site Seoulbeats.com.

PAPERS

**The Fight for Korean Abortion Rights
through Social Media Activism**

Veronica Coffey

**The Change and Continuity of the US Asia-Pacific Policy:
From Obama to Trump**

Man Fung Yeung

**K-pop, Affect, and Intimacy in Transnational Social Mediascapes
During the COVID-19 Pandemic:**

A Case Study of BTS and Participatory Online Fandom

Simone Liew

The Fight for Korean Abortion Rights through Social Media Activism

Veronica Coffey

Undergraduate student at Indiana University

How do abortion-rights activists in South Korea utilize social media to fight for reproductive rights? This research examines which strategies and frameworks were used by pro-choice social media activists to promote legal change regarding women's abortion rights in South Korea. While it was the Constitutional Court that struck down South Korea's criminal abortion law, the act followed years of extensive work by feminist NGOs in South Korea along with the emerging popularity of the #MeToo movement that began to address the need for safe, legal, and regulated abortion policy. Though previous research has examined the role of feminist movements and traditional NGOs in the reproductive rights movement, the significant role social media activism has played in the recent successes of women's reproductive health rights has been largely overlooked. This research conducts a survey of social media activists and aims to understand the role of online feminist activism in the recent advancement of Korean women's reproductive rights. Through exploring how social media activism worked cross-culturally to gain a critical mass of support to change the tide during the Constitution Court case which decriminalized abortion in 2019, the importance of social media as a tool for mobilizing and organizing activist behavior in the context of Korean society can be better understood.

Introduction to Abortion Law in South Korea

Within the past couple of years, abortion laws across the world have seen varying degrees of upheaval, most notably in South Korea. As of April 2019, South Korea's criminalization of abortion has been deemed unconstitutional by

Korea's Constitutional Court due to the efforts of pro-choice¹ non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and the influence of domestic and international pro-choice movements.² Until December 31, 2020, South Korea had to revise its law to decriminalize abortion and add provisions to make the procedure more accessible for all Korean women in need of an abortion. and as of January 2021, the necessary measures were passed to ensure abortion was decriminalized, and the previous laws were repealed.³ Since 2012, suggestions of the influence of social media activism have been reflected in reproductive rights in South Korea. In the country, the Constitutional Court reversed their previous ruling, which upheld the abortion ban except in cases where the mother's life was at risk, or in cases of rape or incest.⁴ This suggests that due to the rise in social media usage and the changing political climate, social media activism may have played an important role in this reversal. Given that the abortion ban has lasted over 60 years since Korea's criminalization of abortion in 1953 and South Korea currently has one of the lowest birth rates in the world, it is remarkable that Korean pro-choice organizations have been so successful in obtaining substantial reproductive health rights over the past decade.

Moreover, a continuing trend relevant for reproductive rights, particularly in East Asia but also throughout the developed world, is the issue of diminishing birth rates.⁵ Historically, South Korea has prioritized economic security over female bodily autonomy, which has led to restricting abortion rights as fears about an aging workforce have risen. This questions how South Korea, a country with meager birth rates, utilized social media activism to promote the decriminalization of

1 For most of those who identify as pro-choice, the term pro-choice is an ideology that advocates for a woman's right to have an abortion and to support legislation that provides safe, legal, and accessible abortion services.

2 Sunhye Kim et al., "The Role of Reproductive Justice Movements in Challenging South Korea's Abortion Ban," *Health and Human Rights* 21, no. 2 (2019): 97-107.

3 Yoonjung Seo, "South Korea to Legalize Abortion after 66-Year Ban," *CNN*, April 11, 2019, <https://edition.cnn.com/2019/04/11/health/south-korea-abortion-ban-ruling-intl/index.html>

4 Eun-Young Jeong, "Abortion Ban Overturned in South Korea After 66 Years," *The Wall Street Journal*, April 11, 2019, <https://www.wsj.com/articles/abortion-ban-overturned-in-south-korea-after-66-years-11554966548>

5 James M. Raymo, "Marriage and Family in East Asia: Continuity and Change," *Annual Review of Sociology* 41, no. 1 (April 2015): 17, <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-soc-073014-112428>

abortion in a country with a history of restricting female bodily autonomy.

Importantly, as South Korea began to re-evaluate its current anti-abortion laws, feminist pro-choice organizations started utilizing social media activism to sustain their cause and garner international support. Before the popularity of the #MeToo movement in South Korea, the issue of abortion was rarely discussed in the general public given the social stigma attached to unmarried women's sexual behavior and bodily autonomy.⁶ However, South Korea has had a long and successful history of activism. Due to the influence of South Korea's profound internet-savvy culture combined with the increased popularity of online activism, South Korean activists began to enact massive social change via social media platforms such as Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, and Daum Internet Cafe.

For example, in 2016 and 2017, South Korea's president, Park Geun-Hye, was impeached due to the successful Candlelight Movement,⁷ organized oversocialmedia, resulting in one of the largest peaceful protests in South Korean history. Furthermore, in 2016, the global #MeToo Movement gained popularity in South Korea, which further developed South Korea's feminist online activist culture.⁸ Along with the #MeToo movement, Megalia, a South Korean feminist online community, emerged in 2015 and became one of the mobilizing forces that confronted misogyny in South Korean society.⁹ After feminist organizations began utilizing social media more effectively to combat misogyny and sexual assault against women, pro-choice feminists started using these online activist methods to implement their reproductive rights-focused agendas.

Furthermore, along with social media activism, the changing political and social climate in South Korea has impacted current abortion politics in South Korea. Compared to the political environment during the 2012 Constitutional

6 Sunhye Kim et al., "The Role of Reproductive Justice Movements," 97-107.

7 Sangwon Lee, "The Role of Social Media in Protest Participation: The Case of Candlelight Vigils in South Korea," *International Journal of Communication* 12, (2018): 1523-1540, <https://ijoc.org/index.php/ijoc/article/view/7767>

8 Alice Privey. "#MeToo: South Korea's Social Revolution," *Institute for Security and Development Policy* (blog), June 20, 2018, <https://isdp.eu/metoo-south-koreas-social-revolution/>

9 Euisol Jeong and Jieun Lee, "We take the red pill, we confront the DickTrix: online feminist activism and the augmentation of gendered realities in South Korea," *Feminist Media Studies* 18, no. 4 (2018): 706-717, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14680777.2018.1447354>

Court case where abortion politics were viewed as more taboo and discussed less in public, South Korea's government has undergone a shifting political environment since 2012. Unlike Korea's president in 2012, Lee Myung-bak, the current president, Moon Jae-in, has cultivated an avid human rights-focused image and is significantly more open to criticism regarding women's rights violations. Moon's popularity and association with human rights have allowed for a more open dialogue on women's rights, specifically regarding abortion rights. Given this increased political opportunity structure,¹⁰ Korean feminists have successfully capitalized on these changes through social media activism.

In South Korea, the first mass protest (primarily mobilized on social media) regarding abortion rights was held on October 15, 2016,¹¹ shortly after the #MeToo movement exploded in the western world. In the same period, various pro-choice rallies were held globally, most notably in Poland. Poland's protests, known as the "Black Monday Protest," circulated among Korean women via social media, and Korean feminists held their own "Black Protest Korea" shortly after. Various online communities, such as Womad, organized these Korean Black Monday Protests by adopting the Polish feminists' slogan, black dress code, and the unifying symbol of the uterus giving the middle finger, which was disseminated all over Korean social media.¹² South Korean feminists' cross-cultural approach to mimic other global activism such as the Black Monday Protests helped pave the way for Korean abortion issues to become internationally recognized and mainstream on social media.

Additionally, Korean feminists not only began to endorse Polish feminist tactics, but they also utilized the Argentinian feminists' pro-choice movement to further spread their own campaign's message and agenda. On August 8, 2018, South Korean feminists held a rally in front of the Argentina Embassy in South Korea to support #Aborto_Legal in honor of the Argentina abortion protests

10 Marco Giugni, "Political Opportunities: From Tilly to Tilly," *Swiss Political Science Review* 15, no. 2 (2009): 361–367, doi:10.1002/j.1662-6370.2009.tb00136.x.

11 Sunhye Kim et al, "The Role of Reproductive Justice Movements," 97-107.

12 Sofia Lotto Persio, "Women in South Korea Launch Polish-Inspired Pro-Choice Protest," *International Business Times*, October 24, 2016, <https://www.ibtimes.co.uk/women-south-korea-launch-polish-inspired-pro-choice-campaign-fully-legalise-abortion-1587986>

occurring at the same time.¹³ Through social media, South Korean pro-choice organizations put the abortion issue into the public's consciousness while also capitalizing on the international movements co-occurring. Therefore, due to the global traction and constant exchange of cross-cultural strategic borrowing, Korean social media maintained public attention on the issue and increased international media coverage compared to the 2012 abortion court case.

Literature Review

The phenomenon of social media as a tool for activism does not solely pertain to South Korea but has impacted activism worldwide. Social media has become crucial in mobilizing people from the local, national, and international levels, and activists have begun to embrace this form of transnational online activism. The emergence of digital networks has enabled more efficient communication and protest artifacts (for example, audio-visual content relating to protests such as images and videos) that can be culturally transmitted and contribute to a collective memory to unify individual protestors.¹⁴ Over the past decade, global NGOs have increasingly begun utilizing new media tools such as social networking sites like Facebook and Twitter to promote their organizations' mission and increase mainstream media attention.¹⁵

Social movement scholarship has suggested that more activism takes place online through social media platforms. Firstly, the potential opportunities created for feminist activism due to the anonymity provided by online platforms have enabled more activists to pursue activism in a safe online space. Due to Korean society's patriarchal nature, Korean feminists are commonly labeled as radicals, which negatively depicts Korean feminists and often leads to the defamation of women's reputations and honor. One example of such defamation occurred in 2018 after Irene, a member of the K-pop group Red Velvet, shared a photo online of her reading *Kim Jiyoung Born 1982*. The novel discusses topics such as sexual harassment and the

13 Marge Berer and Lesley Hoggart, "Progress toward Decriminalization of Abortion and Universal Access to Safe Abortions: National Trends and Strategies," *Health and Human Rights Journal* 21, no. 2 (December, 2019): 79–85.

14 Bart Cammaerts, "Social Media and Activism," in *The International Encyclopedia of Digital Communication and Society*, ed. Robin Mansell and Peng Hwa (Oxford, UK Wiley-Blackwell, 2015), 1027-1034, <http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/62090/>

15 Hyunjin Seo et al, "Global Activism and New Media: A Study of Transnational NGOs' Online Public Relations," *Public Relations Review* 35, no. 2 (2009): 123–126, doi:10.1016/j.pubrev.2009.02.002.

gender pay gap in Korea, forcing some to view the story as feminist and radical. After her post, she received online harassment from her majority male fanbase and had to remove her photo from social media to remedy the controversy she triggered by promoting a 'feminist' novel.¹⁶ Interestingly, Irene has never labeled herself as a feminist, so the unprovoked attack by her male fanbase demonstrates the patriarchal restrictions on women's freedom of speech and opinion regarding women's rights in Korea.

Considering that South Korea's abortion debate is characterized by a history of misogyny and concern with controlling women's bodies, providing anonymous social media outlets can ensure activists safe spaces to organize and protest without the risk of defamation or negative consequences. Korea's obsession with labeling feminist ideology as taboo has forced many feminists to rely on social media activism as a strategy to promote their beliefs safely and anonymously.

Secondly, social media activism has also increased organizations' success in connecting different NGOs across time and space. This model of transnationalism establishes connections between non-state actors across borders that share values and a common objective.¹⁷ These transnational advocacy networks (TANs) provide an opportunity for different transnational groups to exchange ideas, resources, and services while also creating a sense of solidarity.¹⁸ These international efforts to influence policy have been utilized since the age of globalization but have increased due to technology's ability to link international organizations together. In South Korea, online pro-choice activists reached out to Irish, Argentinian, and Polish activists who were simultaneously fighting for their reproductive rights. The similar political background in restricting abortion rights in predominately patriarchal Christian countries and the women's shared goal of decriminalizing abortion allowed these groups to partake in cross-cultural solidarity. Through online activism, these groups could pursue their common goals by using social media as a tool for social interaction, connection, and a method for exchanging resources and ideas.

16 Claire Lee, "[Feature] Feminist Novel Becomes Center of Controversy in South Korea," *The Korea Herald*, March 27, 2018, www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20180327000799.

17 Sidney Tarrow, *The New Transnational Activism* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010).

18 Margaret E. Keck and Kathryn Sikkink, *Activists beyond Borders*, (New York: Cornell University Press, 2014), doi:10.7591/9780801471292.

Overall, transnational advocacy through social media has increased activists' potential for promoting their political objectives and international solidarity. If it were not for social media activism, Korean activists would not have obtained the resources to collaborate with Polish protestors and adopt their Black Monday Protests strategy. Additionally, they would have been unable to demonstrate cross-cultural solidarity to their Argentinian and Irish Pro-Choice activists.

One of the unique mechanisms in which social media connects groups cross-culturally and enables rapid communication is by hashtags. This strategy, known as hashtag activism,¹⁹ ensures broad readership over a short time and allows cross-cultural groups to disseminate information that another group can easily find. This mechanism can be seen in South Korea, where activists consistently used hashtags in Korean and English to reach global audiences. Hashtags in English such as #MyBodyMyChoice, #ProChoice, and #MeToo have all become commonly utilized hashtags on Korean social media. This global strategy allows Korean activists' posts to be exposed to international audiences, and pro-choice online activists worldwide can be exposed to and interact with Korean activists. Without this hashtag activism, it is highly unlikely non-Korean speakers would be exposed to their social media posts, which leads to a decrease in cross-cultural solidarity and fewer media coverage on the issue.

Research Question

Social media activism has proven itself an essential alternative to traditional in-person activism in which women can ensure their anonymity and safety using social media platforms. Online activism provides safe spaces for discussion and debates and can efficiently disseminate urgent information to mobilize and organize protests. This increased protest turnout and encouraged cross-cultural networking with other successful pro-choice organizations and activists. Given past research's emphasis on social media's potential to give women a voice through safe and anonymous measures, has online activism helped activists mobilize and promote abortion rights and, if so, how?

Given the heightened media coverage on South Korean abortion-

19 Ying Xiong et al, "Hashtag Activism and Message Frames among Social Movement Organizations: Semantic Network Analysis and Thematic Analysis of Twitter during the #MeToo Movement." *Public Relations Review* 45, no. 1, (2019): 10–23. doi:10.1016/j.pubrev.2018.10.014.

related issues, this research focuses on what online strategies did reproductive health rights in Korea use to draw attention to their cause during the Constitutional Court case of 2019. This project investigates what roles South Korean social media activism played during the 2019 abortion ruling. Due to the increased presence of social media activism over the past couple of years, South Korean feminists have become more active in asserting their reproductive rights online. This resulted in the strategic organization of pro-choice protests and increased media coverage on women's reproductive rights violations that supported the decriminalization of abortion in 2019.

Research Methods

This research was conducted online using an anonymous Google Forms survey to interview various pro-choice feminist social media activists' accounts. The activists were chosen based on those utilizing their page to primarily promote abortion rights-related content using pro-choice hashtags or content on Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook. The applied survey gathered demographic information as well as strategies that these online activist accounts utilized to promote abortion rights-related content. An anonymous 19-question google forms survey consisted of activist-related questions that investigated what types of methods were used during the abortion protests in 2019. The survey includes a range of multiple-choice questions and one short answer question. The majority of questions were multiple choice because of the ability to compare and analyze the results using a number system. The survey link and an introduction of the interviewer and their research were sent to the pro-choice activists' accounts on various social media platforms. These accounts were found using specific popular hashtags relating to abortion rights in Korea such as #mybodymychoice, #blackmondayprotest, #imsinjungdanhapbeophwa (Legalization of pregnancy termination), #naktajejopyejei (abolish anti-abortion law).

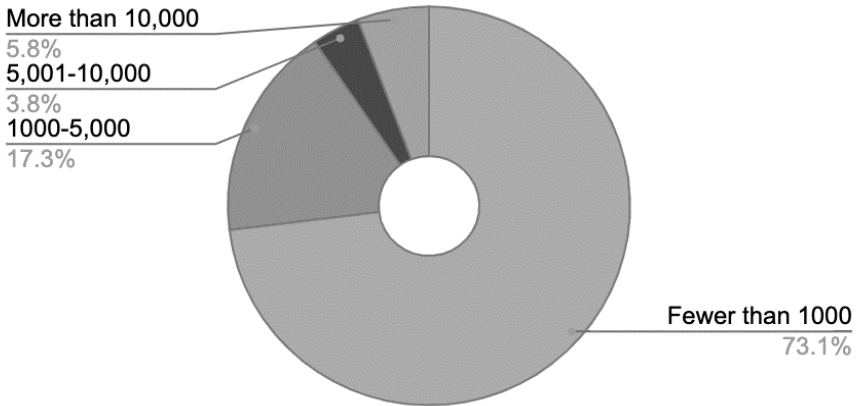
Then, the activists using these popular abortion-related hashtags were privately contacted via direct message on the social media users' accounts. After the survey was sent out to approximately 150 online feminist accounts, 52 responses were anonymously collected from Twitter, Instagram, Facebook, and Daum Cafe. This research method proved the most efficient as the sample was as big as desired. While the original survey was conducted in Korean, the survey questions have been translated into English for this research paper.

Results

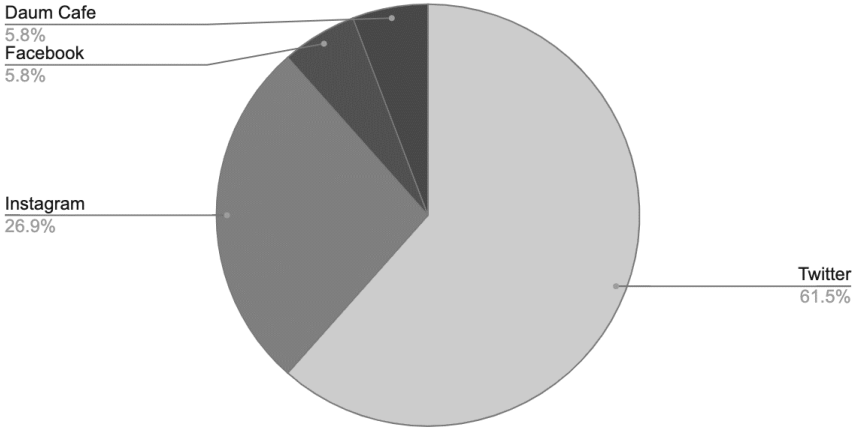
Survey Demographics

The results collected from this survey can be divided into two categories. The first aspect of the survey focused mainly on the demographics of the respondents. Regarding the platforms used most prevalently among the respondents, most online feminist accounts hailed from Twitter (61.5%), then Instagram (26.9%), followed by Facebook (5.8%), and Daum Cafe (5.8%). Most social media activist accounts had a tight-knit community, with 73.1% of accounts with less than 1,000 followers. However, 17.3% of accounts had between 1,000-5,000 followers. Overall, while only a minority of respondents had a large following of over 5,000 followers, most of the accounts relied on a reliable yet small platform to spread their activism, highlighting the importance of the informal networks and tight-knit communities provided through social media platforms.

On average, how many followers did each social media account have?



Which social media platforms did social media activists utilize the most to promote feminism and reproductive rights?



Lastly, all respondents were asked when they first began using social media as a form of feminist activism. Most respondents (76.9%) said that they started their social media accounts between 2016 and 2019, which further emphasizes the contention that #MeToo was a mobilizing force for feminism (since 2016 was the year the #MeToo movement became mainstream globally). Only one user (1.9%) had created an account during 2012 when the first Constitutional Court case on decriminalizing abortion occurred, while the last four other respondents (9.6%) had an online feminist account before 2012. Furthermore, Twitter had no trending hashtags during the 2012 abortion debate, and there was significantly lower hashtag usage than during the 2019 case.

However, the possibility that more 2012 posts were later deleted should be acknowledged. Instagram was a relatively new platform during the 2012 trial. Specialized functions such as hashtags were not as common of a feature, making it more challenging to use hashtag activism and make one’s posts viral. Nevertheless, given the lack of hashtags used for abortion rights and abortion-rights-related posts during 2012, these demographics support the findings that there was a lack of a social media presence during the 2012 Constitutional Court case compared to the 2019 Court case. While attributing the possibility that there could have been more 2012 social media users active during the 2012 court case who are no longer active, the main findings support that there was still a noticeable lack of social

media presence regarding the 2012 court case. This suggests a heightened mobilization surrounding the 2019 court case as there was a sharp increase in the number of feminist activists' accounts covering abortion-rights politics.

Social Media Activist Accounts' Strategies

The second phase of the research was analyzing the strategies utilized by these feminist accounts to promote abortion rights on social media. The most common strategies were publicizing upcoming protests or events regarding abortion rights, sharing relevant news articles and headlines, posting relevant hashtags and webtoon comics, and strategic mirroring. In this case, strategic mirroring is a common strategy that Korean feminists often use to mock misogynistic slurs under a comedic light to emphasize the shallowness of sexist behavior that men often portray online. Mirroring allows feminists to react to online misogyny through trolling, sarcasm, linguistic violence, and parodying misogynistic discourse.²⁰ An example of this would be feminists using purposefully offensive sexist terms and switching their meaning to offend men. This tactic puts men in a vulnerable position and highlights the absurdness of misogynistic behavior. Lastly, participants added that posting pictures of participants at abortion rights protest events was another heavily used strategy. This tactic accurately and actively captures the overwhelming support from women at demonstrations and encourages more women to participate when they physically see other women protesting in pictures distributed online. While some of the women's faces were covered in the photos to protect their identities, this tactic was effective as it demonstrated how massive the support was in protest turn-out. In essence, social media has become essential for mobilizing followers to attend in-person protests and giving people an outlet to support their cause from the comfort of their homes.

As mentioned above, for South Korean users, social media functions as one of the most prevalent methods of disseminating abortion event-related information, especially regarding rallies and protests. According to the survey, social media was considered the most popular method for acquiring specific details about upcoming abortion-rights events, such as the location, time, and expected dress code (usually black for the Black Monday Protests). Specifically, 88.5% of activists claimed that social media was the most common tool to learn detailed information about upcoming events. In comparison, resources such as Daum Cafe (25%) and internet search engines (23.1%)

20 Euisol Jeong and Jieun Lee, "We take the red pill," 708.

were other popular means of obtaining event-related information. Surprisingly, only four respondents (7.7%) reported using women's organizations' websites and offices to access this information. This data highlights that social media has become a more relied upon resource for obtaining activist information as compared to traditional women's organizations, since social media platforms can readily and efficiently disseminate information.

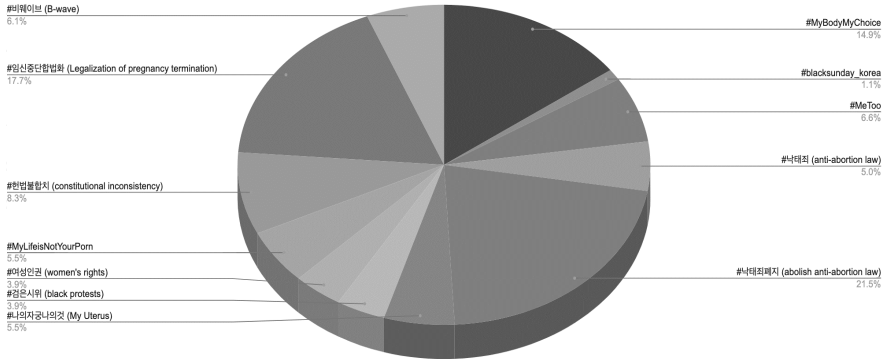
In addition, when asked what they do in situation when they need to find more information about an upcoming abortion-rights-related protest, the majority of activists (42.3%) claimed that they use social media very often to acquire more information. Furthermore, 34.6% of activists noted that they use social media 'almost every time' to obtain information on abortion-related events or protests. Only 5.8% of respondents stated that they rarely use social media to find information. These responses amplify social media's role as an organizational unit for collectively and efficiently disseminating events regarding abortion rights and explaining the successful and timely protests organized over social media throughout 2019.

Another interesting aspect of social media's role in disseminating event-related news was how the users communicated upcoming in-person abortion-related events. Specifically, when asked if they have ever attended and participated in abortion rights events promoted through social media (protests, discussions, fundraising, etc.), most users (53.8%) claimed that they have somewhat often or very often experienced this. On the other hand, a significant portion of respondents (32.7%) noted that they had not experienced a time where they attended an abortion rights event that they previously saw advertised on social media. Despite a substantial number of respondents not being mobilized to participate in events via social media, most have occasionally mobilized to attend protests and other events via social media posts, demonstrating social media's potential for mobilizing followers to be involved activists.

However, when the activists were asked if they ever posted or advertised about abortion rights events, they attended themselves to encourage in-person involvement among their followers, there was a much higher number of respondents who posted advertisements about their own experiences attending abortion rights protests. Twenty-four respondents (46.2%) claimed that they sometimes used this strategy to promote abortion rights, while 12 respondents (23.1%) claimed that they often used it. Also, it should be noted that one of the most cited strategies regarding a post's content was to upload pictures of women at abortion-rights rallies to mobilize the social media

accounts' followers to attend these events. Despite social media not always mobilizing the online activists themselves, the activists were often involved in advertising their own experiences at rallies to mobilize their followers.

