

**THE MAKING OF A GLOBAL RACIAL HIERARCHY: RACIAL FORMATION OF  
SOUTH AND SOUTHEAST ASIAN MIGRANTS IN SOUTH KOREA**

by

Seonok Lee

M.A., Sungkonghoe University, 2005

A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF  
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

in

THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE AND POSTDOCTORAL STUDIES  
(Sociology)

THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA  
(Vancouver)

February 2019

© Seonok Lee, 2019

The following individuals certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies for acceptance, the dissertation entitled:

The Making of a Global Racial Hierarchy:  
Racial Formation of South and Southeast Asian Migrants in South Korea

---

submitted by Seonok Lee in partial fulfillment of the requirements for

the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

in Sociology

**Examining Committee:**

Wendy D. Roth

Co-supervisor

Jennifer J. Chun

Co-supervisor

Gillian Creese

Supervisory Committee Member

Rima Wilkes

University Examiner

Steven Hugh Lee

University Examiner

**Additional Supervisory Committee Members:**

Supervisory Committee Member

Supervisory Committee Member

## Abstract

How, why and under what conditions do new racial categories form? This dissertation examines the construction of South and Southeast Asian migrants (*tongnama*) as a new racial category in South Korea: a country in a continent long neglected within studies of race. Through ethnographic research on foreign migrant workers and marriage immigrants in South Korea, it was discovered that a new racial category has emerged. *Tongnama* has become an umbrella term to refer to migrants from Southeast Asian countries, such as Vietnam, the Philippines, Thailand, Cambodia and Indonesia, but also from South Asian countries such as Pakistan, Nepal, and Sri Lanka. My findings show that several elements contribute to the racial formation of *tongnama* migrants: the Korean State, Korean culture, gender and patriarchy, and the Korean split labour market. To be specific, exploitative capitalist practices in the Korean labour market and state-facilitated gendered recruitment of foreign brides shape and reshape South Koreans' understanding of this new racial category. At the same time, the racial formation of South and Southeast Asian migrants emerges out of a need by Koreans to understand their country's position within contemporary international migration flows. Building upon Omi and Winant's racial formation theory, my findings demonstrate that racial formation in South Korea shares similar racial logics with racial formation in European and white settler countries; such as an emphasis on the physical characteristics of groups, race as a group position, and a gendered racialization process. Yet, my findings also suggest that racial formation taking place in South Korea exhibits a different trajectory from Euro-American racial formation, which emerged alongside slavery, colonialism, and (neo) imperialism. This dissertation thus attempts to explain the dynamics of contemporary race and racial formation in a non-'Western' context. I argue that in South Korea, migrants' countries of origin and the economic developmental status of these

nations within the global economic order appears to be a critical factor in racial formation, which is essential to Koreans' perception of a global racial hierarchy. Therefore, the case of South Korea contributes to theories of race by emphasizing the importance of contemporary economic migration for racial formation.

## Lay Summary

How, why and under what conditions do new racial categories form? This dissertation examines the construction of South and Southeast Asian migrants (*tongnama*) as a new racial category in South Korea: a country in a continent long neglected within studies of race. Through ethnographic research on foreign migrant workers and marriage immigrants in South Korea, it was discovered that a new racial category has emerged. My findings show that several elements contribute to the racial formation of *tongnama* migrants: the Korean State, Korean culture, gender and patriarchy, and the Korean labour market. To be specific, exploitative capitalist practices in the Korean labour market and gendered recruitment of foreign brides shape and reshape South Koreans' understanding of this new racial category. At the same time, the racial formation of South and Southeast Asian migrants emerges out of a need by Koreans to understand their country's position within contemporary international migration flows.

## **Preface**

This dissertation is an original, unpublished, independent work by the author, Seonok Lee. This study has undergone an ethical review process which was approved on August 7, 2013, by the University of British Columbia Behavioral Research Ethics Board. The Human Ethics Certificate is # H12-02925 and expired on August 7, 2014.

## Table of Contents

<b>Abstract.....</b>	<b>iii</b>
<b>Lay Summary .....</b>	<b>v</b>
<b>Preface.....</b>	<b>vi</b>
<b>Table of Contents .....</b>	<b>vii</b>
<b>List of Tables .....</b>	<b>x</b>
<b>List of Figures.....</b>	<b>xi</b>
<b>List of Abbreviations .....</b>	<b>xii</b>
<b>Acknowledgements .....</b>	<b>xiii</b>
<b>Chapter 1: Introduction: How Economic Migration Contributes to Racial Formation .....</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1    Theoretical Background and Literature Review .....	5
1.2    Methods: Ethnographic Research .....	16
1.3    Chapter Outline.....	36
<b>Chapter 2: New Migration Flows and the State’s Intervention .....</b>	<b>38</b>
2.1    Economic Migrants in South Korea: Foreign Brides and Foreign Migrant Workers	38
2.2    Korean State Intervention in Migration Flows .....	45
2.3    Conclusion .....	52
<b>Chapter 3: The Racialization of Migrants - an Outcome of Post-Industrialization .....</b>	<b>53</b>
3.1    Historical and Cultural Background of Race in South Korea.....	54
3.2    Mobilizing Korean Identity to Secure Resources .....	67
3.3    Making the <i>Tongnama</i> Other .....	77

3.4	Slotting Ethnic Status into a Racial Category .....	85
3.5	Racial Strategy: Positioning within New Global Racial Hierarchies .....	99
3.6	Conclusion .....	105
<b>Chapter 4: Racial Others within the Family - Gendered and Racialized Integration of Foreign Brides and Husbands.....</b>		<b>108</b>
4.1	Theoretical background of Patriarchal Racialization.....	111
4.2	The Role of the State: Gendered Settlement Services .....	114
4.3	The Micro-politics of Household and Reproduction of Patriarchy .....	117
4.4	The Racialization of Marriage Immigrants: Ideology of Blood, Patriarchy, and Race .....	140
4.5	Conclusion: Patriarchal Racialization.....	152
<b>Chapter 5: Manufacturing Race - Immigrants and Foreign Migrant Workers at Work..</b>		<b>156</b>
5.1	Debates on Race Issues in the Labor Market.....	159
5.2	Foreign Workers in the Korean Manufacturing Industry .....	165
5.3	Making the New Underclass: The Political Economy of Racialization .....	171
5.4	Cultural Dimensions of Racialization at Work .....	180
5.5	Racialized Class Position: “ <i>Tongnama Nodongcha</i> ” (South and Southeast Asian Workers) .....	196
5.6	Against the Racialized Class Position.....	198
5.7	Conclusion .....	200
<b>Chapter 6: Conclusion – A Global Racial Hierarchy .....</b>		<b>204</b>
<b>Bibliography .....</b>		<b>212</b>
<b>Appendices.....</b>		<b>230</b>

Appendix A. List of Respondents.....	230
Appendix B. Interview guide .....	232

## **List of