Most Popular Hashtags Used



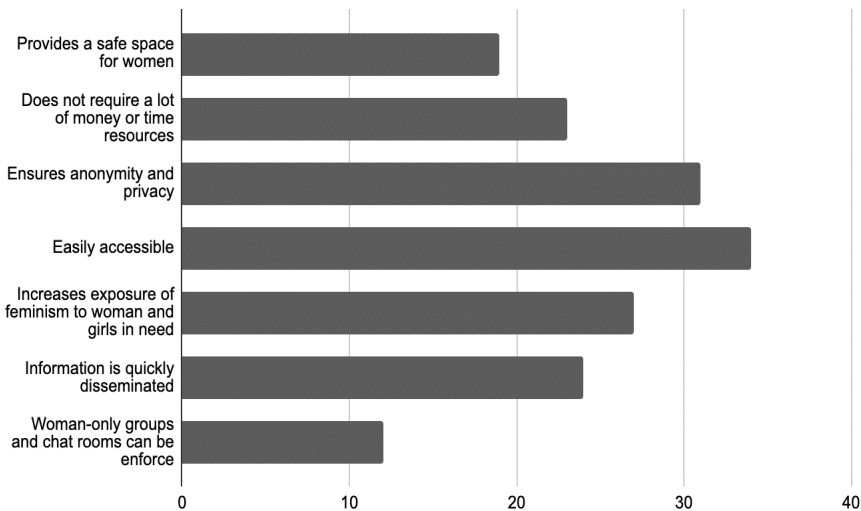
Lack of social media activism prior to 2019

Even compared to 2018, there seemed to have been a significant increase in exposure to abortion rights-related posts on social media. One question asked in the survey was how many more abortion rights-related posts users saw in comparison to 2018. 50% of respondents claimed it increased somewhat since 2018, while 28.8% claimed that the number of posts increased immensely compared to 2018. However, given the demographics, while most respondents (76.9%) became active feminists on social media between 2016-2019, there was still a noted increase in exposure to abortion-rights related posts compared to just the year before the Constitutional Court case. Given that over 90% of activists have an account since 2018 or before, the activists' perception in an increase in social media activism is evident. Beyond the difference in social media attention towards abortion rights between 2018 and 2019, there has been a remarkable increase in social media usage as a form of activism compared to the 2012 Constitutional Court case, as most participants (84.6%) became activists in 2013 or later. It is important to note that the perceived increase in posts does not inherently mean an increase in actual numbers of posts but that these activists themselves have become more aware of them.

Advantages of Social Media Activism

Overall, social media has been a substantial factor in the increase of abortion rights activism. Given South Korea’s rampant and negative public opinion about feminists, social media has acted as a necessary tool for feminists to stay safe yet actively promote women’s rights. When asked why these activists used social media as a platform for activism, among the respondents’ most popular answers were that social media was extremely accessible (59.6%), it effectively disseminated information (51.9%), it easily maintains anonymity (57.7%), and it provides a safe space for women (34.6%). For example, resources such as Daum Cafe and Kakao talk can provide women-only chat rooms where ideas can be safely exchanged, which ultimately protects the safety of anyone participating in these chats. Facebook groups can also accept or decline pending members, where groups often vet the pending member before being admitted to the group’s page. Additionally, many respondents noted that, unlike in-person organizations, social media could educate women unaware of sexism and misogyny more readily by being exposed to their posts that have started trending or gone viral on their platforms. Often, trending social media posts appear on popular pages through hashtags or several likes, exposing young girls and women to these safe resources without purposefully searching for them.

Why is Social Media a Popular Form of Reproductive Rights Activism?



Cultural Aspects of South Korean Feminist Activism

While Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram are all internationally recognized platforms, Daum Cafe and Kakao Talk are Korean-owned social media platforms that also played a significant role in feminist activism. Daum Cafe, a South Korean internet cafe, and Kakao Talk, a Korean text messaging system, were other resources to create female-only feminist online chatrooms. These platforms are a pillar of Korean internet culture and have allowed activists an outlet for spreading their message to a Korean audience.

In one question, the respondents were explicitly asked if they have ever gone on to a Daum Cafe to promote upcoming events and protest regarding abortion rights. Twenty-three respondents (44.2%) responded that they had used Daum Cafe to promote abortion rights events. In addition, Daum Cafe has been deemed the second most accessible method of acquiring feminist-related news and event information after Twitter. Furthermore, female-only chat rooms are easily accessible on Daum Cafe, which ensures a private and safe space for women to meet and organize. Activists have also used Kakao Talk to share event information about upcoming abortion rights protests and the platform as a place to share news updates to female-only chat rooms. Overall, the combination of global platforms such as Twitter and Instagram with culturally Korean platforms such as Daum Cafe and Kakao Talk has allowed activists to effectively reach out to a Korean and a global audience, which helped increase international and national awareness and solidarity of Korean women's rights.

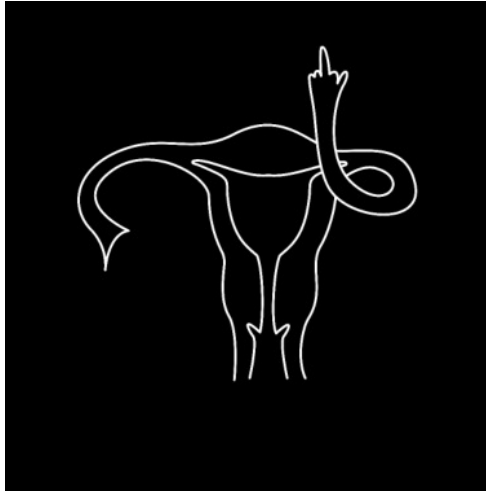
International Solidarity Approach

As mentioned previously, South Korean feminists often linked their cause to other global pro-choice movements. South Korea was not only inspired by global pro-choice movements (specifically in Argentina, Poland, and Ireland), but they also capitalized on their successes through the form of international solidarity. By recognizing these global movements, whether the adoption of Polish pro-choice activism or the protests in front of the Argentinian embassy to show solidarity during the Argentinian pro-choice protests, South Korean feminists were able to force their country's abortion ban into the international community's scrutinizing light. Not only did Korean activists' show their support to international groups, but pro-choice activists in Poland, Ireland, and Argentina all interacted with Korean activists' posts. Activists from around the world have created their posts giving updates on the status of the movement in Korea and using phrases such as "with you," and referring to Korean feminists

as their “Korean sisters” fighting for the same rights. These international social media accounts’ references and even sharing of the Korean abortion movement demonstrated how social media promoted cross-cultural solidarity and communication through linking culturally and geologically distant groups.

The survey asked feminist accounts if they had seen or been exposed to news or posts about international abortion rights movements outside Korea during the 2019 Constitutional Court case (for example, the abortion protests in Ireland, Poland, or Argentina). This question aimed to understand the effects of international pro-choice movements in South Korean social media activism. Among the participants, 11.5% of activists said they were exposed to this media daily in 2019, while the majority (30.8%) claimed they were exposed to this type of media a few times a week. A quarter of respondents claimed that they were exposed to news and posts about international abortion movements a few times a month. The strategic and concurrent timing of various global abortion movements increased international coverage on these causes and cultivated a global solidarity for women’s abortion rights.

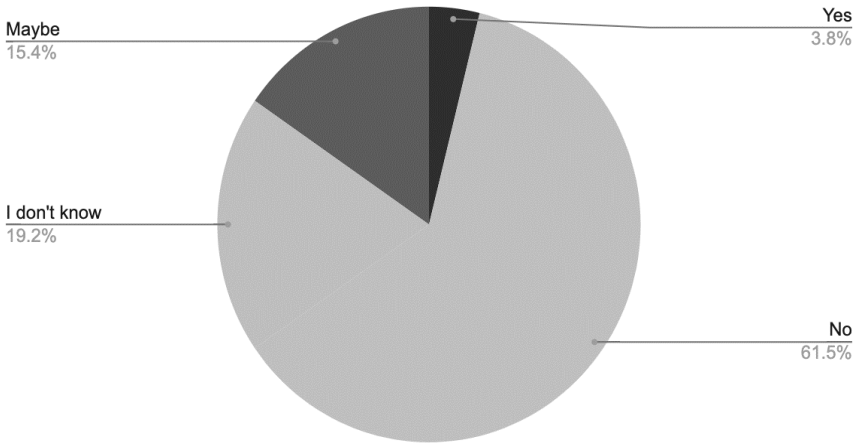
Moreover, participants were shown the image below created during the Polish pro-choice movement and were asked how often they saw this in their social media feed. 51.9% of respondents said they saw the photo often over the past year, while 23.1% claimed they somewhat often saw it. Only 9.6% of respondents claimed they never saw that picture on social media. These results reiterate that references to international pro-choice movements were a common strategy utilized on social media platforms in 2019.



Source: Jim Cooke, *Illustration. Guidelines about women and alcohol*, 2016. From Jim Cooke's illustration website. <https://www.jimcookeart.com/new-project>

While the entire survey unearthed surprising data, the most unexpected response was the last multiple-choice question. The question asked if the users did not have access to social media as a resource, would they still be avid advocates for women's rights. Surprisingly, 61.5% of respondents claimed they would not be activists without social media as an outlet. On the contrary, 3.8% of respondents claimed they would still be activists, while the remainder claimed they were unsure (34.6%). These stark results emphasize that social media is an important outlet for activism on issues such as women's rights. Given the minuscule number of social media activists in 2012 among our participants compared to 2019, the lack of in-person and online organized protest and overall media coverage on the Constitutional Court case in 2012 can be better understood. Because social media was not as commonly used in 2012, many current activists were less able to mobilize themselves and supporters because social media was often the spark that initiated further involvement in this movement. Without social media, many women would not have become mobilized to be activists for fear of reputational setbacks and negative associations with feminism. Therefore, there could have been an immensely lower turnout for the abortion rights protests due to a lack of social media activism. While women in the past have made great strides to fight for their rights without the convenience of safety online activism provides, social media activism provided an outlet for women who may not have been comfortable with in-person activism for several of reasons.

Without social media as a form of activism, would you still be an active feminist?



Conclusion

Due to the nature of feminist activism’s creating social stigma and reputational setbacks for activists, social media activism has acted as a bridge and its platforms a shelter where women can freely express ideas and escape the fear of being publicly labeled a feminist. Platforms such as Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, and Daum Cafe can develop communities that include emotional support systems that also effectively disseminate helpful information and provide organized activism. Unlike during the 2012 court case, the 2019 court case had increased media attention and public opinion due to social media publicizing the issue of abortion rights.

Through the strategies influenced by past domestic and international social media activism, these feminist activists had more accessibility to online activism. Strategies such as hashtag activism, online mirroring, webtoons, and female-only group chats have increased exposure to abortion rights activism, leading to more reproductive rights activists. In addition, social media was heavily relied on to strategically organize protests as well as a space to encourage and mobilize followers to become activists. These tactics helped increase in-person protests turnouts, which raised public consciousness on the issue of abortion and increased women to mobilize online and in person. This, in turn, led to the increase of protests and grassroots pushback that increased media coverage globally on South

Korea's anti-abortion law. In addition, the combination of South Korean strategies such as the use of social media platforms such as Daum Cafe and Kakao Talk, as well as the use of mirroring and webtoons, helped make the abortion rights campaign culturally relevant to South Korean society.

Even while cultural relevance was fostered through social media, the network features of these platforms also allowed for the incorporation of internationally minded strategies such as the adoption of Polish pro-choice movement tactics and the avid solidarity protests with Argentina's pro-choice movement. Additionally, South Korea's use of the Polish term "Black Monday Protest," along with the adopted symbol of the uterus as a unifying symbol of women's reproductive rights, encouraged cross-cultural solidarity. These cross-cultural solidarity tactics increased international media coverage of Korea's and other countries' reproductive rights issues by creating a global support system of pro-choice advocates. South Korean social media activism helped foster a new generation of social media activists that bridged the gap between traditional and online activism through cultural and cross-cultural strategies. Social media activism has given more Korean women the ability to open up discussions on abortion rights using internet portals, along with the tools to organize online petitions and in-person protests better to publicly draw the media and the government's attention for legal change. The utilization of social media for event organization, providing safe spaces for discussion and debates, hashtag activism, and resource allocation has impacted the turnout of the Korean decriminalization of abortion in 2019. Further research on social media's role in women's activism will help us better understand how social media activists use of their platforms to increase mobilization and media attention for their cause.

Acknowledgements

I would like to express my thanks to my research mentor, Professor Kate Hunt, at Indiana University for her guidance and feedback. Professor Hunt not only aided me with the research process but also in sharing her expertise on abortion rights and activism studies and her continuous support throughout the years. Secondly, I would like to thank the Advanced Summer Research Scholarship at Indiana University for their financial support for funding this research project.

The Change and Continuity of the US Asia-Pacific Policy: From Obama to Trump

Man Fung Yeung

Alumni Graduate Institute of China Studies, Tamkang University

This paper aims to achieve two purposes. First, to discuss the US Asia-Pacific policy from the Obama Administration to the Trump Administration. The second is to compare the similarity and differences between Obama and Trump's Asia-Pacific policy. This paper extracts several hypotheses from John J. Mearsheimer's Offensive Realism. In this paper, I argue that China's activities in the Asia-Pacific were the pivotal factor for the US to alter its Asia-Pacific policy. Since the more China promotes different activities in the region, the more active the US becomes in ensuring its leadership. Besides, after comparing these two strategies, I believe that both were similar. Even there were some discrepancies on the way to implement them, the goal of both strategies was the same.

Introduction

Facing the rise of China and the challenges from the Asia-Pacific since 2008, President Obama shifted the US focus from the Middle East to the Asia-Pacific.¹ The Obama administration launched the "Pivot to Asia" Strategy in 2012, which was called "Rebalancing Asia." In Obama's strategy, the administration tried to consolidate the US presence by amplifying the relationship with its Asian allies, promoting liberal values, and integrating China into the US-led international order.² However, US officials found that China had become more

1 Other challenges including North Korea's nuclear threat, maritime disputes in East Asia, and other non-traditional security issues such as climate change and public health issues.

2 Hillary Clinton, "America's Pacific Century," *Foreign Policy*, October 11, 2011, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2011/10/11/americas-pacific-century/>

ambitious in their goals to dominate the region, thereby marginalizing the US influence in the Asia-Pacific. As a result, the “Rebalancing Asia” Strategy failed to respond to the rise of China during the Obama administration.³

After President Trump took office, he found it challenging to ensure the US leadership’s position in the Asia-Pacific since China had accelerated its influence in economic and geopolitical aspects. Therefore, President Trump proposed the term “Indo-Pacific” in 2017, gradually replacing the term “Asia-Pacific.”⁴ In Trump’s “Indo-Pacific” Strategy, the administration tried to extend the US influence over the Pacific Ocean and the Indian Ocean by intensifying the US alliance with Asia-Pacific states and engaging with India to slow down China’s economic, technological, geopolitical, and military development. Trump generally rejected the Obama administration’s foreign policy approaches, such as promoting liberal values and multilateralism. However, Trump’s “Indo-Pacific” strategy did, in fact, implement several of the same measures as Obama’s strategy, such as strengthening cooperation with potential partners. Therefore, it could be argued that there were only marginal differences between the two strategies.

This paper will discuss the change and continuity of the US Asia-Pacific Policy from the Obama Administration to the Trump Administration. To achieve these goals, I hypothesize based on John J. Mearsheimer’s theory of Offensive realism. In this paper, I argue that when China posed increasing challenges to the US during these two administrations, US policymakers believed it was necessary to circumscribe the rise of China to secure the US interests in Asia-Pacific.

Offensive Realism and the US Asia-Pacific Policy

This article aims to explore the US Asia-Pacific policy from the Obama Administration to the Trump Administration. Although domestic factors such as populism and decision-makers played a role in the changing US Asia-Pacific policy, the regional security environment was the pivotal factor

3 Michael Pillsbury, *The Hundred-Year Marathon: China’s Secret Strategy to Replace America as the Global Superpower*, (New York: St. Martin’s Griffin, 2016).

4 “Remarks by President Trump at APEC CEO Summit, Da Nang, Vietnam,” *U.S. Mission to ASEAN*, last modified November 10, 2017, <https://asean.usmission.gov/remarks-president-trump-apec-ceo-summit-da-nang-vietnam/>; Da-Jung Li, “Trump’s Indo-Pacific Strategy: Meaning and Implications,” *Tamkang Journal of International Affairs* 21, no. 3 (January/February, 2018): 165-169.

influencing the change in policy from Obama to Trump. Some analyses have adopted Neoclassical Realism to illustrate the changing of the US Asia-Pacific policy. Neoclassical Realism argues that domestic conditions such as elite cohesion and domestic pressure play a role in how a state responds to the external environment.⁵ Meanwhile, Randall L. Schweller argues that nationalism plays a pivotal role in US foreign policy. Facing the US' power decline and people's reluctance to engage in international affairs, President Trump proposed the "American First" policy that emphasized the US' national interests and economy rather than international affairs. Therefore, President Trump rejected Obama's foreign policy. He no longer behaved generously to its allies; for instance, he required South Korea and NATO states to contribute more to defending themselves. In addition, the Trump Administration pulled out from multilateral organizations, renegotiated trade agreements with US trade partners and started a trade war against China to fulfill the US' interests.⁶ Neoclassical Realism emphasizes domestic factors as the reason behind the Trump Administration becoming more retrenched in diplomacy. However, the theory distracts our attention from international pressure as the pivotal factor in the changing US Asia-Pacific policy from Obama to Trump. Whether a president adopted an engagement policy with China or tried to restrict its development, the strategies launched by both presidents needed to address challenges from the external environment.

In that sense, Offensive Realism is more suitable to illustrate the US China relationship during this period. In his work, *Tragedy of Great Power Politics*, John Mearsheimer provides a picture of power competition between great powers and the strategies that a great power adopts to ensure its position. Because the international system is antagonistic, there is no one to protect a state from external threats. Axiomatically, survival is the goal for a state to achieve. To ensure states' survival, the only thing states can do is become an expansionist until they become a regional hegemon. In

5 Gideon Rose, "Neoclassical Realism and Theories of Foreign Policy," *World Politics* 51, no. 1 (October 1998): 144-172; Randall L. Schweller, "Unanswered Threats: A Neoclassical Realist Theory of Underbalancing," *International Security* 29, no. 2 (Fall 2004): 159-201.

6 Randall L. Schweller, "Opposite but Compatible Nationalisms: A Neoclassical Approach to the Future of US-China Relations," *The Chinese Journal of International Politics* 11, no. 1, (2018): 23-48; Randall Schweller, "Three Cheers for Trump's Foreign Policy: What the Establishment Misses," *Foreign Affairs* 97, No.5, (September 2018): 133-143.

other words, Mearsheimer assumes that the more relative gain a significant power enjoys, the more security a great power enjoys. However, when there is a challenger that tries to change the status-quo, the existing power will ensure its current interests and position by restricting the power acceleration of the rising power. In other words, the more relative gain a great power enjoys, the more likely the great power restricts its potential rival(s).⁷

To ensure the dominant position as regional hegemon, a great power adopts two strategies against the challenger: balancing and buck-passing strategies. Under the balancing strategy, the existing power tries to balance its rival through internal and external balancing. "Internal balancing" means that a great power enhances its military capability, thus preventing the invasion or provocation from an aggressor,⁸ whereas "external balancing" means a great power formulates a "defensive alliance" to increase its influence in the region, thus mobilizing its allies to counter an aggressor collectively.⁹ Other than military measures and alliance formation, the US has used the "Liberal Hegemony" strategy to maintain its hegemonic position after the Cold War Era. The US aims to impose liberal values on its rivals,¹⁰ thereby incorporating them into the liberal international order.¹¹ This is because US policy makers believe that when their rivals or competitors are the members of the order, the US can impose multilateral pressure against them through the liberal international order.¹² Also, they believe that if their rivals or competitors become a democratic state, it is less likely they will start a war easily since they will need to seek prior agreement from their citizens. In other words, the US believes that the promotion of Liberalism helps ensure its leadership of the order. Apart from the balancing strategy, a buck-passing strategy is another way to counter an aggressor. It means a great power trying to pass the responsibility or share the burden with its allies in order to counter the

7 John J. Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics* (New York, NY: W.W. Norton, 2014), 29-42.

8 *Ibid.*, 157.

9 *Ibid.*, 156.

10 Liberal values including Democratic Peace Theory, Economic Independence Theory, and Liberal Institutionalism. See: John J. Mearsheimer, *Great Delusion: Liberal Dreams and International Realities* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2018).

11 *Ibid.*, 1.

12 Stephen M. Walt, *The Hell of Good Intentions: America's Foreign Policy Elite and the Decline of U.S. Primacy* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2018), 54-56.

aggressor collectively.¹³ A great power can receive two benefits from a buck-passing strategy. First, the hegemon can manage its resources wisely when it relaxes the burden of security guarantee to its allies. Second, this tactic encourages buck-catchers to enhance their capability to defend themselves from an aggressor. In other words, it promotes buck-catchers to be self-reliant.¹⁴

In 2014, Mearsheimer predicted that keen competition between China and the US is inevitable; he argues that China's enlargement of its influence in the South China Sea and the East Sea are similar to what the US did in the Western Hemisphere during the 1850s. It implies that China is attempting to become the potential regional hegemon in the Pacific region. If China enjoys more relative gain that can challenge the US position, China can no longer tolerate the US projection of its power in the Asia-Pacific and will eventually exclude the US' presence in the Asia-Pacific. Therefore, Mearsheimer provides three possible ways to balance the rise of China. The first is a containment strategy; for instance, formulating an alliance against China. Second, is to slow down China's economic growth. Finally, the "roll-back" strategy which means to weaken China's influence by overthrowing pro-China regimes or fomenting internal trouble in China.¹⁵ Although both President Obama and President Trump adopted different approaches in responding to the rise of China, both presidents aimed to maintain US leadership in the region. President Obama tried to incorporate China into the US-led liberal international order to ensure the US' leadership, whereas President Trump attempted to restrict China's geopolitical, economic, and military development. Therefore, it is worth discussing the change and continuity of the US Asia-Pacific policy from Obama to Trump.

Hence, from the elaboration of the theoretical discussion of Offensive Realism, a general proposition as follows emerges: *The more relative gains a regional hegemon enjoys, the more the regional hegemon restricts the advance of a rising power.* Based on this proposition, the following hypotheses will attempt to explain Obama and Trump's Asia-Pacific strategies.

Hypothesis 1: The more relative gain a regional hegemon enjoys, the more an existing power restricts the advance of a rising power by forming alliances.

Hypothesis 2: The more relative gain a regional hegemon enjoys, the

13 Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*, 158-159.

14 Ibid.

15 Ibid., 387.

more an existing power restricts the geo-political influence of a rising power.

Hypothesis 3: The more relative gain a regional hegemon enjoys, the more an existing power restricts the economic development of a rising power.

Hypothesis 4: The more relative gain a regional hegemon enjoys, the more an existing power promotes its values to a rising power.

Obama's "Rebalancing Asia" Strategy

Goals of Obama's "Rebalancing Asia" Strategy

In response to the change of the strategic environment in the Asia-Pacific, especially the rise of China, the Obama Administration put more attention on handling challenges in the Asia-Pacific region by launching the "Rebalancing Asia" Strategy. The Obama administration aimed to: (1) amplify the alliances and security partnerships in the Asia-Pacific; (2) engage intensively with the emerging power centers in the region; (3) participate in multilateral institutions and summits; (4) promote free trade; and (5) engage in a productive and constructive relationship with China.¹⁶ The Obama Administration believed that the power competition between the US and China was inevitable. Nonetheless, policymakers of the administration wanted to avoid the self-fulfilling prophecy of the so-called "Thucydides Trap:" wherein which conflict and war between both the rising power and the existing power would be inescapable.¹⁷ Furthermore, the Obama Administration believed that China and the US had common interests over global and regional issues, such as trade, environmental issues, and nuclear nonproliferation. Although the Obama Administration labelled China as a competitor, they looked for a "positive, constructive, comprehensive US-China relationship" and they adopted an engagement-oriented policy with China.¹⁸

16 "Press Briefing by Press Secretary Jay Carney, National Security Advisor Tom Donilon, and Deputy National Security Advisor for Strategic Communications Ben Rhodes," The White House, last modified November 19, 2011, <https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/2011/11/19/press-briefing-press-secretary-jay-carney-national-security-advisor-tom->.

17 Aaron L. Friedberg, *A Contest for Supremacy: China, America, and the Struggle for Mastery in Asia* (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 2011).

18 Jeffery A. Bader, *Obama and China's Rise: An Insider Account of America's Asia Strategy* (Washington: Brookings Institution Press).

The Implementation of Obama's "Rebalancing Asia" Strategy

First, the Obama Administration amplified the existing alliance system in the Asia-Pacific. The US alliance system in the Asia-Pacific maintains the US influence and presence in the region. By providing security guarantees to its Asian allies, such as troop deployment or intelligence sharing, the US can respond to threats and challenges with its allies immediately.¹⁹ In addition, the US can mobilize its allies to address the challenges collectively.²⁰ Therefore, to amplify the US influence in Asia, the Obama administration committed to shifting 60 percent of its naval fleet to the Asia-Pacific until 2020.²¹ In addition, it tried to consolidate the US alliance relationship with Asian allies. In 2014, the US extended the scope of Article 5 of the US-Japan Treaty of Mutual Cooperation and Security to the Senkaku/Diaoyutai Islands in response to China's military activities since 2012.²² Moreover, after the North Korean nuclear test in 2016, the US decided to introduce the Terminal High-Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) system in South Korea.²³ Also, the US tried to formulate a trilateral alliance with Japan and South Korea. Nonetheless, this proposal failed due to South Korea's opposition.²⁴ The Obama Administration likewise amplified its power projection in Southeast

19 Challenges such as North Korea's missile threat, territorial disputes in the South China Sea, and terrorism in the region.

20 Jennifer Lind, "Keep, Toss, or Fix? Assessing U.S. Alliance in East Asia," in *Rethinking American National Security*, ed. Jeremi Suri and Benjamin Valention (Oxford University Press, 2016), 1-45.

21 "Remarks by National Security Advisor Tom Donilon--As Prepared for Delivery," The White House, last modified November 15, 2012, <https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/2012/11/15/remarks-national-security-advisor-tom-donilon-prepared-delivery%3e>.

22 "Senkaku islands dispute escalates as China sends out patrol ships," *The Guardian*, 11 September, 2012, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2012/sep/11/senkaku-islands-china-patrol-ships>.

23 "Opportunities and Challenges in the U.S.-Japan and U.S.-Republic of Korea Alliances," U.S. Department of State, last modified March 4, 2014, <https://2009-2017.state.gov/p/eap/rls/rm/2014/03/222903.htm>.

24 Jong-Yun Bae and Ki-Jung Kim, "A South Korean Perspective: Seoul's 'Pragmatic' Road to Trilateral Co-operation," *Global Asia* 12, no.1 (Spring 2017): 20-23; Ryo Hinata-Yamaguchi, "Completing the US-Japan-Korea Alliance Triangle: Prospects and Issues in Japan-Korea Security Cooperation," *The Korean Journal of Defense Analysis* 28, no. 3, (September, 2016):383-402

Asia and Oceania. In 2014, both the US and the Philippines signed the Enhanced Defense Cooperation Agreement (EDCA) that allows US forces to be deployed to the Philippines' military bases.²⁵ The US also deployed around 2,500 US troops in Darwin Port in Australia.²⁶ Thus, the US was able to enlarge its influence in the South China Sea and Oceania effectively.

Second, in the geo-political realm, the Obama Administration attempted to slowdown China's influence by resolving the South China Sea disputes. To address this issue, the administration adopted legal, diplomatic, and military means.²⁷ For a start, the Obama Administration required all parties to resolve disputes through peaceful and legal measures. When President Obama visited the Philippines in April 2014, he expressed his support of President Aquino III who filed a case concerning China's claim to the nine-dash line to the Permanent Court of Arbitration.²⁸ By using legal means, the US attempted to delegitimize China's claim related to the nine-dash line and its activities over the South China Sea. Also, Michael Fuchs, Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs, proposed the concept of "Freeze" during the Fourth Annual South China Sea Conference in July 2014. He required all parties to cease activities and actions that contributed to instability, stop all unilateral enforcement measures which damaged claimants' economic activities.²⁹ However, China and ASEAN states neglected the proposal as they actively constructed artificial islands in the South China Sea. Finally, facing China's military activities over the South China Sea, the Obama Administration conducted the Freedom of Navigation

25 Jim Wolf, "U.S. plans 10-month warship deployment to Singapore," *Reuters*, May 10, 2012, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-singapore-warship/u-s-plans-10-month-warship-deployment-to-singapore-idUSBRE84811E20120510>.

26 Caren Bohan and James Grubel, "Obama boosts U.S. military in Australia, reassures China," *Reuters*, November 16, 2011, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-australia/obama-boosts-u-s-military-in-australia-reassures-china-idUSTRE7AF0F220111116>.

27 Ely Ratner, "Course Advancing: How to Stop China's Maritime Advance." *Foreign Affairs* 96, no 4 (Jul/Aug 2017): 64-72.

28 "Remarks by President Obama and President Benigno Aquino III of the Philippines in Joint Press Conference," *The White House*, last modified April 28, 2014, <https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/2014/04/28/remarks-president-obama-and-president-benigno-aquino-iii-philippines-joi>.

29 "Fourth Annual South China Sea Conference," *Department of State*, last modified July 11, 2014, <https://2009-2017.state.gov/p/eap/rls/rm/2014/07/229129.htm>.

Operation four times from 2015 in order to manifest its determination to ensure the freedom of navigation, safety and the open use of the South China Sea. In this operation, the US dispatched vessels and aircraft to patrol the disputed islands. In other words, the US wanted to send a signal to China that the US would enforce international law and that it was willing to protect its allies. The Obama Administration behaved circumspectly in their approach to resolving disputes in order to avoid escalating the tension on the South China Sea. Nonetheless, they behaved responsively rather than proactively in resolving the disputes. Even though their approach helped maintain stability in the South China Sea, they failed to constrain China's activities in the South China Sea.³⁰ Despite the verdict released by the Permanent Court of Arbitration in 2016 which rejected China's claim over the nine-dash line, China continues to implement militarization in the South China Sea.³¹

Third, in the economic realm, the Obama Administration attempted to maintain its influence in Asia by taking the lead in promoting regional integration in the Asia-Pacific. In 2013, the Obama Administration established a multilateral trade mechanism called the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP). The Obama Administration aimed to: (1) promote free trade and a rule-based trade environment; (2) protect intellectual property rights and labor rights and; (3) require states to deregulate over enterprises in order to promote fair trade.³² As Kurt Campbell argued, the Obama administration wanted to take the lead in promoting economic integration in the Asia-Pacific region by establishing the TPP. Furthermore, the US aimed to intensify the security ties with US allies by economic means. Regarding the relationship between the TPP and China, Takashi Terada, a Japanese scholar, argued that the TPP was an inclusive trade bloc that welcomed all states to join. Also, the high standard of regulations of the TPP did not target any state or party. All states needed to fulfill the entry requirements before entering

30 Da-jung Li, "U.S. South China Sea Policy during the Obama Administration." *Prospect Quarterly* 18, no 3, (July 2017): 41-84.

31 T. V. Paul, "Soft Balancing vs. Hard Clashes: The Risks of War over the South China Sea," *Global Asia* 13, No 3 (September 2018): 86-91.

32 Inkyo Cheong, "Beyond the Spaghetti Bowl: The TPP and the Quest for East Asian Regionalism." *Global Asia* 8, No 1 (Spring 2013): 60-70 and; Robert D. Backwill and Jennifer M. Harris, *War by Other Means: Geoeconomics and Statecraft* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2016), 180-184.

into the TPP.³³ However, Wang Yong, a Chinese scholar, argued that the US aimed to achieve its geo-political and geo-economic interests by promoting US-led economic integration, trying to constrain China's development. He argued that the US aimed to marginalize China by setting up high standard requirements that the Chinese government had found difficult to meet immediately. For instance, the protection of environment, intellectual property, and the reduction of the role played by state-owned companies.³⁴ Furthermore, he argued that the US attempted to marginalize China as an exclusive economic bloc in order to ensure its hegemonic position.³⁵

President Obama wanted to take the lead in promoting economic integration in the Asia-Pacific region, thereby ensuring the US leadership in the region. It is undeniable that the TPP was an inclusive trade bloc that did not have any provision to prohibit a specific state to participate. Nevertheless, the US aimed to balance China indirectly by setting up a high standard of entry requirements for the TPP since China took time to fulfill those requirements when Beijing wanted to join it. Also, in his work, Kurt Campbell argued that the TPP served as a tool for the US to bolster strong security ties with US allies.³⁶ In other words, the Obama Administration aimed to secure US leadership in Asia by promoting economic integration and indirectly balancing China in the economic realm. The Obama Administration managed to reduce the economic interdependence between China and the member states of the TPP by promoting economic integration within the organization. Therefore, the US expected that China would be unable to increase its influence through its economic statecraft.³⁷ In other words, the Obama Administration increase its influence by gathering its economic allies, thereby isolating China from the US-led economic integration project for ensuring its position in the region.

Finally, in the political realm, the Obama Administration managed to establish a "constructive partnership" with China. The Obama Administration found that China's power acceleration since 2008 posed as a challenge to the

33 Takashi Terada. "It's China's Choice to Join In or Stay Out," *Global Asia* 8, no 1, (March 2013): 57-59.

34 Wang Yong, "The Politics of the TPP Are Plain: Target China." *Global Asia* 8, no 1, (Spring 2013): 54-56.

35 Ibid.

36 Kurt M. Campbell, *The Pivot: The Future of American Statecraft in Asia* (New York: Twelve, 2016).

37 Ibid.

US hegemonic position and its dominance in the international order; power competition and distrust developed between the US and China.³⁸ Nonetheless, policymakers in the US wanted to avoid triggering a large-scale conflict with China. Furthermore, they believed that both China and the US had common interests on various issues, for instance, trade, environmental protection, and nuclear nonproliferation.³⁹ Therefore, to reduce the possibilities of triggering a conflict, the Obama Administration saw China as a potential partner for the US to address those issues. As a result, they tried to promote cooperation with China by adopting an engagement policy. Following the logic of the engagement policy, the Obama Administration attempted to invite China to participate in global governance and tried to shape China's policy choices to align with US interests and the existing international order. As a result, it reduced the possibilities of China's intention to challenge the US position.⁴⁰ In addition, the Obama administration launched the annual US-China Strategic and Economic Dialogue to address issues that both sides needed to face. Both Kennedy Libenthal and Wang Jisi believed that when there was more communication between the two countries, both would be more likely to enlarge their common interests and reduce the likelihood of conflict.⁴¹ Furthermore, the Obama Administration attempted to promote liberal values in China. For example, President Obama expressed US support for the Occupied Central Movement (Umbrella Movement) in Hong Kong.⁴² Nevertheless, Obama's support of Hong Kong was symbolic and did not have significance to the movement. Moreover, it triggered China's dissatisfaction with the US since Beijing believed the US was intervening in China's domestic affairs.⁴³ In addition, they worried that the promotion of liberal values in Hong Kong impaired China's regime

38 Kenneth Libenthal and Wang Jisi, *Addressing US-China Strategic Distrust* (Washington DC: John L. Thornton China Centre at Brookings Institution), No. 4, March 2012, http://yahuwshua.org/en/Resource-584/0330_china_lieberthal.pdf

39 Thomas J. Christensen, *The China Challenge: Shaping the Choices of a Rising Power* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2015).

40 Ibid.

41 Kenneth Libenthal and Wang Jisi, *Addressing US-China Strategic Distrust*.

42 "Remarks by President Obama at the University of Queensland," The White House, last modified November 15, 2014, <https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/2014/11/15/remarks-president-obama-university-queensland>.

43 Lesley Wroughton, Arshad Mohammed, "China tells foreign countries not to meddle in Hong Kong," *Reuters*, October 1, 2014, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-hongkong-china-usa/china-tells-foreign-countries-not-to-meddle-in-hong-kong-idUSKCN0HQ4ET20141001>.

survival. As a result, the Chinese government tried to tighten its control on the society to blockade liberal values from entering China. Above all, facing the rise of China, the Obama Administration launched its “Rebalancing Asia” strategy to ensure the US’ leadership position in the Asia-Pacific. Rather than checking the power acceleration of China directly, the Obama Administration adopted balancing tactics (both internal and external) to enlarge the US’ influence. Alliance behavior and Obama’s South China Sea policy help support hypotheses 1 and hypothesis 2. Meanwhile, in the economic realm, the establishment of the TPP aimed to indirectly balance China’s economic influence while simultaneously ensuring the US’ power by economic means, which helps to support hypothesis 3. Finally, in the political realm, the Obama Administration tried to promote liberal values to China. Even though this was done in a symbolic way, this engagement policy still supports hypothesis 4.

Trump’s “Indo-Pacific” Strategy

Goals of Trump’s “Indo-Pacific” Strategy

When President Trump came into office, he found it difficult to address two pressing issues that impaired the US hegemonic position. First was the power acceleration of China that sought to override the US leadership in the Asia-Pacific region. Another problem was that the power entrenchment during the previous administrations had caused the decline of US power. Therefore, the Trump Administration tried to ensure the US’ position by countering China more actively and passing its burdens to US allies. The Trump administration considered China as the primary threat to the United States that needed to be addressed⁴⁴; the administration labeled China as a “Revisionist Power” that attempted to displace the US leadership, thereby reshaping the existing order.⁴⁵ China managed to establish a “Sino-centric order” that fostered economic interdependence with its neighboring states. Due to their economic interdependence, China exercised its economic statecraft to pressure its neighboring states to comply with China’s will.⁴⁶ On the one hand, the Trump Administration believed the rise of China undermined the US as the leader.

44 Bob Woodward, *Fear: Trump in the White House* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2018), 298.

45 “2017 National Security Strategy of the United States of America,” *The White House*, accessed May 1, 2018, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/NSS-Final-12-18-2017-0905-2.pdf>.

46 Jennifer Lind, “Life in China Asia: What Regional Hegemony Would Look Like,” *Foreign Affairs* 97, no.2 (March/April 2018): 71-82

As Oriana Skylar Mastro argues, China attempted to “displace” the US’ leadership position rather than “replace” it; China attempted to override US leadership through a dual-track approach. Beijing participated in the existing international institutions to enlarge its influence, and, in the meantime, it established its own multilateral institutions that attempt to counterbalance the US influence.⁴⁷ Therefore, to preserve US leadership, policymakers in the U.S. tried various means to restrict the power acceleration of China. On the other hand, President Trump criticized Obama’s generosity to the U.S. allies that undermined US interests. The Trump Administration found it burdensome to provide security guarantees to its allies who only received US protection without sharing the US’ burden. Therefore, when President Trump took office, he did not allow its allies to take US support for granted; he required its allies to invest more into their national and regional security.⁴⁸ In addition, he looked for cooperation between allies that had “a fair share of the burden of responsibility to protect against common threats.”⁴⁹

The Implementation of Trump’s “Indo-Pacific” Strategy

To begin with, President Trump required the US allies to bear more responsibilities to sustain the alliance. He believed that the US provided security guarantee to its allies, such as NATO members and South Korea. However, since they did nothing to contribute to the alliance and regional security, President Trump believed that this situation was unfair to the US. In this case, South Korea was one of the buck-catchers; the Trump Administration required South Korea to contribute more to the US-ROK alliance. President Trump disliked that South Korea took the US’ economic interests and military support for granted. In addition, Trump believed that Seoul’s policy towards North Korea was feckless in keeping North Korea’s aggression in check. Instead, it exacerbated it. Because of that, President Trump held a dubious view over the

47 Oriana Skylar Mastro, “The Stealth Superpower: How China Hid its Global Ambitions,” *Foreign Affairs* 98, no 1 (January/February 2019): 31-39.

48 Randall Schweller, “Three Cheers for Trump’s Foreign Policy,” *Foreign Affairs* 97, no. 5 (September/October 2018): 133-143.

49 The Department of Defense, 2019 Indo-Pacific Strategy Report: Preparedness, Partnerships, and Promoting a Networked Region (United States, 2019), <https://media.defense.gov/2019/Jul/01/2002152311/-1/-1/1/DEPARTMENT-OF-DEFENSE-INDO-PACIFIC-STRATEGY-REPORT-2019.PDF>

value of deploying THAAD missiles and US troops in South Korea.⁵⁰ Not only did President Trump request South Korea to pay more for the maintenance of US military facilities in South Korea, but he also canceled the Ulchi-Freedom Guardian Military Exercise after the Trump-Kim summit in June 2018.⁵¹ Trump's buck-passing tactic to South Korea triggered Seoul's abandonment fear. Although the Moon Jae-in government consolidated the alliance relationship with the US, it tried to enhance South Korea's defense ability to alleviate the abandonment risk. For instance, they tried to develop next-generation submarines, and missile systems.⁵² Through the buck-passing approach, President Trump pushed South Korea to enhance its defense capability which helped reduce the US burden in handling the threat of North Korea. Therefore, the US was able to more effectively handle other challenges in the region.

Although President Trump required the US allies to bear more responsibility for their security, Trump attempted to recruit potential partners to join its "Indo-Pacific" strategy. President Trump managed to build an "ambitious partnership" with India to create the "Free and Open Indo-Pacific region."⁵³ Due to the territorial disputes and India's dubious attitude to China's One Belt One Road Initiative, India became more vigilant of China's economic and military activities in South Asia.⁵⁴ Due to that, both the US and India had a chance for closer cooperation. For instance, the US shared real-

50 Victor Cha, "The Unintended Consequences of Success: U.S. Retrenchment from Korea," *The Korean Journal of Defense Analysis* 31, no.2 (June 2019): 165-191.

51 Ankit Panda, "US, South Korea Announce Suspension of 2018 Ulchi-Freedom Guardian Military Exercise," *The Diplomat*, June 19, 2018, <https://thediplomat.com/2018/06/us-south-korea-announce-suspension-of-2018-ulchi-freedom-guardian-military-exercise/>.

52 Er-Win Tan, Jae-Jeok Park, and Tomohiko Satake, "Security Hedging Strategies of U.S. Allies and Partners in the Era of Trump: The ROK, Japan and Singapore as Case Studies," *The Korean Journal of Defense Analysis*, 32, no 2 (June 2020): 163-184; Joon Hyung Kim, "Deterrence, Alliance and Peace-Keeping: An Ambivalent Peace Initiative," *Global Asia* 14, no.2 (June 2019): 34-39.

53 "Defining Our Relationship with India for the Next Century: An Address by U.S. Secretary of State Rex Tillerson," *CSIS*, October 18, 2017, <https://www.csis.org/analysis/defining-our-relationship-india-next-century-address-us-secretary-state-rex-tillerson>.

54 Shivshankar Menon. "League of Nationalism: How Trump and Modi Refashioned the U.S.-Indian Relationship," *Foreign Affairs* 99, no 5, (September 2020): 132-139.

time intelligence related to China's and Pakistan's military deployment and activities with India⁵⁵ and provided advanced weaponry to India.⁵⁶ Therefore, by consolidating cooperation between the US and India in the security aspect, the Trump administration tried to work with India to counterbalance China's growing influence in South Asia and Indian Ocean.⁵⁷ Other than consolidating the relationship with India, the Trump Administration engaged with Taiwan because of its determination to counter China. The US avoids recognizing Taiwan formally for the sake of preventing the risk of entrapment, however, the Trump Administration did consolidate cooperation with Taiwan.⁵⁸ The Trump Administration enacted three major pro-Taiwan acts that aimed to enhance the relationship with Taiwan, include Taiwan in the "Indo-Pacific" Strategy, and strengthen Taiwan's international presence.⁵⁹ In the military realm, the US sold advanced weaponry to Taiwan. The value of arms sale to Taiwan saw a four-fold increase from USD\$2.2 billion in July 2019 to USD\$8 billion after a month.⁶⁰ In other words, by amplifying the relationship with Taiwan, the Trump Administration aimed to balance China's influence in the across-Taiwan Strait.

Second, in the geo-political realm, the Trump Administration tried to reduce tension on the Korean Peninsula. President Trump adopted his "Maximum Pressure Plus Engagement" policy toward North Korea, which

55 Alyssa Ayres, "The Economic Times. Seven reasons why COMCASA is so important for India," *Council on Foreign Relations*, September 7, 2018, <https://www.cfr.org/in-brief/what-next-us-india-military-ties>.

56 When President Trump visited in India in February 2020, he sold \$3 billion worth of military equipment, including 24 SeaHawk helicopters with Hellfire missiles and six Apache helicopters. See: Steve Holland and Aftab Ahmed, "After raucous welcome in India, Trump clinches \$3 billion military equipment sale," *Reuters*, February 25, 2020, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-india-usa-trump/after-raucous-welcome-in-india-trump-clinches-3-billion-military-equipment-sale-idUSKCN20J0J5>.

57 Robert D. Blackwill and Ashley J. Tellis, "The India Dividend: New Delhi Remains Washington's Best Hope in Asia," *Foreign Affairs* 98, no 5, (September/October 2019): 173-183.

58 Eric Heginbotham and Rajan Menon, "Taiwan's Balancing Act," *National Interest*, 160, (March 2019): 22-29.

59 The administration approved three major pro-Taiwan acts, they are: (1) Taiwan Travel Act of 2017; (2) Asia Reassurance Initiative Act of 2018, and (3) Taiwan Allies International Protection and Enhancement Initiative (TAIPEI) Act of 2019.

60 "US risks China's anger after sealing \$8bn deal to sell Taiwan 66 fighter jets," *The Guardian*, 21 August, 2019, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/aug/21/us-taiwan-8bn-deal-66-f16-fighter-jets-china>.

is similar to the logic of the “roll-back” strategy that Mearsheimer proposed. However, instead of seeking “regime change” in North Korea, President Trump looked for a policy change.⁶¹ The administration tried to imitate the path of Vietnam. In other words, the Kim family would maintain its position as the ruling power to North Korea. Meanwhile, both gradually established a closer connection.⁶² While this approach did not resolve North Korea’s missile threat, North Korea did not conduct a nuclear test after the Singapore summit. In addition, President Trump focused on handling other agenda items such as trade issues with China.⁶³ Apart from moderating North Korea’s missile threats, the Trump Administration attempted to formulate a quadrilateral security framework that included Japan, Australia, and India. There were some reasons that the Trump Administration tried to incorporate them into the Quad framework. First, they are geo-politically significant as major powers in the region. Second, they understood the importance of maintaining the “free and open Indo-Pacific.”⁶⁴ As a result, when the Trump administration included them in the framework, it helped increase the US influence by solidifying the US relationship with its Asian partners. The formulation of a quadrilateral security framework commenced with ministerial level of Quadrilateral Consultations that helped promote cooperation.⁶⁵ However, the US maintained the existing alliance system and solidified the partnership with the US’ Asian partners, rather than formulating a multilateral alliance in Asia.⁶⁶

Third, in the economic realm, President Trump tried to slow down China’s economic development by starting a trade war in 2018. The trade war tried to resolve the trade imbalance between China and the US.

61 Jina Kim and John K. Waeden, “Limiting North Korea’s Coercive Nuclear Leverage,” *Survival* 62, No.1 (February/ March 2020), pp. 31-38.

62 Harry J. Kazianis, “Fire and Flattery,” *National Interest*, 161: 20-27.

63 Kuo-cheng Chang, “The Relationship between China and North Korea after the Trump-Kim Summit: A Realist Perspective,” *Prospect Journal* 20 (October 2018): 39-60.

64 The Department of Defense, *2019 Indo-Pacific Strategy Report*.

65 Ibid.

66 Ping-Kuei Chen, “The Prospects of the U.S. Alliance System in Asia: Managing from the Hub,” *Issues & Studies*, 56, Issue 03 (September 2020): 1-26.

Moreover, it also attempted to ensure the US' national security.⁶⁷ After the Trump Administration had launched the Section 301 investigations related to China's trade practice and imposed tariffs against Chinese products such as steel and aluminum in March 2018,⁶⁸ they prohibited China from obtaining technological products from the US. For instance, American firms were not allowed to sell telecom equipment to ZTE. In addition, the Bureau of Industry and Security included Huawei on the "Entity List" for the sake of national security concerns.⁶⁹ The Trump administration further attempted to prevent Chinese firms from obtaining "dual-use" products because the administration was concerned about China using those products to develop its military capability.⁷⁰ After the trade war, friction between China and the US remained tense until the trade negotiation in January 2020. To cease the negative impacts caused by the trade war, both sides agreed to reach an agreement in December 2019 and signed the phase one trade agreement in January 2020. Before starting the phase two trade negotiations, China was required to meet the following criteria: (1) purchase US goods and services, for instance, manufactured goods, agricultural and seafood products, and energy products of no less than USD\$200 billion; (2) require its firms to comply with intellectual property, including to cease forced technological transfers and (3) cease competitive devaluations. In addition, the US wished to verify whether China fulfilled the requirements of the trade agreement

67 "Findings Of The Investigation Into China's Acts, Policies, And Practices Related To Technology Transfer, Intellectual Property, And Innovation Under Section 301 of The Trade Act of 1974," Office Of The United States Trade Representative, last modified March 22, 2018, <https://ustr.gov/sites/default/files/Section%20301%20FINAL.PDF>.

68 Office Of the United States Trade Representative, "Findings Of The Investigation Into China's Acts, Policies, And Practices Related To Technology Transfer, Intellectual Property, And Innovation Under Section 301 of The Trade Act of 1974."

69 "Entity List," Bureau of Industry and Security, accessed 17 August 2020, <https://www.bis.doc.gov/index.php/policy-guidance/lists-of-parties-of-concern/entity-list>.

70 Darren Lim, "The US, China and 'Technology War'," *Global Asia* 14, No. 1 (March 2019): 8-13.; Alexandra Alper and Idrees Ali, "Exclusive: Trump administration says Huawei, Hikvision backed by Chinese military," *Reuters*, June 25, 2020, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-china-military-exclusive-idUSKBN23V309>

by setting up a dispute resolution system.⁷¹ In other words, the Trump Administration doubted whether China would fulfill its commitment sincerely.

Finally, in the political realm, President Trump showed his indifference to the promotion of liberal values abroad.⁷² However, the administration used the issue of Hong Kong as a bargaining chip to counter China after the anti-extradition law movement in 2019. Although former security advisor John Bolton criticized Trump's reluctance in rephending China over the suppression of the movement in Hong Kong in June 2019, President Trump did sign acts related to Hong Kong.⁷³ This is because Hong Kong's issues involved US national security and interests, pushing the Trump Administration to action in an attempt to prevent sensitive US technology in Hong Kong from falling into China's hands.⁷⁴ As such, Trump signed the Hong Kong Human Rights and Democracy Act on November 27, 2019. This act consists of three components: (1) to verify Hong Kong's firms evade both US export control laws and UN sanctions;⁷⁵ (2) to verify whether the Hong Kong SAR government and the Chinese government are upholding the commitments from the Sino-British Joint Declaration that ensure civil rights and freedom in Hong Kong and (3) to sanction officials in Hong Kong and China who undermine human rights and Hong Kong self-autonomy. Eventually, after the Hong Kong National Security Law passed on June 30, 2020, the Trump Administration revoked US special treatment to Hong Kong. In other words, the Trump Administration did not consider Hong Kong as a separate entity from China. Without this treatment, China found it difficult to obtain sensitive technological products through Hong Kong; it also helped restrict China's

71 "Agreement between the United States of America and the People's Republic of China," United States Trade Representative, last modified December 12, 2019, <https://ustr.gov/sites/default/files/US-China-Agreement-Fact-Sheet.pdf>.

72 Barry R. Posen. "The Rise of Illiberal Hegemony: Trump's Surprising Grand Strategy," *Foreign Affairs* 97, no 2 (March/April 2018): 20-27.

73 John Bolton, *The Room Where It Happened: A White House Memoir* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2020).

74 According to the 1992 Hong Kong Policy Act, the U.S. treats Hong Kong and China separately, Hong Kong enjoys special treatments in terms of trade, tariff and the import of sensitive technology from the U.S. See: ORLC. Chapter 66—United States-Hong Kong Policy. <https://uscode.house.gov/view.xhtml?path=/prelim/@title22/chapter66&edition=prelim>.

75 "U.S. Congress. H.R.3289 - Hong Kong Human Rights and Democracy Act of 2019," *Congress.gov*, <https://www.congress.gov/bill/116th-congress/house-bill/3289>.

economic and military development. Namely, security concerns were the primary concern for the Trump Administration to take an active approach to respond to the social movement.⁷⁶ Above all, facing the rise of China, the Trump administration launched its “Indo-Pacific” Strategy to ensure the US leadership position in the Asia-Pacific. Unlike President Obama, President Trump adopted a more direct approach against China. To enlarge the US influence, President Trump required US allies such as South Korea to contribute more to the alliance. In the meantime, he engaged with India and Taiwan to enlarge the US influence in the region. Trump’s alliance behavior helps support hypothesis 1. Moreover, President Trump tried to limit China’s influence in the geopolitical realm; he attempted to reduce China’s leverage on the Korean Peninsula. Meanwhile, President Trump promoted Quadrilateral cooperation with Japan, Australia, and India, mobilizing them to respond to rising China collectively, thus supporting hypothesis 2. Also, in the economic realm, President Trump triggered a trade war against China in order to restrict China’s economic development, supporting hypothesis 3. Finally, Trump’s policy to Hong Kong does support hypothesis 4, but the result is conflicting. The administration tried to protect Hong Kong’s civil rights and liberty, but the main purpose of this intervention was due to security concerns.

Comparison between Obama’s and Trump’s Asia-Pacific Strategy

Since President Trump’s took office, he proposed a term called “Indo-Pacific” and gradually replaced this with the term “Asia-Pacific.” In Trump’s strategy, he attempted to consolidate the ties with allies and India, thereby confronting the existing challenges that the US needed to face. Although President Trump’s strategy attempted to reject Obama’s approach, Trump’s “Indo-Pacific” strategy preserved some elements from Obama’s “Rebalancing Strategy” because both focused on responding to

76 Jie Liu and Congyan Cai, “From Hong Kong Policy Act of 1992 to Hong Kong Human Rights and Democracy Act of 2019: The Evolution of the US’s Hong Kong Policy in the Context of the Rise of China,” *Journal of East Asia & International Law* 13, No.1 (May 2020) :7-20.

the rise of China.⁷⁷ The following section will compare the two strategies.

To begin with, both Obama and Trump's strategies aimed to maintain US leadership in the Asia-Pacific. Nonetheless, the measures they adopted were different. President Obama adopted a strategy called "Liberal Hegemony" that John J Mearsheimer proposed. The Obama Administration attempted to promote multilateral mechanisms to the Asia-Pacific region. In the meantime, he tried to incorporate China into the U.S-led international order.⁷⁸ Obama believed that if China were a contributor to the liberal international order, it would help the US ensure its leadership. By contrast, Trump's "Indo-Pacific" strategy showed his indifference to the "liberal international order." The Trump Administration explicitly indicated that the US should adopt "principled realism" to handle strategic challenges in the "Indo-Pacific" region.⁷⁹ In other words, the Trump Administration placed security issues ahead of the promotion of liberal values. The Trump Administration enhanced the US' military capabilities and projection, consolidated the alliance system, and extended partnerships with other "Indo-Pacific" States. By mobilizing the US allies and partners, the US could more effectively meet the challenges in the "Indo-Pacific" region. In addition, Trump preferred adopting bilateralism, because he believed the culprit eroding the US' bargaining power was multilateralism.⁸⁰ Therefore, the US withdrew from several multilateral mechanisms such as the TPP during the Trump Administration and launched negotiations with its allies and rivals bilaterally.

Second, regarding the alliance behavior between both administrations, they mobilized the US allies to address problems in the region collectively. However, the two administrations treated the US allies in Asia in different ways. The Obama Administration provided more military aid to traditional allies and new partners. For instance, the Obama

77 Renato Cruz De Castro. "From Rebalancing to Competition: The Trump Administration's Grand Strategy for the Indo-Pacific Strategy," *Tamkang Journal of International Affairs* 22, no 4 (April 2019): 1-50; Muhammad Saeed. "From the Asia-Pacific to the Indo-Pacific: Expanding Sino-U.S. Strategic Competition," *China Quarterly of International Strategic Studies* 3, no 4 (Winter 2017): 499-512; and Bilahari Kausikan. "Asia in the Trump Era: From Pivot to Peril." *Foreign Affairs* 96, no 3 (May/June 2017): 146-152.

78 Kurt M. Campbell and Ely Ratner. "The China Reckoning: How Beijing Defied American Expectations," *Foreign Affairs* 97, no 2 (March/April 2018): 60-70.

79 The White House, "2017 National Security Strategy of the United States of America."

80 Schweller, "Three Cheers for Trump's Foreign Policy."

Administration consolidated the US-ROK alliance by amplifying the trade relationship with South Korea, signing the US-Korea Free Trade Agreement (KORUS FTA) with South Korea in 2011. By contrast, President Trump considered its allies as buck-catchers despite trying to engage with potential partners. President Trump expected US allies to bear more responsibility in maintaining the alliance relationship with the US and expected their trade policy needed to favor the US' interests. For instance, President Trump required its allies such as South Korea to bear more for their national defense.

Third, while both Obama and Trump considered China as a competitor of the US, their approaches were different. Although President Obama considered China as a competitor, he looked for “the positive, constructive, comprehensive US-China relationship.” The Obama Administration tried to engage with China by narrowing the “strategic distrust.” The South China Sea dispute was the issue that bought the biggest chafing.⁸¹ By contrast, the Trump Administration regarded China as a “real enemy” of the United States.⁸² The Trump Administration believed China to be a “Revisionist Power” that caused disarray in the region.⁸³ To preserve the existing international order and the US leadership, the Trump Administration tried to restrict the rise of China. In military and strategic aspects, the Trump Administration not only sought to launch the Quadrilateral cooperation with Japan, India and Australia, but also sought to strengthen its ties with Taiwan in order to blockade China's Belt and Road Initiatives and power acceleration in the geo-political realm—which we can consider as external balancing. Also, President Trump tried to launch a technological war against China to stagnate China's technological and military advancement. Overall, the continuity of both strategies launched by President Obama and President Trump was to ensure the US leadership in the region and to respond to the rise of China. However, Trump's “Indo-Pacific” strategy rejected some elements of Obama's “Rebalancing Asia” strategy that rendered some changes to the US Asia-Pacific policy. For instance, President Trump rejected multilateralism, condition-free support to the US allies, and an engagement policy with China.

81 Li, “U.S. South China Sea Policy during the Obama Administration.”

82 Woodward, *Fear*, 298.

83 The Department of Defense, *2019 Indo-Pacific Strategy Report*.

Conclusion

To conclude, the changing environment in the Asia-Pacific was the pivotal factor for the changing policy of the US Asia-Pacific policy for both Obama to Trump. The more China advanced in the region, the more active the US was in response to the rise of China. Although the Obama Administration adopted a moderate approach in confronting the rise of China, the administration became more hawkish when China became more self-assertive over the South China dispute. Besides, Trump's "Indo-Pacific" strategy was more explicit in setting up a blockade to China's geopolitical advancement, and to stagnate China's economic, technological, and military development. For the development of the US Asia-Pacific policy from Obama to Trump, international pressure was the pivotal factor in the changing US Asia-Pacific policy. The discussion of Obama's and Trump's alliance behavior in the Asia-Pacific region helps to verify hypothesis 1: the more relative gain a regional hegemon enjoys, the more an existing power restricts the advance of a rising power by forming alliances. Also, Obama's South China Sea policy and Trump's North Korea policy and the formation of the "Quad" help to prove hypothesis 2: the more relative gain a regional hegemon enjoys, the more an existing power restricts the geo-political influence of a rising power. Furthermore, the establishment of the TPP and Trump's trade war against China seems to help verify hypothesis 3: the more relative gain a regional hegemon enjoys, the more an existing power restricts the economic development of a rising power. Finally, although US policy towards Hong Kong under the two administrations did not play an important role in the US foreign policy agenda, overall the US policy toward Hong Kong does support hypothesis 4 (the more relative gain a regional hegemon enjoys, the more an existing power promotes its values to a rising power).

The discussion of the US Asia-Pacific policy from President Obama to President Trump helps support these four hypotheses, and in turn, proves the general hypothesis extracted from the elaboration of John Mearsheimer's Offensive realism as follows: the more relative gain a regional hegemon enjoys, the more the regional hegemon restricts the advance of a rising power. Therefore, Offensive realism helps to explain the US Asia-Pacific policy from Obama to Trump.

K-pop, Affect, and Intimacy in Transnational Social Mediascapes During the COVID-19 Pandemic: A Case Study of BTS and Participatory Online Fandom

Simone Liew

Graduate Student at GSIS Yonsei University

The global phenomenon of Korean popular culture since the late 1990s has been referred to as Hallyu, or the Korean Wave. While early Hallyu focused on the export of television dramas, today's wave is best characterized by the popularity of Korean pop music (K-pop) and its passionate legion of fans. Previous research has explained the popularity of Hallyu through theories of cultural proximity, cultural hybridity, and the use of innovative digital technologies. However, these theories do not place enough importance on the affective and emotional nature of Korean cultural products, nor the use of social media as a public site of emotion and connection for fans. K-pop has been well known as having an international, digital participatory community that utilizes social mediascapes as places of belonging and connection. Social mediascapes serve as transnational interactive communication between fans and artists. Situated within the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, which caused social isolation and increased reliance on online technology for human interaction, this study focuses on the normalization of emotional interaction through digital spaces and innovative technology in K-pop. These strengths have allowed the industry to navigate the pandemic while attracting even more fans, despite the cancellation of face-to-face events. Using the globally iconic Korean musical group BTS as a case study, this study draws on secondary data to perform a quantitative analysis of their increasingly intimate online activities throughout the pandemic. Corresponding with this, their fandom growth over a year exemplifies social media as a site of affect and emotion, the

participatory power of online fandom, and the future of Hallyu through technological development. These findings can be used to draw broader implications on the growing digitalization of the world and contribute to understanding K-pop's ever-growing global popularity.

Keywords: Hallyu, K-pop, transnational fandom, fan-artist relationship, affect and emotion, parasocial relationships, connection and belonging, social isolation, digital spaces, online participatory community, COVID-19 pandemic

Introduction

The popularity of Korean cultural and media products has been widely referred to as the Korean Wave, or *Hallyu*, in both informal and academic circles. The Korean Wave, which includes music, dramas, films, fashion, food, comics, and online games, has enjoyed international popularity since the late 1990s, especially in neighboring East Asian countries such as Japan, China, and Taiwan. In these countries, Korean dramas are available in the daily programming of free-to-air and satellite television. This technology affordance has encouraged the consumption of Korean cultural products as part of the daily viewing habits of East Asian audiences.¹ According to this pattern of popularity, early *Hallyu* scholars have theorized several discourses to explain the regional and international success of cultural products from a seemingly small, North-East Asian state. These perspectives generally view the Korean Wave through a soft power or neoliberalist, economic lens and posit theories of cultural hybridity, cultural proximity, and transnational flows to explain the Korean Wave's globalizing success.² However, these theories fail to account for Korea's cultural products' affective and emotional nature and its growing internationalization through social media as a public site of emotion.

1 Sangjoon Lee, "Introduction: A decade of Hallyu scholarship: Toward a new direction in Hallyu 2.0," in *Hallyu 2.0: The Korean Wave in the Age of Social Media*, ed. Sangjoon Lee and Mark Nornes Abe (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2015), 13.

2 Dooboo Shim, "Hybridity and the rise of Korean popular culture in Asia," *Media Culture & Society* no. 28(1), (2006): 25-44; Yong-jin Won, "Hallyu: Numerous discourses, one perspective," in *The Korean Wave: Evolution, Fandom, and Transnationality*, ed. Tae-jin Yoon and Dal Yong Jin, (Maryland: Lexington Books, 2017), 23-43.

English-speaking academic discourse on *Hallyu* had significantly weakened as scholars in Asian studies, communication studies, and cultural studies claimed that the Korean Wave had been thoroughly analyzed and researched.³ However, in the latter part of 2006, a second wave of Korean cultural products emerged, referred to by scholars as ‘*Hallyu 2.0*’; as *Hallyu 2.0* began to globalize as an unparalleled cultural phenomenon, the discourse was renewed.⁴ Differentiated from the first wave, *Hallyu 2.0* has focused on technological development, the use of social media, and the convergence of creative content – which has subsequently spawned peripheral ‘K’ industries such as K-gaming and K-beauty into the *Hallyu* brand. K-dramas were the primary cultural export in the first wave. In contrast, the growth of *Hallyu 2.0* has been led by Korean pop music (K-pop), whose accessibility through internet video platforms such as YouTube has immensely extended its international reach.⁵ Today, the South Korean music market ranks as the sixth largest globally with a 44.8 percent growth, positioning itself as the fastest-growing major market in 2020.⁶ In 2019, the K-pop industry’s exports (including tour products) contributed over US \$3 billion to the South Korean economy.⁷

Hallyu 2.0’s technological developments and reliance on social media as a distribution channel have allowed for the organization of imagined communities, online intimacy, transnational fandom activities, and the erasure of barriers between producer and consumer. The role of social media as a tool for experience and organizing communities has been highlighted as the world faces social isolation due to COVID-19. On March 11, 2020, the COVID-19 virus was officially declared a worldwide pandemic by the WHO, and governments urgently implemented border control and social distancing

3 Sangjoon Lee, “Introduction,” 14.

4 Dal Yong Jin, “New Perspectives on the Creative Industries in the *Hallyu 2.0* Era: Global-Local Dialectics in Intellectual Properties,” in *Hallyu 2.0: The Korean Wave in the Age of Social Media*, ed. Sangjoon Lee and Mark Normes Abe (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2015), 56.

5 Ibid. 54.

6 International Federation of the Phonographic Industry, “Global Music Report 2021,” accessed November 20, 2021, https://www.ifpi.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/GMR2021_STATE_OF_THE_INDUSTRY.pdf.

7 Yonhap News Agency, “Exports of Korean culture products soar 22.4 pct last year,” *Yonhap News Agency*, April 14, 2020, <https://en.yna.co.kr/view/AEN20200414009800315>.

policies to curb the spread of the virus.⁸ As a result, face-to-face social interaction, and physical contact as the norms of human interaction have been erased, and communication has been relegated to the cybersphere.

The global music industry, too, has not been exempt from the devastating impacts of the pandemic, with US\$ 30 billion lost in the concert industry alone in 2020.⁹ However, for the K-pop music industry, which has been at the forefront of technological innovation and online communication, this increased global shift to community communication via social media has further accelerated its popularity with music promotion, video performances, and digital interaction with fans becoming normalized throughout the pandemic.¹⁰ K-pop fandoms are recognized as a social, participatory culture and emotional space of intimacy for meeting like-minded people. This transnational community relies on social media for interaction, and the increased saturation of K-pop content, as well as the amount of time spent online during the pandemic, has allowed the global K-pop fandom to thrive, expanding its reach further than ever before.¹¹ Thus, rather than continuing to justify the success of the Korean Wave as one based on previous theories of cultural proximity and hybridity, this paper posits that the continued digitalization of the Korean Wave and its expanding global presence today should be viewed vis-à-vis an affective, emotional and experience-based economy.¹²

In examining the affective, emotional, digitalized nature of K-pop fandoms, first, a literature review on these concepts will be conducted. Then, situating within the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, the paper will discuss

8 M. Reza Azarpazhooh et. al, "COVID-19 Pandemic and Burden of Non-Communicable Disease: An Ecological Study on Data of 185 Countries," *Journal of Stroke and Cerebrovascular Diseases*, no. 29 (9) (2020): 2 & 3.

9 Jem Aswad, "Concert Industry Lost \$30 Billion in 2020," *Variety*, December 11, 2020, <https://variety.com/2020/music/news/concert-industry-lost-30-billion-2020-1234851679/>.

10 Yonhap News Agency, "K-pop album market bullish despite pandemic," *Yonhap News Agency*, October 21, 2021, <https://en.yna.co.kr/view/AEN20211015005200315>.

11 Meicheng Sun, "K-pop fan labor and an alternative creative industry: A case study of GOT7 Chinese fans," *Global media and China*, no.5 (4) (2020): 390; Hyunji Lee, "A 'real' fantasy: hybridity, Korean drama, and pop cosmopolitans," *Media, Culture & Society*, no. 40 (3) (2018): 366.

12 Katrin Dovelung, Anu A. Harju, and Denise Sommer, "From Mediatized Emotion to Digital Affect Cultures: New Technologies and Global Flows of Emotion," *Social Media + Society*, (January-March 2018): 1-11.

how virtual connections and online intimacy have accelerated the growth of online, transnational K-pop communities by employing the Korean pop group BTS and their fandom, called ARMY, as a case study. The K-pop industry and its fandoms utilize online spaces as communities for emotional and affective interaction. However, an analysis of the behaviors of all K-pop fandoms is far beyond the scope of this study. Therefore, the author has decided to use only BTS as a case study because they are known for their close connection to fans on social media. As of 2021, BTS has five consecutive wins of Billboard Music Award's Top Social Artist Award, where award nominees are considered based on significant fan interaction, including global music streaming and social engagement.¹³ They have also been recognized internationally as Korea's most accomplished musical artists, becoming the first to debut a non-English song at No. 1 on the Billboard Hot 100 chart and the first Asian act to win Artist of the Year at the American Music Awards.¹⁴

This paper conducted a quantitative analysis to display the increase of online activities and BTS' fandom growth throughout the pandemic. Secondary data were collected from official company notices, social media channels, viewing statistics, and news and magazine articles between March 11, 2020 (the WHO's COVID-19 pandemic declaration date) to June 15, 2021 (the day after BTS' eight-year anniversary virtual fan meeting). BTS' activities and transition to online performances in lieu of face-to-face events, as well as their active social media presence, demonstrate how BTS have successfully transitioned to online technologies to recreate spaces of intimacy. Furthermore, these events and the corresponding development within the fandom community can be applied to *Hallyu* 2.0's international growth and contribute to our understanding of global society's increased dependence on social media and online connections as a place of belonging. Through this case study, this paper seeks to contribute to the understanding

13 Ananya Varma, "BTS wins top social artist at Billboard Music Awards for 5th time; debuts 'Butter' live," *Republic World*, May 24, 2021, <https://www.republicworld.com/entertainment-news/music/bts-wins-top-social-artist-at-billboard-music-awards-for-5th-time-debuts-butter-live.html>.; Sun-Ah Shim, "BTS becomes first Asian act to win top honor at AMAs," *Yonhap News Agency*, November 22, 2021, <https://en.yna.co.kr/view/AEN20211122004800315>.

14 Franchesca Judine Basbas, "BTS make history as 'Life Goes On' becomes the first non-English song to debut at number 1 on the Billboard Hot 100 charts," *Bandwagon*, December 9, 2020. <https://www.bandwagon.asia/articles/bts-life-goes-on-debuts-at-no-1-on-3-billboard-global-charts-hot-100-global-200-global-excl-us-be-album-dynamite-big-hit-entertainment-korea-november-2020>.

of K-pop, affect and intimacy in transnational social mediascapes, the power of participatory online fandom in *Hallyu 2.0*'s success, and the future of K-pop fan-artist communities through technological development.

Literature Review

Concepts

In the context of cultural studies, affect is considered to be the performativity of emotion; an emotion that is socially produced, regulated, and shared; and how emotion flows and creates responses. Affect exists outside of a person and is an entity that is relational to the natural world that we engage with; it is something that we *do* rather than have.¹⁵ Emotion, meanwhile, is built into a person as a psychological construct and becomes active in social sharing situations. Emotion is situational and contextual, performed with discursively constructed cultural practices. For emotions to travel and affect, they must be produced into a text. How one is affected by emotions depends on their spatial dimension; that is, how close or far they are to the text.¹⁶ New media technologies both enable the exchange of information and foster globally mediatized emotional exchange. This is referred to as digital affect cultures, as the digital realm constructs a space where participation and orientation are guided by emotional communication. Social media are emotional media, and their core characteristics are based on emotional identification with others and belonging in a collective imagined community.¹⁷ Mediatization plays a crucial role in constructing public opinion, and by acknowledging this, the role of the media in processes of socio-cultural change can be understood. Humans gather around cultural artifacts and organize themselves through their understanding and opinions concerning the artifact, and this organization unites individuals into communities validated through shared and mediatized interaction.¹⁸ In digital affect cultures, these mediatized communications are no longer bound by time and instead allow users to conduct multiple simultaneous interactions unconstrained by distance.¹⁹

15 Katrin Dovelung et.al, "From Mediatized Emotion," 1.

16 Ibid, 2.

17 Ibid, 3 & 4.

18 Ignas Kalpokas, "Enabling Post-truth: Mediatisation and Affect," in *A Political Theory of Post-Truth* (Pivot, Cham: Palgrave, 2019), 57.

19 Ibid, 59.

The self, too, is increasingly becoming mediatized. As the dominant method of interaction transitions to digital encounters rather than face-to-face interaction, the self becomes more existent as a digital representation rather than projected through our physical bodies.²⁰ This digitalized projection of self is driven especially in social mediascapes, controlled by user interactions. In the context of the K-pop industry, social media drives the interplay between entertainment companies and global fandoms, and reliance on social media is inevitable for interaction between the host (artists) and viewers (fans).²¹ Technologies such as the chatbox function on live streaming and video platforms allow for real-time virtual connection that users lack in their actual lives. Not only does the chat function as a direct interaction between host and viewer, but it also connects fellow viewers as they exchange their thoughts and emotions. These arenas provide a safe space that fosters transnational connections and intimacy between the host and viewer, building a strong sense of community, empathy, and affiliation amidst the absence of physical togetherness.²²

Indeed, one of the promises of the Internet is to “bring together isolated, but like-minded people,” making it inseparable from the concept of transnational fandoms today.²³ Fandoms can be defined as a “vibrant, socially rewarding space where groups of people come together to share interests, ideas, and occasionally work to change the world.”²⁴ It is a social space strengthened by community participation and unity. As Anna Lee Swan writes, “physically dispersed, but affectively connected, K-pop fans around the world have formed a dynamic community that imagines itself as transcending national boundaries.”²⁵ Perhaps no better example of this can be seen than through the role of social media in *Hallyu 2.0*, as it rapidly promotes the

20 Ibid.

21 Dal Yong Jin and Yoon Kyong, “The social mediascape of transnational Korean pop culture: Hallyu 2.0 as spreadable media practice,” *New Media and Society*, no.18 (7) (2016): 1280.

22 Hyesu Park, “Chapter 3: Korean mukbang wave: Making sense of eating and broadcasting and its techno-mediated narrative environment,” *Understanding Hallyu: The Korean Wave Through Literature, Webtoon, and Mukbang* (London and New York: Routledge, 2021), 3; Anna Lee Swan, “Transnational Identities and Feeling in Fandom: Place and Embodiment in K-pop Fan Reaction Videos,” *Communication Culture & Critique*, no. 11 (2018): 549.

23 Hyesu Park, “Korean mukbang,” 10.

24 Ibid.

25 Anna Lee Swan, “Transnational Identities and Feeling in Fandom,” 549.

visibility and accessibility of Korean popular culture to the Western world.²⁶

In Pandemic Times

COVID-19 has significantly impacted the South Korean music, concert, and tourism industry. A little over a month after the declaration of the pandemic, South Korea recorded its first case of COVID-19, and by February 29, 2020, it became the second most infected country.²⁷ This situation caused the immediate mass cancellation of live entertainment events amidst social distancing policies.²⁸ Globally, numerous countries implemented nationwide lockdowns and curfews, effectively halting face-to-face interaction for several consecutive months.²⁹ The extended length of the pandemic and these policies have caused threats to mental health worldwide as communities remain socially isolated.³⁰ Now, more than ever, are social media functioning as spaces for emotional connection during a time of physical separation.³¹

Scope and Methodology

Why BTS?

BTS, as K-pop idols, are known to be early adopters of social media. As one of the first K-pop groups to operate a ‘personal’ social media account independent of their company’s official account, BTS have consistently displayed their vulnerable and candid appearances through ‘personalized’ fan interaction. Pre-debut, the group opened their Twitter account and uploaded

26 Hyunji Lee, “A ‘real’ fantasy: hybridity,” 366.

27 Victor Cha and Dana Kim, “A Timeline of South Korea’s Response to COVID-19,” Center for Strategic and International Studies, last modified March 27, 2020. <https://www.csis.org/analysis/timeline-south-koreas-response-covid-19>.

28 “Performances, concerts cancelled over coronavirus,” *Yonhap News Agency*, February 25, 2020. <https://en.yna.co.kr/view/AEN20200225004000315>.

29 M. R. Azarpazhooh et al., “Covid-19 Pandemic,” 7.

30 Rodolfo Sarracci, “Prevention in COVID-19 time: from failure to future,” *Epidemiol Community Health*, no.74 (2020): 690.

31 *Ibid.* 550.

their first Tweet on December 18, 2012.³² Just over a month later, the first video-log (vlog) of leader RM sitting in their recording studio and chatting to the camera was uploaded onto their 'BANGTANTV' YouTube channel.³³ Mirroring their Twitter account, the 'BANGTANTV' YouTube channel is separate from their company's official music video distribution channel and presents 'behind the scenes' footage of the members' daily, casual, and intimate interactions. At the time of this paper's writing, BTS have Tweeted 12,762 times and have uploaded 1,633 videos on BANGTANTV.³⁴ Of course, the production and curation of each post and video are not wholly independent from company control. However, in line with *Hallyu* 2.0, BTS have utilized social media to show 'publicly private' moments, and in doing so, have built a global fandom based on intimacy and emotional connection. This connection has been recognized internationally through their wins of the Billboard Music Award's Top Social Artist Award, beating out US-industry competitors such as Justin Bieber, Ariana Grande, Taylor Swift, Shawn Mendes, and Billie Eilish.³⁵

A world tour beginning in Seoul on April 11, 2020 and extending throughout the summer of 2020 was planned to promote BTS' fourth studio album, marking an important seventh year of group activities.³⁶ However, due

32 BTS (@BTS_twt), "What's up! It's BTS. Finally, BTS' official Twitter has opened~ Clap clap clap! Before our debut, more weird and fun things that you could have only imagined will be uploaded," December 18, 2012, 2:43 a.m., https://twitter.com/BTS_twt/status/280729943476953090.

33 "130107, RAP MONSTER" January 7, 2013, BANGTANTV, video, 1:44, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=srk5_rQVmmA&ab_channel=BANGTANTV.

34 "BANGTANTV," Social Blade, accessed November 20, 2021, <https://socialblade.com/youtube/user/bangtantv>; "@BTS_twt," Social Blade, accessed November 20, 2021, https://socialblade.com/twitter/user/bts_twt.

35 Billboard Music Awards (@BBMAs), "top social artist winners for the FIFTH YEAR IN A ROW !! congrats, @BTS_twt !! #BBMAs," May 24, 2021, 4:30 a.m., <https://twitter.com/BBMAs/status/1396549134258081792>.; Billboard Staff, "Billboard Music Awards 2018 Nominations: See the Full List," Billboard, last modified April 17, 2018, <https://www.billboard.com/articles/news/bbma/8343598/billboard-music-awards-2018-nominations-list>.; Denise Warner, "Cardi B Leads 2019 Billboard Music Awards Nominations With 21," Billboard, last modified April 4, 2019, <https://www.billboard.com/articles/news/bbma/8505581/billboard-music-awards-2019-nominations>.; "2020 Nominees," Billboard, accessed June 17, 2021, <https://www.billboardmusicawards.com/2020-nominees/>.

36 "BTS 4th Full-length Album Map of the Soul: 7," ibighit, accessed June 16, 2021, https://ibighit.com/bts/eng/discography/detail/map_of_the_soul-7.php.

to the exacerbating COVID-19 situation, the 37-date stadium world tour was canceled.³⁷ Despite these extenuating circumstances, BTS and their company, HYBE, introduced new technologies and varied modes of social media interaction to expand their business models and foster intimacy with fans.

The following section will detail data collected from secondary data sources between March 11, 2020 (the date the pandemic was declared) and June 15, 2021 (the date after their two-day eight-year anniversary concert). It will display how they have facilitated the growth of BTS' digital affect community during the COVID-19 pandemic. The data was collected through official company notices, official and fan social media channels, official press releases, viewing statistics, news articles, and magazine interviews between March 11, 2020 to June 15, 2021. This timeframe has been chosen as the start of the pandemic brought a halt to international travel, and a series of social distancing and lockdowns policies globally, affecting BTS' world tour plans. In addition, BTS' eight-year anniversary virtual fan meeting (an important event to celebrate the connection between artist and fan) is their most recent online live performance with publicly accessible data, as per the time of writing and publishing of this paper.

Data Analysis

Recreating Live Events Through Alternative Online Technologies

On February 27, 2020, two days before Korea ranked as the second most infected COVID-19 country, HYBE announced the cancellation of BTS' Seoul concerts scheduled for April 11, 12, 18 and 19 of 2020.³⁸ A month later, on March 26, the postponement of the North American leg of their tour (April 25 to June 6, 2020) was announced, and the ultimate decision to completely

37 Ana Monroy Yglesais, "BTS Cancel 2020 Map of the Soul World Tour Dates Due to COVID-19 Restrictions," Recording Academy Grammy Awards News, last modified April 28, 2020, <https://www.grammy.com/grammys/news/bts-cancel-2020-map-soul-world-tour-dates-due-covid-19-restrictions>.

38 Althea Legaspi, "BTS Cancel 'Map of the Soul' Korea Shows Due to Coronavirus Concerns," *Rolling Stone*, last modified February 27, 2020, <https://www.rollingstone.com/music/music-news/bts-cancel-map-of-the-soul-korea-shows-coronavirus-959472/>.

reschedule all dates of the world tour was made on April 28, 2020.³⁹ Despite canceling their 37-date tour, measures to bring performances directly to fans were quickly executed.⁴⁰ On April 18 and 19, 2020, BTS held their first at-home concert series, 'Bang Bang Con,' streaming previous concert DVDs for free on their official YouTube channel. The two-day event replaced the cancellation of their in-person Seoul concerts, streaming for nearly 24 hours across the weekend; it attracted a total of 50.5 million viewers and a peak of 2.24 million concurrent viewers at one time across 162 regions.⁴¹ On June 14, 2020, 'Bang Bang Con: The Live' was held to replace their annual in-person fan meeting events. The event was streamed in live from Seoul and was the first collaboration between HYBE and the cloud-based live streaming platform Kiswe, whose mission statement includes "modernizing the fan experience," "audience-driven viewing," and "social-first experience."⁴² The platform includes cheer and chat functions that allow audiences to interact live with the artist. For this concert, a six-camera angle multi-view was offered as well as real-time Bluetooth connection technology to BTS' fan light-sticks. This technology allowed for the simultaneous syncing of fan cheering devices, replicating the same technology provided at physical concerts and allowing for a participatory aspect regardless of time, space, and distance.⁴³ 'Bang Bang Con: The Live' recorded 756,000 concurrent viewers in 107 countries, setting the Guinness Book of World Records for the biggest audience at a paid virtual concert,

39 Althea Legaspi, "BTS Postpone North American 'Map of the Soul' Tour Amid Coronavirus Pandemic," *Rolling Stone*, last modified March 26, 2020. <https://www.rollingstone.com/music/music-news/bts-postpone-north-american-map-of-the-soul-tour-coronavirus-973975/>; Ana Monroy Yglesais, "BTS Cancel 2020 Map of the Soul World Tour Dates Due to COVID-19 Restrictions," *Recording Academy Grammy Awards News*, last modified April 28, 2020, <https://www.grammy.com/grammys/news/bts-cancel-2020-map-soul-world-tour-dates-due-covid-19-restrictions>.

40 BIGHIT MUSIC (@BIGHIT_MUSIC), "BTS MAP OF THE SOUL TOUR Schedule Information #BTS #BangtanSeoyeonDan #MapOfTheSoulTour, January 22, 2020, 9.00 a.m., https://twitter.com/bighit_music/status/1219771684904792064.

41 Sarah Deen, "BTS' mammoth online concert series BANG BANG CON fetches over 50 million viewers worldwide," *Metro UK*, last modified April 20, 2020, <https://metro.co.uk/2020/04/20/kpop-bts-bang-bang-con-gets-50m-viewers-12581409/>.

42 "Home," Kiswe, accessed June 17, 2021, <https://www.kiswe.com/>.

43 "Big Hit Entertainment and Kiswe Forge Strategic Alliance," *Kiswe News*, last modified June 8, 2020, <https://www.kiswe.com/news/big-hit-entertainment-and-kiswe-mobile-forge-strategic-alliance>.

and added an estimated 10,000 new members to the official BTS fan club.⁴⁴

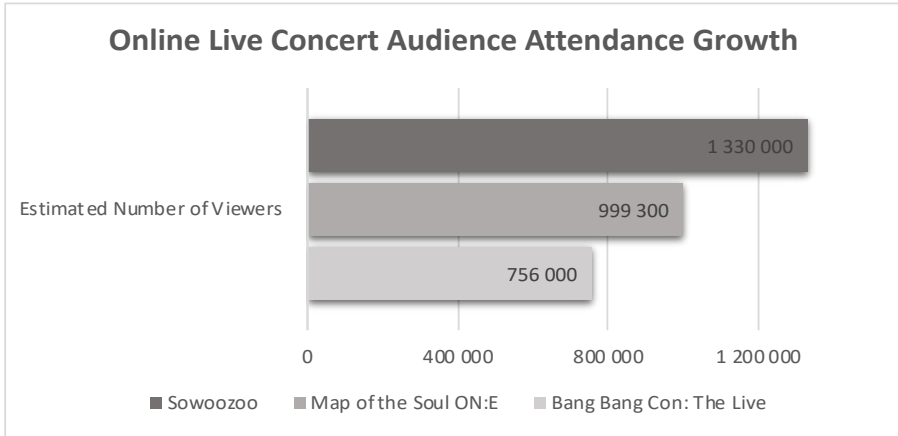
Four months later, on October 10 and 11, 2020, BTS broke their own Guinness Book World Record with their first full-length online concert, 'Map of the Soul ON:E.' Hosted using the same Kiswe technology, the concert introduced the 'ARMY on Air' function, where chosen fans' video and audio were streamed in real-time from their rooms to LED screens on-stage at the Seoul venue. It was the world's first streaming concert to apply both multi-view and 4K/HD technology, attracting 993,000 paid viewers from 191 countries and territories; a 237,000 viewership increase from 'Bang Bang Con: The Live.'⁴⁵ On April 17, 2021, one year from the first of the home concert series, 'Bang Bang Con 2021' streamed over eight hours of concert DVDs on YouTube, attracting 2.7 million concurrent viewers; an increase of nearly half a million viewers from the previous year.⁴⁶ Finally, on June 13 and June 14, 2021, BTS held their biggest paid online concert yet, attracting 1.33 million paid viewers from 195 countries and regions for their eighth-anniversary commemoration concert titled 'Sowozoo.' Held live at the Seoul Olympic Park Stadium, the sets and venue scale of the concert were the largest to date, with an upgraded version of 'ARMY on Air' that displayed fans individually across hundreds of LED screens in the formation of would-have-been physical concert seats.⁴⁷

44 Dominic Punt, "K-Pop Sensations BTS Set Concert Live Stream Record With Bang Bang Con: The Live," Guinness World Records, last modified July 22, 2020, <https://www.guinnessworldrecords.com/news/2020/7/k-pop-sensations-bts-set-concert-live-stream-record-with-bang-bang-con-the-live-624548>.; Patrick Frater, "BTS 'Bang Bang Con: The Live' Claims Record Viewership for Online Concert," Variety, last modified June 14, 2020, <https://variety.com/2020/digital/asia/bts-big-bang-con-the-live-record-online-concert-1234635003/>.

45 "Kiswe Powers BTS' Innovative Virtual Concert 'Map of the Soul ON:E,'" Kiswe News, last modified October 14, 2020, <https://www.kiswe.com/news/kiswe-powers-bts-virtual-concert-map-of-the-soul-on-e>.

46 "Number of Peak Concurrent Viewers on BTS Online Event Surpasses 2.7 mln: Agency," *Yonhap News Agency*, April 18, 2021, <https://en.yna.co.kr/view/AEN20210418001100315>.

47 Hye-Min Hong, "1.33 million fans gather for BTS' 8th anniversary fan meeting," *Hankook Ilbo*, June 15, 2021, <https://www.hankookilbo.com/News/Read/A2021061509220003032?did=NA>.



Graph 1: An increase of 574,000 paid viewers in attendance between the 2020 and 2021 online fan meeting

Intimacy, Community, and Online Interactions

Although seven months elapsed between BTS' latest live online concerts, they participated in numerous pre-recorded online performances for several talk shows and music award shows, including the Billboard Music Awards, the American Music Awards, and the Grammy Award Show.⁴⁸ Moreover, the seven members (individually or in groups) regularly live-streamed daily activities such as cooking, playing video games, making arts and crafts, practicing instruments, or simply chatting. The first of these candid activities were live streamed on March 26, 2020, via the Korean video platform VLIVE. From then until April 5, 2021, 22 casual live streams were conducted on the platform.⁴⁹ For greater global reach, 24 live streams were conducted on YouTube between April 17, 2020, and November 13, 2020, and were labeled with the hashtags #StayConnected and #CarryOn.

48 "BTS (BangtanSeonyeonDan) 'Butter' @ Billboard Music Awards," May 24, 2021, BANGTANTV, video, 3:27, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T7lhGz6Bfik&ab_channel=BANGTANTV.; Noah Yoo, "Watch BTS Perform 'Life Goes On' and 'Dynamite' at AMAs 2020, last modified November 22, 2020, <https://pitchfork.com/news/watch-bts-perform-life-goes-on-and-dynamite-at-amas-2020.>; "BTS (BangtanSeonyeonDan) 'Dynamite' @ 63rd GRAMMY Awards Show," April 21, 2021, BANGTANTV, video, 3:00, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jWRMXiHhDjc>.

49 "BTS," VLIVE, accessed June 17, 2021, <https://www.vlive.tv/channel/FE619>.

While the live streams on YouTube started as daily vlogs, they later functioned as candid footage for the making process of the BE album released on November 20, 2020.⁵⁰ During these live streams, the chatbox function of each platform was used to respond to and react to fans’ questions in real-time. Further, BTS uploaded 285 image posts between January 1, 2020, and June 15, 2021, on Weverse, a social media platform created by HYBE exclusively for direct artist-fan interaction. Additionally, they regularly appear on the platform to chat and respond to fans’ posts.⁵¹ On Twitter, BTS made 526 Tweets between January 1, 2020, and June 15, 2021.⁵²

Platform	Amount of content uploaded
VLIVE	22 live streams
YouTube	24 live streams
Weverse	285 images
Twitter	526 Tweets

Table 1: Summary of activity across BTS’ social media platforms March 2020-June 2021

These daily activities and live interactions with the members have allowed fans to feel a sense of participation and ownership of BTS’ regular lives, privy to their ‘private’ moments. To add to this perception, the concept of the BE album focused on themes of isolation, loneliness, and ways to overcome the pandemic. Part of the title track ‘Life Goes On’ was filmed at BTS’ dorm and featured casual home clothing rather than the flashy high-end fashion that K-pop usually utilizes.⁵³ BTS also replaced their annual travel-reality show with a ‘staycation’ reality series featuring the members in a summer house doing activities that are “somewhere between everyday life and leisure.”⁵⁴ Footage included fishing, hiking, cooking, and sleeping

50 “BANGTANTV,” YouTube, accessed June 17, 2021, <https://www.youtube.com/user/BANGTANTV>.

51 “BTS,” Weverse, accessed June 17, 2021, <https://www.weverse.io/bts/feed>.

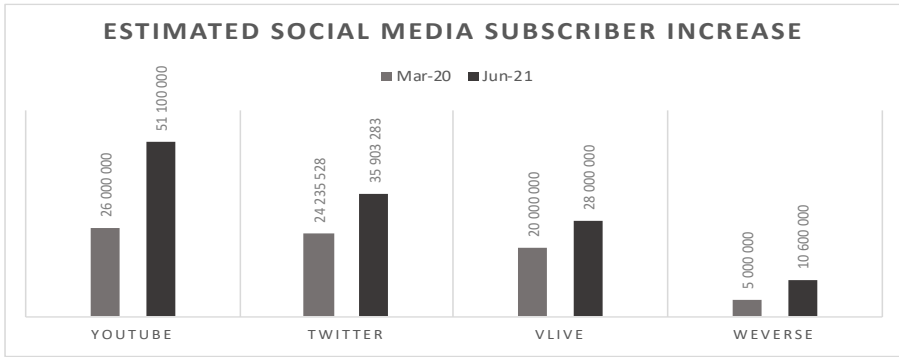
52 “BangtanSeonyeonDan,” Twitter, accessed June 17, 2021, https://twitter.com/bts_twt.

53 “BTS (BangtanSeonyeonDan) ‘Life Goes On’ Official MV,” November 20, 2020, HYBE LABELS, video, 3:50, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-5q5mZbe3V8>.

54 “In the Soop,” Weverse, accessed June 17, 2021, <https://weverse.io/bts/media/category/73>.

and was aired on the Korean cable TV channel JTBC. Extended versions of the free-to-air episodes were uploaded as paid content on Weverse.

Of the 461 days within the research timeframe, BTS-related content was released across 355 days. This content includes their social media posts, reality show airing, online concerts, vlogs, music videos, interviews, magazine spreads, behind-the-scenes videos, DVDs, and advertisements. Notably, new content was released every day between February 21, 2021, and June 15, 2021.⁵⁵ As a result of BTS' and HYBE's strategies to produce and promote affective online content, the following estimates have been made of their followership across all social media platforms between March 2020 and June 2021.⁵⁶



Graph 2: Overall, BTS' YouTube subscribers have increased by 49.1%, Twitter followers by 32.5%, VLIVE subscribers by 28.5%, and Weverse members by 52.8%.

Discussion

BTS have a long history of utilizing their social media channels as affective,

55 "BTS," Google Calendar by choarosa@gmail.com, accessed June 17, 2021, <https://t.co/N6Oqu1suYP?amp=1>.

56 "BANGTANTV," Social Blade, accessed June 17, 2021, <https://socialblade.com/youtube/user/bangtantv/monthly>.; "@BTS_twt," Social Blade, accessed June 17, 2021, https://socialblade.com/twitter/user/bts_twt/monthly.; V LIVE (@Vliveofficial), "BTS's VLIVE channel reached over 20 million subscribers VLIVE thanks ARMY from all over the world that showed love for BTS~ If you still haven't followed BTS's VLIVE channel, follow us now [#BTS #BangtanSeonyeonDan #VLIVE](https://channels.vlive.tv/FE619)," June 5, 2020, 12.38 p.m., <https://twitter.com/Vliveofficial/status/1268748890884333568>.; "BTS," VLIVE, accessed June 17, 2021, <https://channels.vlive.tv/FE619>.

culturally discursive spaces for community belonging and fandom practices. Nevertheless, the display of increasingly candid activities across their social media platforms during COVID-19 has resonated with audiences and contributed to a mass increase in fandom growth. Throughout the pandemic, with online platforms as the only way of communicating with fans, BTS have increased the sharing of their 'publicly private' personas, feelings, and innermost thoughts on a globally publicly accessible forum by providing footage into their personal living spaces, workspaces, and through live streams of their everyday activities. Although BTS have featured their work studios and living spaces before the pandemic, the addition of 'everyday' activities and conversations shared with fans within these spaces has enhanced the parasocial fan-artist relationship. It removes their unreachable superstar status and plays a performative role of friendship between the stars and fans. These interactions have further curated a sense of intimacy between artist and fandom. Adopting this communication model in place of face-to-face interaction has created a synergistic environment for attracting new audiences who view these images as BTS' 'authentic' selves. These actions highlight visual intimacy, public vulnerability, and belief in BTS as affective personal leaders. Although most fans cannot directly interact with BTS, they can feel connected through textual viewing, breaching the barrier between public and private spaces, time, and distance.⁵⁷ As their influence expands, so too does BTS' political leadership in these mediatized public spheres, and their 'selves' become a commodity to be consumed. Especially in today's 'Experience Age,' exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, online users not only seek to maximize the pleasure of their consumption experience but to believe that they have a stake (or can participate directly) in the process of collective consumption.⁵⁸

The 'ARMY on Air' technology used during the 'Map of the Soul ON:E' and 'Sowozoo' live concerts allowed BTS to view fans in real-time through screens at the concert hall, while fans simultaneously watched BTS (and themselves) through their screens at home. These virtual community meetings present implications for the further deterritorialization and digitalization of K-pop. K-pop as a genre has relied on its global export to its transnational fans for the increase and longevity of its popularity. Pre-COVID-19, a significant portion of K-pop groups' revenue was based on their performances at live events and corresponding ticket sales

57 Anna Lee Swan, "Transnational Identities and Feeling in Fandom," 557.

58 Ignas Kalpokas, "Enabling Post-truth: Mediatization and Affect," 62.

and merchandise sales. However, the transition to online concerts may decrease tour costs in favor of larger revenues through online ticket sales while also reaching masses of international fans who otherwise may never have had the opportunity to experience their favorite stars up-close. As displayed through the case study of BTS, the frequency and accessibility to increasingly intimate K-pop content allows for transnational fandom growth, who rely on social mediascapes as a site of community, affect, and emotion.

Dangers of Fandom as Emotionally Charged Spaces

Even before their official debut, BTS' candid nature and freedom over their 'personal' social media channels allowed them to share more of their lives than the average K-pop idol, consequently attracting a loyal fan community who feel a strong and close emotional connection to the group. However, while the sharing of BTS' 'everyday' and 'natural' lives throughout the pandemic has lent emotional and mental support to the fan-artist relationship, fandom and social media are emotionally charged spaces, and not all interactions within these digital affect communities are positive. With the growth of the group's fandom and investment in the increasingly emotional connection to the artist, leading to the consequent belief that fans have influence or ability to affect their real lives, the digital fandom space has the potential to be a place of negativity and unsavory behavior. The enormous size of the fandom and BTS' continued relevance on social media platforms have more than once led to the spread of rash and incorrect information; ARMY's keen protectiveness towards their stars has been interpreted as online cyberbullying and feeding into the digital 'cancel culture.'⁵⁹ Both Western and Korean industry celebrities alike have not been spared from this toxic behavior, and musical collaborations between BTS and other artists have been canceled as a consequence.⁶⁰

While on the one hand, online technologies, and their digital spaces as a site for social gathering and emotional interaction, has served as an important arena to allow global audiences to navigate and overcome feelings of social isolation throughout the pandemic, these spaces and their normalized behaviors also bring with it dangerous implications. Fans'

59 Michele Amabile Angermiller, "Charlie Puth implores BTS fans to end 'toxic internet screaming match,'" *Variety*, July 5, 2020, <https://variety.com/2020/music/news/charlie-puth-bts-fans-1234698628/>.

60 SBS PopAsia HQ, "BTS fans attack Wale on Twitter," *SBS PopAsia*, June 27, 2017, <https://www.sbs.com.au/popasia/blog/2017/06/27/bts-fans-attack-wale-twitter>.

investment into their parasocial relationships can lead to the overstepping of socially constructed personal boundaries, and an unhealthy reliance on digital affect communities as a place of lived 'reality' in place of real, human society.

Study Limitations

This study is limited by its reliance on the use of a single K-pop group as a case study. The behavior and nature of the relationship between BTS and ARMY is not representative of the way all K-pop idol groups and their fandoms utilize digital affect spaces. The study is also constrained by its' reliance on English language data sources and Korean to English language translations which may subconsciously reflect a Western bias perspective or factual inaccuracies. Furthermore, due to the quantitative nature of this study, the participation of fandom and interaction between fan and artist has only been displayed through numerical data. It has not been able to show how fan-artist interact on the micro-level, nor the actual thoughts, feelings, words, ideas, and behaviors of these communities.

Regardless of these limitations, this study, and its exploration on the reliance of digital affect communities for emotional connection, especially in times of mass social isolation, presents that the increased normalization of these behaviors could further benefit and attract audiences to *Hallyu 2.0* and subsequent Korean waves. Future research should offer a qualitative perspective on how K-pop fandoms participate in social media as an intimate space of affect. Additionally, further research can observe how and if future technological innovations such as virtual reality and augmented reality can be applied to deterritorializing online communities, live K-pop performances, its effect on fan-artist interactions, and fandoms' emotions and behaviors.

Conclusion

Indeed, new media has allowed viewers to transgress linguistic barriers and spatial dimensions with ease through fan-driven live translation blogs, real-time simultaneous subtitling, or official pre-captioned videos. Thus, previous applications of K-pop and cultural proximity may no longer be justified within the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, where the entirety of the world seeks intimacy, emotional belonging, and affect. Technological mediation through BTS' innovative online concerts have deconstructed the boundaries between 'us' and the 'other,' closing the distance between the character onscreen and fans' own lived experiences. Suddenly, attendance

at the events of the world's biggest boy band is no longer dictated by geographical boundaries or language barriers. These technological developments have increased viewers' desires for transnational intimacy and provoked appetites for international media as a part of their daily routines.

Through this research, this paper has sought to display global viewers' increasing dependency on social media as a form of social and emotional connection. While research on *Hallyu 2.0* and the integral role of social media as a mediator between entertainment companies, artists, and fans has been conducted, the innovations learned from BTS' activities and portrayals of the 'authentic,' yet mediatized, and commodified self can be further applied as the K-pop industry continues to digitalize. The case of BTS has shown how social media and digital affect cultures reinforce fan identities and shared experiences between the artist and the community. Within the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, this paper has highlighted the increasing importance of social mediascapes as a place of affect and belonging and shown how *Hallyu* industries can innovate within an environment of increasing self-mediatization, as the boundaries between real and virtual continue to blur.

ESSAY

**The Presence of Diverse Cultures in South Korea:
Redefining South Korea's Multicultural Society**

Bridgette Ellise Han

The Presence of Diverse Cultures in South Korea: Redefining South Korea's Multicultural Society

Bridgette Ellise Han

Graduate Student at GSIS, Korea University

In relation to western ideology, multiculturalism is defined as the harmony and co-existence of multiple cultures living in one area. This definition is forward-thinking and has been unsuccessful due to the lack of constant improvement from both the government and the civil society in western nations. In contrast, the concept of multiculturalism in South Korea tends to focus on society and the immigrants that fit into the categories of marriage migrants and multicultural families. The policies created with multiculturalism in mind have been known to leave out specific groups, still making it harder for them to be included in society in 2021. Much of the discourse around multiculturalism stems from multiple viewpoints that aid in the misconception that multiculturalism is new to the region. This essay looks at the chronological-historical emergence of multiculturalism as having been present on the Korean peninsula prior to democratization. Rather than critically analyze the ongoing multicultural debate, this research begins with the Goryeo dynasty's approach to open borders. It then moves forward to modern South Korean society in a timeline of events that consider immigrants and policies. In addition, this essay will discuss the emergence of a multi-ethnic society and highlight current policies of multiculturalism in South Korea.

Keywords: Multiculturalism, Global Society, Multicultural Policy, Immigration, Migrants, Integration

Introduction

In the field of Korean studies, there is debate regarding the topics of national identity and multiculturalism, specifically regarding the topics of one-ethnic

identity. The recent trend of discussing Korean society as a global society in academics has influenced research questions on Koreanness, Korean national identity, and one-ethnic identity versus globalized society. These are just a few straightforward concepts that begin debates about Korea's future during a globalized world rather than looking at the present discourse in Korea and how multiculturalism is becoming synonymous with globalization. It is commonly argued that multiculturalism in South Korea is a relatively new topic of discussion, and that South Korea is still learning and accepting new cultures and the immigrant society. This view, however, is a misconception as Korea has long been a point of passage in East Asia from a historical point of view. In pre-history, while there was little contact with the nations of the west, Korea was in close contact with its neighbors Japan and China.

Throughout Korean history, from *Goryeo* (918-1392) and *Joseon* (1392-1910) to the Republic of Korea (1945-present), the presence of 'the other' was always part of the local history. However, there have been significant differences in the governments' acceptance and policies regarding 'the others' throughout history. Before the 2000s, there were few policies regarding multiculturalism within the government legislation. However, the 1940s stance on mixed-racial individuals served as a political agenda to marginalize the multicultural community. This marginalization continued for decades as mixed-racial children, those born of another race and Korean, over time began to include migrants and immigrants. After Korea's democratization in 1987, policies were created with multiculturalism as the coined terminology in mind. In 2006, the multicultural community was working to integrate into society; however, due to the policies and education layout, they were given more options of assimilation and segregation.

The sources referenced in this essay discuss the emergence of multiculturalism in South Korea. They especially look at South Korea's identity crisis in the globalization process, as it involves the perception of multicultural families and immigrants. Scholars Shin Gi-Wook and Emma Campbell discuss the change Korean society is going through as Korea enters the global stage. They both accept that Korea is changing with the presence of foreigners in South Korea. However, they have contrasting views about the direction society is taking. Ahn Ji-Hyun is a leading researcher in neoliberal multiculturalism in Asian media and has analyzed how it is perceived by society by way of the media. Ahn's book *Mixed Race Politics and Neoliberal Multiculturalism in South Korean Media* looks at the transformation of society in South Korea through media analysis of how Korean society has

perceived members of the multi-ethnic community.¹ Finally, other scholars such as Iain Watson, Bae, and Robert Prey examine the transformation and struggles of a global society through a historical and comparative analysis of other nations in the world and struggles within multiculturalism.

Chronologically, this essay will briefly explain the *Dangun* myth as the point of fallacy in a one-ethnic identity argument. It will then discuss the open border policies of *Goryeo* and *Joseon*. The *Joseon* government exemplified the practice of welcoming individuals who followed and accepted the *Joseon* way of life through assimilation. Thus, looking at multi-ethnic society through history, despite the small number of non-Korean ethnic groups that have been present in Korea, shows that the narrative of Korean nationalism being homogenous is a new framework introduced with relatively recent government policies. The essay follows the timeline to the modern history of South Korea, starting from the 1940s as Korea was coming out of the Japanese occupation and forming its own government. After the Korean War and the democratization of Korea, new members are introduced to the community—as well as a new set of government policies regarding multiculturalism. The terminology and conceptualization of a global society are introduced to Korean society in the twenty-first century. These policies were created with the goal of integrating immigrants and migrants into a shared Korean society.

Literature review

South Korea has been a historically homogenous nation. Moreover, the national identity of South Korea has reflected an ethnic identity instead of one based on republic nationalism, such as in the United States of America. Despite the similarities of the US and South Korea having free-market economies or being democratized nations, the national identity that the citizens of their respective countries use to describe themselves may be different. Nationalism in the US is based on the unity of the nation under “universalistic ideals (democracy, rule of law, free marketplace) and institutions (separation of power).”² The one-ethnic concept of Korean identity is centered on the familiar lineage of passing heritage and citizenship by blood. The narrative of Korea being a “one ethnic” nation is changing due to

1 Ji-Hyun Ahn, *Mixed-Race Politics and Neoliberal Multiculturalism in South Korean Media*, (Switzerland: Springer International Publishing, 2018).

2 Minxin Pei, “The Paradoxes of American Nationalism,” *Foreign Policy*, no. 136 (2003): 31–37. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3183620>.

multiple factors, mainly the steady increase of migrants and immigrants to the region since the armistice of the Korean War. In 2015, Statistics Korea reported that “the number of international migrants was of 1,306 thousand persons.”³ Immigrants and migrants come to Korea for reasons that allow them to stay in Korea for an extended period rather than the limitations of a tourist visa. They may come to Korea as students, low-skilled labor workers, English teachers, employees, or spouses. Whatever their reason for being in Korea, they desire to be part of a community and part of Korean society. While migration to South Korea has been increasing over the years, there is debate about whether Korean society is globalizing or having an inverse reaction. Scholars like Shin Gi-Wook argue that the globalization of Korea would cause a reverse reaction during which the community would latch on and maintain traditional values and culture.⁴ On the other hand, scholars like Emma Campbell argue that Korea’s youth show more acceptance and acknowledgment of the worldwide society and are working towards globalizing Korea.⁵ South Korea remains in a constant debate over the identity of Korean nationals, therefore contesting the ‘Koreanness’ of immigrants.

The Korean language uses the term *Uri*, meaning a collective ‘we;’ in fact, this term is used in context to describe the country as *Uri Nara* (our country) rather than *Taehanmin’guk*, (the Republic of Korea). The emphasis on ‘we’ is well-represented in the Korean terminology *Han minjok* as an ethos and pathos to what it means to be Korean; however, this essay will focus on the ethos of what it means to be Korean or be considered Korean. The scholar Robert Prey states that the singular citizen and the nation are inseparable in Korea due to the perceived ethnic homogeneity of South Korean society.⁶ This collective ‘we’ in Korean culture reflects the relationship between ethnic Koreans, having Korean ancestry, while individuals

3 Statistics Korea, *International Migration Statistics in 2015*, (July 14, 2016), <http://kostat.go.kr/portal/eng/pressReleases/8/5/index.board?bmode=read&bSeq=&aSeq=355673&pageNo=1&rowNum=10&navCount=10&currPg=&searchInfo=&sTarget=title&sTxt=>.

4 Gi-Wook Shin, *Ethnic Nationalism in Korea: Genealogy, Politics, and Legacy* (Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press, 2006).

5 Emma Campbell, “The End of Ethnic Nationalism? Changing Conceptions of National Identity and Belonging among Young South Koreans,” *Nations and Nationalism* 21, no 3 (2015): 483–502.

6 R. Prey, “Different takes: Migrant world television and multiculturalism in South Korea,” *Global Media Journal – Canadian Edition*, 4 (2011): 112.

who are not ethnically Korean are identified as ‘the Other’ in society.

Iain Watson provided three qualities in reference to the term multiculturalism in South Korean society based on the following elements: (1) assimilation, (2) multicultural pluralism, and (3) respect for cultural plurality.⁷ However, the key aspect of assimilation sees traditional South Korean culture as ‘greater’ than other cultures. Watson stressed that this idea could be compared to the US assimilationist approach to multiculturalism. In the United States, it is commonly argued that one should speak English on U.S territory. Stemming from the old saying “when in Rome, do as the Romans do,” assimilation is the preferred method of social integration in a multicultural society. However, this approach is problematic as it leads other cultures to be inferior and lose cultural specificity while assimilating to mainstream culture.

Korea is experiencing various ethnic and cultural groups due to the increasing number of foreigners who stay for shorter tourists or work visits and immigrants who have visas that allow them to stay long-term. As a result, Korean society is starting to incorporate those not ethnically Korean by blood lineage. Watson explains that South Korean society encourages foreign wives to be more like traditional Korean wives, for instance, wearing traditional Korean clothes, keeping the house in order, cooking, or caring for children.⁸ These expectations can be observed during wedding ceremonies and Chuseok.

Furthermore, South Korean multiculturalism is additionally suffering from cultural pluralism.⁹ Cultural pluralists’ approach respects cultural diversity. However, rather than form a co-existence amongst cultures, this approach expects diverse cultures to be integrated into mainstream culture—thus setting up a dominant culture to lead the others. Lastly, Watson stated that a facet regards multiculturalism as “equal respect for cultural plurality,”¹⁰ yet even countries like Australia and Canada struggle with forming respect among the diverse cultures. While multiculturalism is the harmonious and equal status of all cultures in a nation-state, the term has been interpreted very differently in South Korean society. As a result, there is confusion regarding people’s

7 Iain Watson, “Paradoxical Multiculturalism in South Korea,” *Asian Politics & Policy* 4, no. 2 (2012): 233–258. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1943-0787.2012.01338.x>.

8 Iain Watson, “Multiculturalism in South Korea: A Critical Assessment,” *Journal of Contemporary Asia* 40, no 2 (2010): 337–346.

9 Watson, “Paradoxical Multiculturalism in South Korea,” 236.

10 *Ibid.*, 237.

perception of multiculturalism and how to integrate a multi-ethnic population.

Historical analysis

Korean nationalism is described as ethnic nationalism within the context of a common language, history, and set of customs. They also claimed descendants of a common ancestor: *Dangun*, who helped create the first nation of Korean history, *Gojoseon*. *Dangun* is known as the first ruler of Korea and the direct line to Korean history, but not necessarily as the origin of the bloodlines. Despite the knowledge of *Dangun*, the dynasties did not teach or focus on the identity of what it meant to be one ethnic group. During the Three Kingdoms period, three separate kingdoms occupied the peninsula. It was during the unified *Silla* and subsequent *Goryeo* dynasties that the peninsula was under one government rule. The lineage of *Dangun* was not the narrative used by the government, as these kingdoms had close relations with China and faced invasions from Mongolians and other tribes. Generally, there was an ‘open-door policy’ that welcomed foreigners to Korea without ethnic discrimination. Acknowledging that the narrative of one ethnicity did not exist during *Goryeo* and *Joseon* is key for exploring when the national identity narrative was created and how the identity of citizens has changed over time. In order to study this progression, this essay will start with the *Goryeo* dynasty and its immigration policies.

The *Goryeo* dynasty had the principle of “stopping neither those who wanted to come nor those who wanted to leave.”¹¹ Koreans of the *Goryeo* period could agree that birth itself did not condemn a person to uncivilized status but rather that civilization was achievable by individuals who chose to participate and be active in their efforts to assimilate. This policy embraced *Hyanghwain*: those coming to Korea for various reasons, such as defectors fleeing from economic distress or prisoners of war.¹² *Hyanghwain* was used as a broad term for all foreigners defined as those who just immigrated without

11 Mun-Jong Han, *Joseon jeongi hyanghwa, sujik woe'in yeongu* [A Study of the Japanese Who Were Naturalized and Received Official Titles] (Seoul: Gukhakjaryeowon, 2001).

12 Kyung-Koo Han and Geon-Soo Han, “Damunhwa sahoe gaenyeomgwa hanguksahoe damunhwa damron'e daehan seonchal: dan'ilminjokgukka'eui jaseungjabak/ hwangoltaltae? [Reflections on the concept of multicultural society and the discourse on multiculturalism in Korean society: is the nation-state going to be caught in its own trap or recasting itself?]” (paper presented at the Plenary Session of the Annual Meeting of the Korean Sociological Association held at Ewha Womans University, Seoul, South Korea, 2007).

speaking a word of Korean and those born and raised in *Joseon* from foreign families, indiscriminate of their Korean cultural fluency. The government agenda was to embrace individuals' hard work and effort with rewards and leniency. The *Joseon* dynasty was able to assist immigrants by separating them into small groups and allotting them pieces of land in different regions.¹³ Some policies exempted Jurchen people, immigrants from Northeast China (modern-day Manchuria), and Japanese immigrants from taxation of farming products for three years and from corvee labor for ten years.

Additionally, there was a rule of leniency towards immigrants in the criminal justice system. Immigrants and their future lineage who committed crimes in *Joseon* had the right to trial. If punished by the penal code of *Joseon*, they would be held to a lesser standard than Joseon citizens.¹⁴ Despite the acceptance of immigrants, there were still cases of discrimination as *Joseon* considered itself a civilization on par with China. This conceptualization of status resulted in the discrimination of the Jurchens and the Japanese compared to other immigrants from China.¹⁵ Chinese immigrants and their descendants were perceived as more civilized and were given more favorable treatment.¹⁶ Korean literature available in English has offered a historical and favorable context of the immigration 'open door policy,' in contrast to the closed doors of the mid-1940s during which Koreans were re-establishing what was considered traditionally Korean and made them unique. This reevaluation of identity was the result of the Japanese occupation (1905-1945), when the Korean people were forced to relinquish their tradition and culture under the latest promulgation policy of the Japanese military government during its last few years of occupation.

The aftermath of the Korean War separated Korea into the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK; North Korea) and the Republic of Korea. The Republic of Korea, referred to as South Korea or Korea, rebuilt the state under Rhee and later Park Chung-hee. During Rhee Süng-man's First Republic (1948–1960), the government worked to suppress the presence of the mixed-race population and to prevent any potential future social problems. The peninsula faced strong influence vis-à-vis the US and North Korea, and with the end of Japanese occupation, the peninsula was in a frenzy of

13 Han, *A Study of the Japanese*, 49.

14 *Ibid.*, 196.

15 Han, "Reflections on the concept of multicultural society," 22.

16 *Ibid.*, 23-24.

rebuilding its identity and determining the state's future as a democracy or socialist government. In the 1940s-1950s, the Korean government passed the Korean Nationality act of 1948. This law grants naturalization to people who are Korean through the blood of the patrilineal line. At the time, it did not seem to have strong implications as there were only 1,020 mixed-racial children in Korea.¹⁷ However, only 326 were naturalized by birth, meaning they were recognized as Korean citizens. Naturalization was denied to those whose mother was a Korean citizen. The unregistered mixed-racial children could not attend school and were not able to be active in civil society, as they were not given the same opportunities as naturalized Korean mixed-racial children.

In Korea, Park Chung-hee's military government dictatorship (1963-1979) is known for its rapid economic success; however, many South Korean citizens lost their lives under the dictatorship, and people started to fight for democracy and freedom.¹⁸ Unlike North Korea, South Korea welcomed the international community and actively interacted with other countries, which helped South Korea develop into a more globalized society.¹⁹ The most notable post-Korean War influx of mixed-racial children occurred due to foreign (primarily American) military presence. A high number of wartime orphans and mixed-racial children were born to single mothers, who at this point faced stigmatization from comingling with American military personnel. Women involved with the US military and their children were viewed as an embarrassment for the family and, in some cases, as enemies of the state. Korean women were subjugated to derogatory terms and were not encouraged to mention that their children were significantly marginalized, as this could be seen as anti-nationalist.

Park Chung-hee's government promoted the increased perception of mixed-race individuals as "enemies" of the state. The newly formed nationalism that embraced Korean traditions and culture was used to unite the people under one bloodline. However, the threat lay in the mixed-racial children who possessed partial Korean lineage. During Park's and Rhee's governments, mixed-racial males were not allowed to participate in military duty as pure Koreans' citizenship duty, even though the law was amended on how

17 Ahn, *Mixed-Race Politics and Neoliberal Multiculturalism*, 38.

18 J. Kim, *A history of Korea: From 'land of the morning calm' to states in conflict* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2012).

19 Nora Hui-Jung Kim, "Multiculturalism and the Politics of Belonging: The Puzzle of Multiculturalism in South Korea," *Citizenship Studies* 16, no 1 (2012): 103–17.

citizenship was given based on parents' lineage.²⁰ Koreans recovered national pride and confidence due to the rapid economic growth from the 1960s-1980s. Korean civil society experienced a resurgence of international interest in things Korean, causing a revisit of the *Dangun* myth to unite the people.²¹

Korea was known to be a labor-exporting nation until the late 1980s, during which the situation turned, and it became a labor-importing nation. After Korea's economic boom, migrant workers came from Southeast Asia to fill low-skilled jobs, introducing new ethnic groups to Korean society. During the 1980s, Korean popular entertainment began to show representation with mixed-racial celebrities in the media, such as Park Il-Chun (African-American Korean), Insooni (African-American Korean), and Yun Su-Il (Caucasian-Korean) in the 1970s and 1980s. These individuals were known as Itaewon club singers who performed live shows but later gained popularity due to physical characteristics differentiating them from popular Korean singers.²² Culture media scholar Ahn Ji-Hyun argues that the expectation of the mixed-racial singers, "Amerisians," was to appear more Korean using whitening makeup. In contrast, their Korean counterparts needed to look more exotic, thus popularizing the use of yellow foundation.

Transitioning into the late 1980s, the Korean government made it a national policy to incorporate globalization into the framework of the Roh administration, thus, opening the discussion of accepting new groups into Korea and working together for integration. However, this would not be possible until the late 1990s, after the IMF crisis in Korea and the explosive increase of "international marriages."²³ Men in rural areas had difficulties finding marriage partners as young women migrated to the cities, which catalyzed the practice of bringing brides from other Asian countries such as China, Vietnam, Cambodia, the Philippines, and Thailand.²⁴ During the rise of marriage migrants from Southeast Asia, we see the term "Ko-asian" being coined to describe children of mixed Korean and other Asian ethnicities.²⁵ This term would not only separate these individuals from Koreans but

20 Ahn, *Mixed-Race Politics and Neoliberal Multiculturalism*, 42.

21 Kyung-Ko Han, "The Archaeology of the Ethnically Homogeneous Nation-State and Multiculturalism in Korea." *Korea Journal* 47, no 4 (2007): 8-32.

22 Ahn, *Mixed-Race Politics and Neoliberal Multiculturalism*, 42.

23 Prey, "Migrant world television and multiculturalism in South Korea," 109-125.

24 Ibid.

25 Ahn, *Mixed-Race Politics and Neoliberal Multiculturalism*, 42.

also cause a distinction between categories of mixed-racial individuals.

The rise of marriage migrants and the issues surrounding the new spouse and children’s rights was at the forefront of the government agenda, which used them for state propaganda. There was a policy shift towards multiculturalism, and therefore the South Korean government struggled to determine which policies to prioritize regarding ‘multicultural family’ issues within society.²⁶ The policies created by the government highlighted the two largest migrant groups: migrant workers and foreign brides. However, it was not until the twenty-first century that we saw the Korean government and NGOs working to provide better legislature for protection and fundamental rights for mixed-raced Koreans and foreign national residents, such as migrant brides or naturalized immigrants in Korea.

President Roh advocated to stop teaching ethnic homogeneity and embrace the views of multiculturalism. With this guideline, government agencies started various projects to aid foreign brides in adapting to South Korean society.²⁷ For example, the Ministry of Justice implemented the Act on the Treatment of Foreigners in Korea (2007) and the Multicultural Family Support Act (2008). Both legislations sought to improve the lives of the families and individuals and promote social integration (see table 1 below for more in-depth information).

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

Table 1: Korean Legislature for Immigrants and Multicultural Families.²⁸

26 Prey, “Migrant world television and multiculturalism in South Korea,” 109–125.

27 Han, “The Archaeology of the Ethnically Homogeneous Nation-State,” 8–32.

28 Ahn, *Mixed-Race Politics and Neoliberal Multiculturalism*, 50.

Korea is one of the countries with the world's lowest birth rates at 0.9 children per woman²⁹ and simultaneously has one of the most rapidly aging populations.³⁰ Consequently, South Korea has been affected by a shortage in the labor force and has strongly relied on migrant workers from other Asian countries. In 2018, the South Korean population was 51,629,512, and the number of international immigrants was 1,480,000 (the highest number of migrants recorded after 200).³¹ Consistent with findings from the Korean Statistical Information Service (KOSIS), the number of registered foreigners had gradually increased from 3.5 percent in 2014. The influx of foreign individuals living in Korea began to create small groups who were socially active; however, these individuals were marginalized by policies that were originally designed to accept their cultures and ethnicities into society. The government began to use the term *damunhwa chu-ŭi*, or multiculturalism, to explain the continued phenomena and policies. As discussed earlier, multiculturalism is defined as harmony and co-existence of multiple cultures living in one area, but this may be a forward-thinking concept that does not work without constant improvement and attention from both the government and civil society. However, looking at contemporary Korean society, notable changes are being made, although their ethnic identity and racist past are still present within this globalized society. Learning from the past is important; as nations and citizens, the primary step in growth is acknowledging the past, while the second step is addressing issues within the scope of current social goals.

One crucial tool for integration was the multi-ethnic primary school set to be opened to educate children of multi-ethnic identity. Led by the Division of Education and Welfare Policy of the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, the school would primarily cater to older children born outside of the country and mixed-race children who are born in Korea and are having difficulties in school. These children are living in Korea with limited knowledge of the language and culture. The goal of this school is to allow for social cohesion. The aim was to teach the children

29 Korean Statistical Information Service, "Total fertility rate(persons) 2019," Vital Statistics of Korea Table, https://kosis.kr/statHtml/statHtml.do?orgId=101&tblId=DT_1B8000F&conn_path=I2&language=en

30 Prey, "Migrant world television and multiculturalism in South Korea," 113.

31 Statistics Korea, *International Migration Statistics in 2018*, (July 18, 2019), <http://kostat.go.kr/portal/eng/pressReleases/8/5/index.board?bmode=read&aSeq=377860&pageNo=&rowNum=10&amSeq=&sTarget=&sTxt=>

and their families the Korean language and culture to ease the process of adapting to Korea and joining the society and the labor force in the future. This school is a topic of debate as its solution to multicultural students' educational challenges is, in essence, to segregate them from their Korean classmates and teach assimilation. Statements by Korean professors and the Ministry of Gender Equality were included in a report by the Korea Herald:

I think basically those children's education should be done with other Korean children. Right now it may work, but I worry about it if we open separate schools it means, for the future, Korea may be divided." (Professor Han Geon-soo of Kangwon National University)

"I am opposed to the school, because it will further segregate the multiracial children."

(Park Kyung-tae, professor of sociology at Sungkonghoe University)

"The establishment of a separate school, class, and after school activities for children with multicultural backgrounds is not viewed as an appropriate measure for the children of multicultural families.

(Ministry of Gender Equality)³²

Since the promotion of the 2007 and 2008 legislature, there has been little effort to work on the integration of immigrants in a form that avoids marginalizing sub-groups of different multicultural groups. The government promotes multiculturalism and uses media to show the model group of the Southeast Asian assimilated wives who have worked hard, learned Korean, and raised their children to be fully participating Koreans. It is essential to realize the marginalization and expectations different immigrant groups face in society, especially migrant brides and multicultural families. Ahn's research gives examples of how they are perceived and viewed through media representation shown to society as entertainment.³³ Ahn analyzes visual representations of mixed-race children on television: *Rainbow Kindergarten* (tvN, 2011) and *Cackling Class in Vietnam* (tvN, 2013). It investigates these two reality shows portraying everyday mixed-race children as platforms where Korean audiences

32 Paul Kerry, "Making Sense of Korea's Multicultural Policy," *The Korea Herald*, March 1, 2011, <http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20110301000137>.

33 Ahn, *Mixed-Race Politics and Neoliberal Multiculturalism*, 169-189

learn to read racial differences between the two programs' cast members.

Ahn pointed out that the two programs focused on different groups of mixed-race children. *Rainbow Kindergarten* cast mixed-race children whose fathers were from western nations. These children were praised for their bilingual skills and their appearance. The majority of these children, between five to nine years old, became famous as ulzzang (good looking) among the viewership. *Cackling Class in Vietnam* cast children of Vietnamese women to participate in cultural exchange with their mother's home country, as representatives of Koreans experiencing other cultures. Unlike the children of *Rainbow Kindergarten*, the children partaking in *Cackling Class* were initially less popular. The program included traveling to other counties, such as Cambodia and Mongolia. Ahn noted that rather than viewing the Southeast Asian-Korean children as beautiful, they were viewed as subjects of compassion.³⁴ With biracial children at the center of the dialogue, there is a current increase of the reality-observation genre concerning the globalization of reality TV and the media industry's neoliberal turn in the twenty-first century. Ahn critically analyzed what specific types of racial disparities become evident in television culture while arguing that both shows televise the neoliberal transformation of the family on a multinational level. Ahn discusses the racialization of children among their Korean peers, as the terminology of *danmunwha* and skin color played key roles in the children's experiences with discrimination and bullying. Despite these popular shows taking place in the recent decade, there is still some discourse on what is accepted as being multicultural in Korean society.³⁵

In 2021, there is more so a presence and acceptance of foreigners and multicultural individuals in all forms of entertainment. Korean entertainment is a commodity and is highly prized with the rise of the *Hallyu* wave, representing the spread of Korean culture through media entertainment such as music and films in recent years. The acceptance and promotion of the multicultural group are not for the group's benefit but for the national image of Korea; current reality shows and television often do not tell the same stories as Ahn's book. Ahn points out that it is the face of Korea that is changing in society, hinting that Korea is moving away from homogenous

34 Ibid., 167.

35 Ibid., 167-179.

and becoming a global society.³⁶ However, even though multicultural groups have been present throughout Korean history, this was not valued until globalization and capitalism came to the forefront of Korea's political agenda.

Conclusion

Shin points out that Koreans established the concept of ethnic homogeneity during the colonial period to counter the Japanese propagandist notion of *naisen ittai* (Korea and Japan are one and the same).³⁷ The term "multiculturalism" has become a key concept within South Korean society as the Korean population has gone through demographic changes and has accepted the immigration population to some degree.³⁸ With the co-existence of both identities in Korea, the multicultural groups may face future obstacles as Korea continues transitioning into a global society and strives to be part of the global community. During this process, it is important to look at the social integration of immigrants and migrants in South Korean society. Most importantly, it is vital to note that multicultural integration is a slow and tedious process in any culture. It is also not a sudden incident but rather a transition that occurs over time with the assistance of politics and economics. While South Korea may seem noticeably changed in the late twentieth century, this essay shows that the occurrence of a multicultural community can be traced back to pre-modern Korea.

The focus on South Korea shows the historical presence of non-Koreans in society for generations. Nevertheless, awareness of such groups has not increased despite an increasingly technological and globalized world. With the aid of media and transnationalism, the diaspora of non-Koreans moving to Korea and Koreans leaving to other countries have contributed to the global society, but now we must bring the narrative to a local level; Korean society needs more confrontation on this discourse. Positive change is to come with work not only from the government but also from society and the active effort from the immigrants. With these three groups working together and holding each other accountable, South Korea has a

36 Ji-Hyun Ahn, "Transforming Korea into a multicultural society: Reception of multiculturalism discourse and its discursive disposition in Korea," *Asian Ethnicity* 13 (2012): 98.

37 Shin, *Ethnic Nationalism in Korea*, 472.

38 A. E. Kim, "Demography, migration and multiculturalism in South Korea," *The Asia Pacific Journal* 7, no. 6 (2009): 1-19; Ahn, "Transforming Korea into a multicultural society," 98.

strong foundation and will continue to progress towards a global society.

Special Submission: Literature Analysis

Encountering the Ghosts of Gwangju: Tragedy and Trauma in Ch'oe Yun's *There, a Petal Silently Falls* and Han Kang's *Human Acts*
Chelsea Proctor

Encountering the Ghosts of Gwangju: Tragedy and Trauma in Ch'oe Yun's *There, a Petal Silently Falls* and Han Kang's *Human Acts*

Chelsea Proctor

Graduate Student at GSIS, Korea University

*When reality was darker than fiction, those who witnessed the Gwangju Democratic Uprising of May 1980 were left chasing specters and ghosts while attempting to put to words the trauma they experienced at the hand of a brutal military regime. Despite years of governmental repression, the ghosts of Gwangju began to resurface in the student protests of the 1980s, subsequent literature and continue to resurface to this day. Regardless of how much truth is revealed about the events of May 1980, the Gwangju Democratic Uprising still carries a haunting element of the incomprehensible, specters and traces that cannot be resolved. As such, Gwangju presents an almost impossible problem for writers and scholars alike: how can they confront the tragedy of Gwangju beyond pure commemoration or exploitation? In order to address this situation, authors Ch'oe Yun and Han Kang looked to specters -- haunting figures that exist in both the living and the dead victims of Gwangju -- in their stories *There, a Petal Silently Falls* and *Human Acts*, respectively. Both works of fiction, written decades apart, confront the tragedy of Gwangju and try to put language to trauma, and both evoke ghosts as the vessels through which trauma is inherited and lurks in the everyday. *There, a Petal Silently Falls* and *Human Acts* present a Derridean hauntology that implicates not only the authors, but the readers, in the grief of the Gwangju Uprising. This work seeks to understand the presence of ghosts in Ch'oe and Han's work, not just as representations of the dead of Gwangju, but as a historical burden that extends beyond characters into the language of grief and trauma that each novel employs. This paper will also use *There a Petal Silently Falls* and *Human Acts* as lenses to understand how the legacy of Gwangju continues to haunt the Korean consciousness, compelling Gwangju*

literature, though rare, to still be written in the twenty-first century.

Introduction:

If it – learning to live – remains to be done, it can happen only between life and death. Neither in life nor in death *alone*. What happens between two, and between all the “two’s” one likes, as such between life and death, can only *maintain* itself with some ghost, can only *talk with or about* some ghosts. So it would be necessary to learn spirits.... To learn to live with ghosts, in the upkeep, the conversation, the company. Or the companionship.... To live otherwise and better. No, not better, but more justly.... And this being-with specters would also be, not only but also, a *politics* of memory, of inheritance, and of generations.¹

If we are to live, to live better, we must learn from ghosts and specters, so argues Jaques Derrida in his seminal work, *Specters of Marx*. Put to question here is not *what a ghost is?* But *why* and *how* do ghosts and specters haunt the politics of the present and cultural memory. For the wrongs of history that resurface in the present, the specters of revolution, the ghosts of tragedy, appear and re-appear, always reminding us of not only our physical mortality but the ideas and tragedies that have not died and haunt the present. How then are we to address these ghosts? Do we attempt to speak to them, like Horatio to the King, demanding it to speak? Do we wait for the ghosts to speak to us? Or, in literature, can we speak for the specters as part of the work of mourning? When history demands that we actively forget, how do we keep the dead alive? To speak to, speak for, the ghosts, mourning by the people is necessary to conjure the ghosts and coexist.

These are only some of the questions raised by deconstructionist philosopher Jaques Derrida in his outline of hauntology or the study of the specters that exists between ontological concepts of history and their cultural legacy. Between every ontological concept and its opposite lies a specter that haunts and cannot be resolved. Nonetheless, it manifests in the present and persistently haunts like a ghost. When looking at history, there is no such thing as a single “event.” Instead, an event is born from something (always already existing), and the event itself continues to reproduce and multiply. This constant production produces dominant narratives and carries with it that

1 Jacques Derrida, *Specters of Marx : the State of the Debt, the Work of Mourning, and the New International*, (New York: Routledge, 1994), xvii-xviii.

which has been repressed. The key question for Derrida is not how to speak to the ontological concepts or define historical “events,” but rather how to address the persistent elements that remain unspoken (either by force or through the passage of time) between life and death of history and human action. In *Specters of Marx*, he explores how the ghosts and specters of Marxism exist in the present day. However, his outline of hauntology – of that which exists is history, haunts the present, but has yet to be spoken to -- creates a viable framework through which deconstruction of historical trauma is possible. Derridean hauntology seeks to identify ghosts of history and talk to them, not as means of justice, but as a way of living *better* in the present and future.

The challenges of adequately addressing history laid out in *Specters of Marx* raise critical questions when exploring cultural trauma and the legacy of tragedy, specifically when looking to South Korea. The twentieth century saw a series of tragedies compounded on one another, creating a society that is always running from ghosts and haunted by specters of the past and present. Due to years of authoritarian repression and the resulting cultural and collective trauma, ghosts and specters are everywhere in contemporary South Korea: in the fear of communism, the dark alleys of the *kijicheon*,² the landmines along the DMZ, and in the city center of Gwangju where hundreds were murdered and disappeared by paratroopers in May of 1980. These specters linger because they are unresolved and because they have yet to be fully spoken to. Speaking to and for specters is not an easy task because the very nature of a ghost is that it is not visible, neither fully living nor fully dead. Disguised in armor, much like the King in Hamlet, ghosts can be used to trick, scare, prevent that which is inevitable to re-occur: *ghosts can be silenced*. By hiding the specters – limiting the press, lying to the public – the language necessary to address them becomes more complex. Regardless, we must speak to them.

Ghosts and Specters in a Haunted Society

The Gwangju Democratic Uprising began on May 18, 1980, traumatizing the citizens of Gwangju and leaving hundreds, potentially thousands, dead or missing by the end of the protests on May 25, 1980, and in the months that followed. The atrocities witnessed by the residents of Gwangju were so impactful that language failed to capture the severity of the military

2 Camptowns, or brothels near US Army bases. This idea is well portrayed in the 2012 documentary *Tour of Duty*.

repression of the city, with people referring to it only as the “Gwangju Incident” (gwangjusageon) for years following. We now know that what began as a coordinated student protest by students of Chonnam University against the Chun Doo-hwan regime quickly escalated into a city-wide, armed uprising after the Chun administration declared martial law on May 17, 1980. The city was closed off, with no one allowed to enter or exit aside from the military. Despite the lockdown, Gwangju citizens continued to protest, and potentially thousands of Gwangju citizens were indiscriminately killed at the hands of military paratroopers in response. Despite the unspeakable violence within Gwangju, the rest of the country remained largely unaware of the scale of the government’s response. The Chun government repressed news circulation out of Gwangju and instead crafted a narrative that the military responded to a communist threat in the region. Even the American allies were unable (or unwilling) to intervene during the seven-day confrontation and the months that followed. When the violence came to a stop on May 25, citizens of Gwangju were left in disbelief, still struggling to fully understand the violence they had witnessed at the hands of their government. As outlined by Sheena Choi in her work “Protesting Identity: Memories of the Kwangju Uprising and Effects on Identity Formation of Youths,” even for Gwangju citizens who did not directly experience violence at the hands of the state, the Gwangju incident left them with significant trauma. This trauma was further compounded by the inability of those outside Gwangju to believe the events even when witnesses tried to communicate the truth.³

The authoritarian repression of Chun Doo-hwan’s administration, as well as regionalism,⁴ prevented the Gwangju Democratic Uprising from properly entering public discourse until the *minjung* student movements of the mid to late 1980s. The movements took on the Gwangju Uprising as what Lee Namhee identifies as the “original” sin that had to be atoned for through the revelation of the atrocities that took place.⁵ Simultaneously,

3 Sheena Choi, “Protesting Identity: Memories of the Kwangju Uprising and Effects on Identity Formation of Youths,” *Educational Perspectives* 46 (2013): 9-19.

4 Since the Park Chung Hee administration (1961-1979) the southern province of Jeolla was largely excluded from state development and was presented as an agricultural center of developing South Korea. However, this exclusion led to isolation of the Jeolla people from the larger development project and only heightened regional divides between Jeolla and other provinces.

5 Namhee Lee, *The Making of Minjung: Democracy and the Politics of Representation*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2007), 54.

Korean literature has also made attempts to confront the tragedy of Gwangju when reality was darker than fiction, those who witnessed the uprising used language, specifically literature, to commemorate, enlighten and grapple with the events that took place in Gwangju from May 18 to May 25.

Ch'oe Yun was one of the first authors to attempt to capture trauma, grief, and guilt in her short story *There, a Petal Silently Falls* (1988/1992). The short story follows nameless narrators on the quest for a "girl [they] had never seen" desperately searching for her brother following the events of the Gwangju uprising.⁶ Writing decades later in 2011, Han Kang also undertook the ambitious project of capturing the auxiliary trauma of the Gwangju uprising through her multi-narrative, time-skipping novel *Human Acts*. Han's novel, as well, focuses on the lingering presence of the ghost of Dong-ho, a volunteer who was killed by soldiers. His death haunts Gwangju survivor Eun-soo five years later as she attempts to understand the forced normalcy of those around her and contemplates if violence is human nature. Both works of fiction, written decades apart, confront the tragedy of Gwangju and try to put language to trauma, both evoking ghosts as the vessels through which trauma is inherited and lurks in the everyday.

Ch'oe's short story was groundbreaking in its subject matter, arising at a time when realism and autobiographical fiction made up most of the published literature. Furthermore, the 1980s were often regarded as a lackluster dark period in Korean literature. Bae Ha-eun argues that this depression was not due to a lack of literary merit coming out of the age, but instead that the realities of the 1980s – particularly in the wake of the Gwangju Uprising – were too dark to be captured in the conventional narrative structures of the time. By exploring the work of Ch'oe Yun alongside Im Cheol-woo, Bae asserts that their fiction was the first to break with the physical reality of Gwangju into a new level of signification and commemoration.⁷ Choi Young-ja echoes Bae's readings of Ch'oe's work, adding an ethical implication of the reader in *A Petal Silently Falls*, where the "us" of the second person narrative becomes the collective conscious of the readers, directly

6 Ch'oe Yun, *There, a Petal Silently Fall*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008), 78.

7 Ha-eun Bae, "Jaehyeon neomeoeui jeungeon : 1980nyeondae imcheoru, choeyun soseoreui 5.18 jeungeon-jaehyeon munjee gwanhayeo," *Sangheohakbo*, 2017, 491-541.

living in the wake of Gwangju, chasing ghosts that we too have never met.⁸

Han Kang's work has received slightly more critical attention in recent years. However, most scholarship regarding *Human Acts* leans towards the limits of translation in portraying the trauma of Kang's novels. Daniel Y. Kim's *Translations and Ghostings of History* falls into this camp of research, but he expands beyond the limits of Korean to English translation and instead explores how Han Kang's experiences of the Gwangju uprising as a child echo in her larger body of work.⁹ His essay pays particular attention to the final chapters of *Human Acts* in which Eun-soo confronts the ghost of Dong-ho, and he understands this as an expression of the incomprehensible grief and the ghosts of Gwangju that haunt not only the characters but the author herself. Hwang Jeong-ah approaches *Human Acts* from the angle of historical testimony, with the multiple narratives of Han's novel existing as a way of working through the trauma of the massacre.

While both novels deal with the same historical incident and independently have a body of scholarship around them, the two have yet to be considered products of the same line of historical trauma that began in the 1980s and persists to the modern day. With years and investigations between Ch'oe and Han's work, why is the specter of Gwangju still so remarkably present in each text? To properly answer this question, this article will employ Jaques Derrida's concept of *hauntology*. More specifically, it will assert that Gwangju literature "attends to a ghost" that presents itself as a "wholly irrecoverable intrusion in our world, which is not comprehensible within our available intellectual frameworks, but whose otherness we are responsible for preserving."¹⁰ Derrida is not only addressing physical ghosts and phantoms but the burden of language and history that infuse themselves into the text, carrying the weight of history as a means of grieving and preserving historical memory. For Derrida, ghosts can be understood as what history actively tries to repress, and specters become

8 Youngja Choi, *Gwangjuminjunghangjaeng soseore natanan yullijeok jucheroseoeui munjeeuisikgwa daean mosaek yeongu -imcheoru bomnal gwa choeyuneui jeogi sorieopsi han jeom kkochipi jigo reul jungsimeuro*, (Seoul: Inmunsahoe, 2019), 545-558.

9 Kim, Daniel Y. 2020 Spring; 51(2). "Translations and Ghostings of History: The Novels of Han Kang." *New Literary History: A Journal of Theory and Interpretation* 375-399.

10 Davis, Colin. July 2005. "Hauntology, spectres and phantoms." *French Studies, Volume 59, Issue 3* 373-379.

the manifestation of that repression. Both *There, a Petal Silently Falls* and *Human Acts* are excellent examples of this kind of historical haunting that implicates the authors and the readers, in the grief of the Gwangju Uprising

For many scholars, the ghosts of Gwangju can be addressed through shamanism. Shamanism also confronts suffering and pain (*sinbyeong*) through negotiating with the spirits and exorcism (*hanpuri*). While there are valid connections to shamanism that can be drawn to the examined texts, Derrida's framework of hauntology is more closely related to the political ghosts and repression. Moving away from shamanistic understandings of ghosts can make room for the specters of Gwangju to be analyzed more accurately in their socio-political context in hopes of providing novel insights and perspectives. This will aid the understanding of the presence of ghosts in Ch'oe and Han's work, not just as representations of the dead of Gwangju, but as a historical burden that extends beyond characters into the language of grief and trauma that each novel employs. In the two novels to be examined, specters manifest in three main emotions: guilt, anger, and injustice. By looking at the role of these specters of Gwangju, we can better see how the legacy of Gwangju continues to haunt the Korean consciousness as a means of understanding why Gwangju literature, though rare, is still being written.

Ch'oe Yun's, *There, a Petal Silently Falls*

Ch'oe Yun's *There, a Petal Silently Falls* uses three non-linear narratives to show the various traumas and reactions in the days following the Gwangju Uprising. Understanding that "violence interrupts time, disarticulates it, dislodges it, and displaces it out of its natural lodging," the unclear timeline of *There, a Petal Silently Falls* is properly "out of joint."¹¹ Violent acts, like those experienced in Gwangju in 1980, create a rupture between the time of the event and lived experience—producing a quest for understanding that lies neither in the past nor the present. This is exactly the case for the characters within *There, a Petal Silently Falls*—each seeking their form of understanding or attempting to right the wrongs of May 1980, without fully understanding the magnitude of the incident. Time and place become secondary to the power of the trauma. Therefore, Ch'oe's narrative has no choice but to be disjointed as it seeks to piece together the fragmented experiences of multiple characters.

Throughout the story, the word "Gwangju" is never mentioned. Instead, the location of the tragedy must be pieced together, bit by bit. Writing

11 Derrida, *Specters of Marx*, 37

in the late 1980s, the truth of the Gwangju Uprising was being uncovered and largely still unknown to the public. Ch'oe chose this narrative style to convey the confusion and the trauma of people from different walks of life. Each character in Ch'oe's short story is chasing a specter of something, and each character is also running from the ghosts of Gwangju – both the Derridean ghosts of memory as well as specters of haunting that manifest in real ghosts. The main narrator, a young girl, witnessed the massacre firsthand and has dissociated from her own body. The second narrator, a group of unnamed students, chases the girl as an act of duty to her dead brother. The final narrator is a working-class man who has no knowledge of what happened in Gwangju but takes the girl in and tries to understand her ghostly presence.

Suddenly, a voice came from that mouth. At first it was soft, but then, as that underground thump grew steadily louder, it changed into a cry. That gaping mouth began to say things it shouldn't have: "I'm going to get rid of that black curtain for you. You said it's been covering your head – since when? Liar! Look at me now! Go ahead, attack me! I'm going to open up that skull of yours and pull out the curtain. You want me to tell you what happened? No? Come on, attack me! Look me in the eye, put those shameless lips to work, tell me all about that awful scene!"¹²

Approaching the climax of Ch'oe Yun's *There, a Petal Silently Falls*, the unnamed girl narrator attacks her own "monstrous" reflection in the window of a train. Her [unrecognized] reflection's crime is provoking her to speak about what she saw on a day in May in "that city to the South." Throughout the novel, the unnamed girl's journey has only one goal: to find the body of her brother and finally confess that their mother is dead, and she watched it happen. Until that moment, she could not speak. Even as those around her take her in, force alcohol down her throat, rape her, beat her, and try to help her, she remains mute. Those around her do not know what happened in that city to the south yet. They only can guess that she came from there given her tattered appearance and dead eyes – the same expression they have seen on countless others who managed to escape.

The girl, in many ways, is a walking specter, completely dissociated from reality, her eyes filled with "sand" and a black curtain that covers her

12 Ch'oe, *There, a Petal Silently Falls*, 52

thoughts and prevents her from remembering, from speaking. The lines between life and death blur in her narration: she knows her mother and brother are dead, she somewhat registers that she is alive, and yet she insists on finding them, speaking to them. In her mourning, she is attempting to both “conjure” and “exorcise” the “malignant” or “evil doing” specter that haunts her, and her method of exorcism is to speak.¹³ When the curtain is finally lifted, her subconscious forces her to look, forces the specters of that day to the forefront:

And then I heard it, a sound like someone walking alone in the dead of night. It became the sound of someone running after us... some caught Mama from behind, and faster than a sound something ripped into her chest. My mother's chest. It happened so quickly. *That's why you have to open your eyes wide and look! Look at that one instant!* When Mama's face was thrown back, when she turned to face me, Mama with holes in her, her mouth open, only the whites of her eyes showing. And I... *That's it, call it all up, take your time, every last detail, until your bones dissolve in grief.*¹⁴

The final utterance, “Until your bones dissolve in grief,” captures the magnitude of the trauma the narrator experienced: a trauma so strong it consumed her physical body and silenced her. Yet, through Ch’oe’s narrative, she is forced to speak as it is the only way grief can be expelled. For Derrida, this is a “conjuration,” or an “incantation destined to evoke, to bring forth the voice,” but stops short of “[causing] something to happen,” because her life ends before she can speak.¹⁵ Tragically, like many who witnessed the events of Gwangju, her grief dies with her, leaving those who pursue her as unaware as they were at the beginning of the story. For them, she becomes a specter of a tragedy they cannot fully comprehend.

Grappling with the events of Gwangju were also Korean citizens outside of Gwangju that were trying to understand the events that took place under a government that did everything in its power to keep it a secret. In another point of view, a group of university students pursues the girl. They have never met her, but they knew her brother that was killed in Seoul in the months before the event in the city to the south. They chase

13 Derrida, *Specters of Marx*, 59.

14 Ch’oe, *There, a Petal Silently Falls*, 70.

15 Derrida, *Specters of Marx*, 50.

her because they are trying to “fill the void [her brother] had left” because they have heard something happened in that city to the south, and another senseless death would be too much to bear.¹⁶ They know they are no longer chasing a full human, but a “soul,” a specter of tragedy and loss. By forcing themselves to encounter it, they might be able to make amends.

We, her brother’s classmates, had set out in search of her, and now that we were wide awake we spent the hours remaining till dawn wondering exactly why we had launched this search. To comfort our lost friend with the knowledge that we had found her? To fulfill our sense of obligation to do something after what had happened that day in that city to the South? Or because we couldn’t live with ourselves if we did nothing?... Were we motivated by a masochistic desire to find that girl a corporeal vestige of that horrible day?... or were we trying simply to live on in spite of the cancerous nightmares we carried inside us?¹⁷

In this narrative, specters appear as a different kind of trauma: guilt. The students who did not witness the events in Gwangju but did witness the death of their friend are left to wonder why they are alive and why those around them keep dying. As [implied] student activists, the collective guilt associated with the Gwangju uprising came to be known as “the original sin” of the democratization movement. Their narrative captures their negotiation of why it is important to understand what took place. To them, the girl may be a “corporeal vestige of that horrible day,” a specter they can approach and speak to alleviate the “cancerous nightmares” that haunt them. The guilt they feel compels them to chase her, no matter how fruitless their pursuit may be.

Ch’oe’s non-linear and multi-perspective narrative uncovers the multiple specters of Gwangju, allowing some of them to be spoken to, but forcing others into permanent silence. Writing in the late 1980’s when much of what happened in Gwangju was still largely unknown, Ch’oe’s intentionally vague narrative captures the confusion of the survivors trying to make sense of tragedy. Gwangju itself is the Derridean ghost that political leader try to repress within this narrative. The girl, the lone survivor, then manifests as a specter to those around her. She cannot speak or be fully understood, yet her haunting presence unnerves those she encounters, pulling out their best and worst instincts in trying to take care of her. Some react to the specter

16 Ch’oe, *There, a Petal Silently Falls*, 74.

17 *Ibid.*, 76.

girl with violence (rape, beatings), while others band together to protect her. Regardless of their reaction to the girl, her spectrality pulls out the effects of grief, guilt, and anger that plagued society in the aftermath of Gwangju.

Han Kang's, *Human Acts*

The dead can often be more powerful than the living.¹⁸

Over twenty years after Ch'oe's *There, a Petal Falls*, Gwangju native Han Kang published her novel, *Human Acts*. With more distance from the events of May 1980, Han also employs a non-linear, multi-narrative style to show how the specters of Gwangju continue to haunt even into the present. In particular, Han uses the spirit of a boy named Dong-ho to express the way different people spoke to his ghost under the pressure of political repression and censorship. Navigating between the past and present, multiple friends and acquaintances of Dong-ho bring to light the reach of the trauma that inhabits both the living and the dead, giving each narrative space to address the spirit of Dong-ho and grieve his loss in the place of hundreds of others who died in May 1980. Beyond the ghost of Dong-ho, Han takes spectrality a step further than Ch'oe by giving a voice to the dead body of Dong-ho's best friend Jeong-dae in the second chapter of the book, *The Boy's Friend, 1980*. In so doing, Han addresses the disbelief of the victims, the immense grief they feel knowing others have also died, and ultimately the rage that compels their souls to linger, wondering why they had to die.

Jeong-dae's chapter begins as his body is thrown into a cross-shaped pile in a field from a truck. Aware of his death, Jeong-dae remarks, "with my head tipped backwards, the shade of the wood turned my face into a pallid ghost of itself, eyes closed and mouth hanging open."¹⁹ Though he is dead -"we were bodies, dead bodies, and in that sense there was nothing to choose between us"²⁰- his soul moves like a living body, climbing to the top of the pile of bodies to observe the faces and souls of the dead. Whereas the girl in *There, a Petal Silently Falls* was understood as a "corporeal vestige," Jeong-dae himself (and those around him) as "an incorporeal something," that confuses him because "no one had ever taught [him] how to address a

18 Derrida, *Specters of Marx*, 60.

19 Han, Kang. 2016. *Human Acts*. London: Portobello Books, 52.

20 *Ibid.*, 57.

person's soul."²¹ Souls will be central to Jeong-dae's chapter, as he comes to understand the power of a soul and the impact of death, the way he went from a human with dreams to a body in a pile of "festering flesh now fused into a single mass, like the rotting carcass of some many-legged monster."²²

I wasn't Jeong-dae anymore... I wasn't Park Jeong-dae, whose ideas of love and fear were both bound up in the figure of his sister. A strange violence welled up within me, not spurred by the fact of my death, but simply because of the thoughts that wouldn't stop tearing through me, the things I needed to know. Who killed me, who killed my sister, and why.²³

As bodies are added to the pile day by day, Jeong-dae becomes increasingly frustrated with the circumstances of his death. He contemplates how things went from "a vast mass of humanity... making a show of solidarity," while marching in the city center into "faces [that] were canceled out, expunged by white paint."²⁴ He recalls the horror on Dong-ho's face when he realized the military was firing on their citizens: "you muttered to yourself in blank incomprehension, *our soldiers are shooting. They're shooting at us.*"²⁵ His thoughts evoke the dehumanization of the protestors whose deaths were kept secret and the horrifying moment those protestors realized exactly how little they meant to their government. The shock of paratroopers firing so indiscriminately at civilians traumatized those who witnessed it – it was a thought so incomprehensible that those outside Gwangju refused to believe it even when survivors spoke out in the early days following the massacre. Similarly, for Jeong-dae, his soul demands to know why he died -- so much so that he vows to haunt those who killed him:

I want to see their faces, to hover above their sleeping eyelids like a guttering flame, to slip inside their dreams, spend the nights flaring in through their forehead, their eyelids. Until their nightmares are filled with my eyes, my eyes

21 Ibid., 52.

22 Ibid., 57.

23 Ibid., 55.

24 Ibid., 62-63.

25 Ibid., 63.

as the blood drains out. Until they hear my voice asking, demanding, why.²⁶

Jeong-dae's chapter introduces a new kind of specter of Gwangju: the haunting of injustice. For Derrida, injustice can prompt acts of retaliation in the quest for justice, "to *do justice* or to *render justice* to the other on behalf of the other."²⁷ Senseless deaths like his and Dong-ho's never had the chance to be acknowledged – his body decomposes in a field before it is set on fire, erasing him forever. By speaking for Jong-dae's soul, Han presents an "imprecation" or curse against those who caused suffering. An imprecation "does not theorize, it is not content to say how things are, it cries out the truth, it promises, it provokes."²⁸ Of course, the irony is that Jong-dae is already dead and cannot act on his imprecation short of haunting those who murdered him: "*go to those who killed you, then. But where are they?*"²⁹ The helplessness Jong-dae's soul experiences produces an "affective baggage" for the reader, who is now the carrier of Jong-dae's promise and implicated in the injustice of his death.³⁰

This affective baggage carries through in the novel as specters of Gwangju continue to haunt the present timeline. Jong-dae and his sister briefly return to the story in the chapter *The Factory Girl, 2002*. Here, Han once again plays with time and narrative, switching between the perspectives of "now," "you remember," and "uprising" as the narrator is forced to confront her memories of the Gwangju Uprising, her time working in a factory, and the torture she endured at the hands of the military. As she sits down to write, she contemplates, "Testimony, Meaning. Memory. For the Future."³¹ She is reluctant to confront the ghosts of her past, but the specters of those she knew keep invading her memory. "Yoon has asked you to remember. To 'face up to those memories,' 'bear witness to them.' But how can such a thing be possible?"³²

By "speaking up" and "bearing witness," the narrator must engage in

26 Ibid., 61.

27 Derrida, *Specters of Marx*, 32.

28 Ibid., 52.

29 Han, *Human Acts*, 66.

30 Song, Jesook. 2016. *Living on Your Own: Single Women, Rental Housing, and Post-Revolutionary Affect in Contemporary South Korea*. New York: SUNY Press, 79.

31 Han, *Human Acts*, 173.

32 Ibid., 174.

precisely the conjuring Derrida spoke to in *Specters of Marx*: “to bear witness would be to bear witness to what we are insofar as what we inherit.”³³ Derrida asserted that “What seems almost impossible is to speak... to the specter, to speak with it, therefore especially *to make or to let a spirit speak*.”³⁴ He acknowledges that it is easy to deny the existence of ghosts, that it is only natural to push them away and not consider them with any seriousness. But, in challenging ourselves to conjure them, to face the specter head-on and make it *speak*, we can understand the nature of their haunting. For the narrator and her experiences in Gwangju, she has spent years unsuccessfully running from her trauma and the specters of her past. Even claiming at one point that she returned to Gwangju “to die” because she was so exhausted. The weight of her trauma cannot easily be put to words, nor can the specters of her past – the ghosts that remain in Gwangju – be easily put into language. Much like the girl in *There, a Petal Silently Falls*, she must first talk to herself and acknowledge the ghosts that follow her before she can speak to others.

Only occasionally, just now and then, you wander... and Dong-ho’s profile flits into your mind, mightn’t the thing flickering in front of your eyes be what they calla soul? In the early hours of the morning, when dreams you can’t remember have left your cheeks wet and the contours off that face jolt into an abrupt clarity, mightn’t that wavering be a soul’s emergence?³⁵

In *Human Acts*, ghosts and specters are not limited to physical presences or absences but memory itself. This memory exists in the individual, as well as the collective. As Derrida asserted, “Marx has ghosts and we have ours, but memories no longer recognize such borders; by definition they pass through walls, these *revenants*, day and night, they trick consciousness and skip generations.”³⁶ Memories and ghosts are intimately linked. If we are to “bear witness” to them, we must also understand how they are inherited and perpetuated by a society that wants us to forget. The narrator wants to forget, and she assumes those around her already have. Society seems to have moved on, but the violence and trauma linger under the surface in specters in her memory. Her growth comes in learning that those around her also carry

33 Derrida, *Specters of Marx*, 68.

34 *Ibid.*, 11.

35 Han, *Human Acts*, 182.

36 Derrida, *Specters of Marx*, 36.

the same specters, and each person is trying to find a way to speak to them.

Human Acts and its multiple narratives and timelines are Han Kang's way of bearing witness to the ghosts of Gwangju. Having grown up in Gwangju herself, she too admits to being haunted by specters of the trauma. So, she creates narratives that allow the ghosts to speak and give space for characters to address the specters directly. For the characters, talking to ghosts does not mean the trauma goes away, but it does allow for the dead to be mourned and not forgotten. Above all, the novel instills a responsibility in the reader to confront the ghosts of Gwangju and not let the past disappear as so many did in May of 1980. *Human Acts* is a bold work, especially when understood in the context of hauntology.

Conclusion: The Politics of Mourning and Memory

When comparing *There, A Petal Silently Falls* and *Human Acts*, the changing nature of spectrality and ghosts surrounding the Gwangju Uprising become more apparent. Written in the same decade as the Gwangju Democratic Uprising, Ch'oe's *There, a Petal Silently Falls* used spectrality and ghosts to try and make sense of the event that was still largely unclear to the public. Her characters express confusion and violence when confronted by the specter of the girl. Some characters, the young university students, choose to pursue her to work through their guilt. Her spectrality, and the ghosts of the incident, remain mysteries and the truth of the event is never spoken in the novel, much the way the name "Gwangju" is never once written. *Human Acts*, written three decades later, no longer works to make sense of the events that happened in Gwangju in May 1981. Instead, it uses spectrality and ghosts to show how the events of the uprising linger in the subconscious and haunt an entire generation. Derrida would call this the inherited spectrality of an injustice. Han's writing is an act of "bearing witness" and speaking for and to the specters of Gwangju so that they will not be forgotten by a society that wants them to remain ghosts of the past.

Both these works offer significant contributions to understanding the impact the Gwangju Uprising had on South Koreans – not only those who witnessed it but society as a whole. The confusion following the uprising led to mass disbelief – few could comprehend how the government could fire on its citizens. The truth of the incident was buried for years and only brought back into public consciousness through the tireless effort of Gwangju survivors and student movements who refused to let it be forgotten. The sacrifices of Gwangju

citizens inspired the actions of student and democratization movements in the late 1980s. Still, with successful democratization, the truth of Gwangju was once again pushed to the sidelines. Literature acts as a way of not only confronting the specters of Gwangju but allowing them to speak in contemporary society.

For Derrida, “this being-with specters would also be, not only but also, a *politics* of memory, of inheritance, and of generations.”³⁷ How society chooses to address or speak to the ghosts of its history will determine how the society can cope with the trauma of the past. Specters of Gwangju exists for “others who are not present... in the name of justice.”³⁸ Korean literature can confront them and speak for them as a way of acknowledging the injustices of the past, “of justice where it is not yet, not yet *there*, where it is no longer.”³⁹ In this way, the works of Ch’oe and Han take on some of the responsibility Koreans have to history. By introducing the specters of Gwangju to the reader, they also bestow some of that responsibility upon them. Exposing the injustices of history through specters can affectively speak to their justice in the present. Therefore, we must engage with specters – with death – to “live better.”

The ghosts of Gwangju do not only reside in fiction, though literature has proven to be an effective medium to address them. Beyond allowing ghosts to speak, works like *There, a Petal Silently Falls* and *Human Acts* force the specters of trauma and mourning into real public discourse. So, then the question becomes, why is it still necessary to speak to these ghosts forty years after the massacre? If South Korea now operates under a third-wave liberal democracy, what is the value in perpetuating the grief of the past? The answer is both simple and complex: the ghosts of Gwangju continue to be evoked because the issue of Gwangju is still not settled – though many in power would like it to be. Beyond literature, Gwangju is frequently appropriated by politicians who connect their platforms to the legacy of 5.18. This is done in some respects to appeal to the collective trauma of the incident and underhandedly bring the issue to a close. If Gwangju can enter the public discourse as *history* and not a legacy that continues to haunt, then the injustices can forever be unaddressed. Time, as well, will remain out of joint with the injustices of the past becoming only history but never fully addressed. So long as Chun Doo Hwan continues to deny the atrocities, and the city of Gwangju seeks to commemorate the massacre and prove it happened, the ghosts of

37 Ibid., xviii.

38 Ibid.

39 Ibid.

Gwangju will not be able to rest. Therefore, literature and the works of Ch'oe Yun, Han Kang, and their contemporaries force us to speak to those ghosts.

INTERVIEW

The N of the Earth: Interview with Philip Turner,
New Zealand ambassador to South Korea

The N of the Earth

Philip Turner, New Zealand ambassador to South Korea

Philip Turner is the New Zealand Ambassador to South Korea. He has extensive experience as a diplomat and a business leader in North Asia, with a particular focus on the Korean Peninsula. He speaks fluent French and Japanese, conversational Chinese, and enjoys becoming acquainted with the Korean language. In this interview, he discusses New Zealand's position as a middle power, the impact of Korean soft power, and AUKUS.

YJIS: Could you please tell us a little bit about your path to your current career, and what led to you being the ambassador for South Korea?

Ambassador: I've had a slightly unusual career. It started off orthodoxly. I went to Auckland university, studied history and languages, a traditional arts curriculum. I really enjoyed it, but the result was limited options, one of which was the civil service. So, I got into the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which was fantastic, and had 12-13 years in the New Zealand Foreign Service with a short posting in Brussels and a long posting in Tokyo. Then I left, went to the private sector, and spent 18 years working for Fonterra (initially the New Zealand Dairy Board). With Fonterra we went right around the world - I worked in Brussels, Tokyo, Auckland, and Shanghai. I really enjoyed my career with Fonterra and didn't expect to go back to foreign affairs. But when this opportunity arose to come as an ambassador to Korea, I leapt at it. I thought it was a really exciting opportunity. This was 2017 during the 'fire and fury' period. I thought and still think this is one of the most interesting places in the world to be and work. I've now spent about half my time in the private and half in the public sector which is rare for a diplomat.

YJIS: What is your day to day at the embassy like?

Ambassador: During COVID things have changed a lot. Normally New Zealand politicians, officials and business leaders frequently visit Korea, and managing those visits is a huge task. There are usually a lot of big events like conferences, business promotion events, and events held by the Korean government that I attend as ambassador. We call these representational events, where you go to represent New Zealand. During COVID that's nearly all stopped. Normally that would be 40% of the job. So COVID has basically made things quieter for everyone and cut off direct person to person contact between New Zealand and Korea. We have to compensate by innovative means such as Zoom meetings...we've actually had several conversations with the Korean government directly by video from Wellington to Seoul which we've never done before. We're spending much more time in the office than we used to do. Traditionally ambassadors and diplomats spend a lot of time out, meeting people, showing our faces.

Today started with a Korean lesson, a couple of Zoom meetings with Wellington to discuss future planning, then a lunch at the New Zealand residence with a leading New Zealand export company where we got an update on how their business is doing and what the embassy can do to help, such as by helping them network. We also discussed potential promotional events for next year, the 60th anniversary of New Zealand and Korean diplomatic relations. Now I'm talking to you guys, this evening we have dinner with the chairman of a major Korean company, so we'll talk about business... and business often has policy aspects to it such as issues around market access, tariffs, and regulations. We discuss those issues and try to help them. In the meantime, we are also trying to report back to New Zealand about current issues such as North Korea, like what's happening with the End of War Declaration and if it's going to happen and what it means. We are thinking about the significance of President Moon's visit to Australia. We are thinking about the news yesterday that Korea may join the CPTPP and what that means for New Zealand...That's today's list of things to do.

YJIS: What do you enjoy most about your job?

Ambassador: I enjoy most aspects of the job. I enjoy meeting people, which is helpful because we meet lots of people. I really enjoy learning about Korea and about ordinary people's perspectives on life in Korea. Policy issues are always intellectually interesting whether it is politics, trade, security, or even public relations. I love traveling around Korea and getting to know the history and

culture of the country. And it's always good to think that you're trying to work for the interest of your country. We're basically trying to make New Zealand a better place, a stronger, safer, and more prosperous country. So, what's not to love?

YJIS: You are surrounded by other embassies in the area. Any ones you're personally close?

Ambassador. There are three embassies in this building: Norway, New Zealand, Netherlands. So, I jokingly refer to them as the "N"s of the Earth. And we also have GGGI (Global Green Growth Institute) with Ban Ki-moon as the chairman in this building as well. Just down the road we have Canada. We see a lot of each other because we are neighbours and have a lot in common. I like to refer to other small countries we talk to such as the Netherlands and Norway as PSALM which stands for Peaceful, Small And Like Minded nations. Just a joke, but with countries like the Netherlands and Norway we are very likeminded. We share values like democracy and rule of law, and we have similar political systems. We share similar interests like climate change, multilateral bodies, and international rules. We are working together very often on the same issues, so it makes sense to work together. And we like each other. We often swap notes on issues or perspectives, such as Korean politics or sometimes we actually take action together. Like making a *démarche* on the Korean government. For example, we recently took joint action around recognition of foreigners getting vaccinated outside of Korea. We felt that the rules in Korea were discriminatory since foreigners weren't getting the same recognition for their vaccines as Koreans were when they were vaccinated overseas. So, several embassies wrote letters and approached the Korean Ministry of Foreign Affairs. So that's called a joint *démarche*. And obviously we're very close to the Australian embassy, they're our best friends.

YJIS: What was the most surprising thing to you about Korean culture? Whether that's when you first came here or still?

Ambassador. Probably the success of Hallyu. I think it's surprising to Koreans too, right? I arrived in the beginning of 2018, and it was already happening. The first internet meme to get a billion hits was Gangnam Style and the first to hit 10 billion was Baby Shark. So, Korea has produced the most popular internet hits ever, plus you have BTS and Blackpink and films like Parasite and Minari. How did that happen? It feels like Korea is having its moment in

the sun to me. This is the Korean moment. The world's attention is on Korea in a way that it hasn't been before. It's extraordinary, a huge achievement for Korea. I think we are all struggling to understand how it happened.

YJIS: Any favourite K-pop groups?

Ambassador: Everyone who went to New Zealand. Like BTS went to New Zealand in 2019. Rap Monster studied English in New Zealand. Rose and Jennie from Blackpink, one studied in New Zealand, and one was born in New Zealand. All these New Zealand connections. The song Savage Love was written by a 17-year-old New Zealand South Auckland boy named Jawsh who wrote the song in his bedroom. He wrote the song, Jason Derulo picked it up and produced it into a professional song that went viral in the US. And then BTS heard that song and said they wanted to do that song and that's how it became a worldwide hit. BTS has been really good to Jawsh, who was just a kid when he wrote the song. BTS gave him the recognition for writing the song and he's become mega famous.

YJIS: Have you been back to New Zealand recently and do you see the effects of the Korean wave there?

Ambassador: I was back in June and July, and yes, a little bit. I did public events in Auckland, Wellington and Christchurch talking to New Zealanders and the Korean community. Lots of people, all the young people are talking about hallyu. The feeling is remarkable. The Korean Government organises an international K-pop dance competition every year. The only condition is that you can't be Korean. The last one they had was before COVID. A New Zealand team made it through to be one of the 12 finalists, so we went to Changwon and supported them in the global finals. They didn't win, but still it was a great achievement.

YJIS: How easy do you find the language?

Ambassador: It's difficult, eh? It's very difficult for English speakers. I speak Japanese and a bit of Chinese. So, I know that Asian languages are already very different, but Korean is one of the most difficult languages there is. It makes us all modest. Day 1 you learn Hangul and you think you can do this, and then for the next 3 years...minimal progress!

YJIS: Would you consider New Zealand and South Korea as middle powers?

Ambassador: I guess the question is, what is a middle power? From a New Zealand perspective, we would certainly see Korea as an extremely successful country in many ways. It feels like Korea has arrived at the top table of the world. If you think about where Korea was 50 years ago, and then their economy took off, they democratized, they joined the UN in 1992, they got recognition from China and Russia at the same time, they joined the OECD, the WTO, the G20 and then last year for the first time they got invited to the G7 meeting. They are now by some counts the number 10 economy in the world, with the 6th largest military. Korea has become a world leader and a very influential country in just a few decades.

I think with that leadership and success comes responsibility. Many countries including New Zealand are very pleased to see Korea be so successful and are now keen to see Korea take an even bigger leadership role in the global issues we confront like climate change. Under the Moon Jae-in government Korea has indeed taken a far more forward leaning stance on green issues, such as the 2050 net zero target, the green new deal that was announced last year, and hosting the P4G summit this year.

We talked earlier about the hallyu phenomenon, a fantastic example of soft power. In that area too Korea has become very influential. You could say Korea is one of the biggest cultural influences in the world. When I first came to Korea I would talk about New Zealand as a small country and Koreans would say: "New Zealand's not small, it is physically a lot bigger than Korea". But that's the way New Zealand sees itself. So maybe it's New Zealand that needs to change our mindset on this. We tend to emphasize Korea's economic power, industry, cultural power, but some Koreans look at New Zealand and see unspoiled environment, big amount of land and large amounts of ocean and fishing resources and a peaceful, stable corner of the world.

So, what is a middle power? It depends on the context and your point of view. New Zealand has a very strong reputation in Korea for its nature, a clean pristine environment, a well-run society, good governance, and the rule of law, since it's one of the least corrupt countries in the world. All these things contribute to our reputation and our national brand. Does that make us a middle power? I don't know, possibly. It depends on your point of view.

YJIS: How does New Zealand's absence in the trilateral security agreement between Australia, US, and the UK with the Aukus military deal speak to its role in the region?

Ambassador: Aukus is an agreement between three countries, all of which are members of the Five Eyes intelligence exchange group, of which New Zealand is a member. New Zealand is not interested in operating nuclear-propelled submarines. We have different strategic needs from Australia, and we have an anti-nuclear policy. But our government has not ruled out other areas of cooperation with Aukus countries that might be useful to both New Zealand and those other countries. Aukus is still being developed, so we still don't know what its full scope will be. But it's possible that in some areas New Zealand may wish to be associated with or to work with Aukus, for example, in areas like cyber or defense cooperation. There could be scenarios where it would make sense for us to work together, and we are open to that. But as I said, we don't have a need for nuclear-propelled submarines. New Zealand sees the world through a Pacific lens. Our neighbourhood is the South Pacific. We have enormous concern for what is happening with our Pacific Island neighbours where there are big challenges around climate change, economic development, how COVID-19 has affected tourism, issues around dealing with the pandemic and providing medical help, corruption, under development and strategic competition in the Pacific. All these things make us concerned, and we look at the security environment as a Pacific nation first. We recognize that the Aukus countries have a slightly different geopolitical perspective. The other thing to say to your point, there's no indication that the three Aukus countries want anyone else to join Aukus. There's been no invitation to other countries. We understand why the three countries got together and we respect that.

YJIS: Are there any lessons South Korea can take from this situation?

Ambassador: New Zealand and Korea share a lot of similar interests. From a New Zealand perspective, Korea is one of the few countries in the Indo-Pacific that shares our values to a very large extent: democracy, the rule of law, an independent judiciary, free press, free markets, freedom of navigation and so on. On values we are very aligned. But our interests too are very similar. We both have one big ally; we both have China as our number one trading partner and we both have a strong friendship with many similarly aligned countries. Our ally is Australia, and Korea's ally is the US. Neither of us belongs to

other major regional groupings like the QUAD, ASEAN - or Aukus. In that sense we are in a similar situation. Korea is much geographically closer to its neighbours than New Zealand. But we have similar exposure in terms of our trading reliance with China. In Korea's case this has been the cause of some tension with China over the years. And now we see tensions between China and Australia now. We think this kind of economic tension is very unhelpful to everyone. Like Korea we are looking for ways to manage a very dynamic geopolitical situation in the region: how do we balance relations with big powers like the US, China and Japan while preserving our values and interests. In that sense we have a lot in common. Both of us find talking to the other useful because few others have the same overlap of interests.

YJIS: How do you think the continued COVID-19 pandemic will affect New Zealand and South Korea, and their relations with each other?

Ambassador: Firstly, both countries have done really well to date. In fact, in the OECD, the top two performers in terms of deaths and hospitalizations from COVID are New Zealand and Korea. So, both countries lead the OECD, but they've done it in very different ways. Korea's approach has been to keep the borders open and avoid lockdowns but do lots of public health measures like wear masks, limit social gatherings and that kind of thing. New Zealand has had a different approach where we sealed the border from the beginning and have had lockdowns on a couple of occasions with the result the New Zealand was able to achieve elimination—we had zero cases for a long time. Now there are some cases, though still low. We've both been talking together a lot; we admire each other's performance, and we learn from each other. And both countries can learn from other countries and see what has worked and not worked so well. I think that's been really valuable. The main issues we have right now is that there's so little person to person contact. The Korean government has kept the border open and allowed visits especially by political leaders and business leaders. So, President Moon is traveling to Australia this week. Whereas we've had very little travel from New Zealand. The Prime Minister travelled to Australia. The foreign minister and trade minister have travelled but that's it. One thing we're looking forward to is being able to resume visits to Korea and have our leaders or business leaders travel back and forth. Zoom is great, but it's not the same as physically being in the same room as someone. You can maintain a relationship on Zoom, but you can't start one or build one. So that's the next step for

countries like New Zealand and Korea and hopefully that'll happen in 2022.

YJIS: Do you have any advice for GISIS students who wish to become ambassadors or otherwise work in this field?

Ambassador: It's a wonderful field to work in if you are interested. The first thing is to just follow your passion and soak up knowledge and experience. I'm very keen on experience as well as knowledge. Knowledge is useful. But it's even more useful to apply knowledge in a real-world way. Experience different aspects of life. If you never leave home, it's hard to understand the world. Getting out there, traveling, and working in other countries, meeting a lot of people, listening to other people, and understanding other people's points of view is the most important thing. And then if you can find a way of applying that to joining a foreign ministry or think tank or university or working in that field, that's great. I spent half my career in business, in the private sector, so I think that's a great thing to do. Broad experience, diverse experience is really helpful.

GUIDELINES FOR SUBMISSION

PEAR (Papers, Essays, and Reviews) welcome submissions from all scholars, most notably graduate students, regarding the diverse field of International Studies, particularly those topics that challenge the conventional wisdom of any given issue. Each issue of the printed Journal will contain the following three sections:

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Japanese: Revised Hepburn

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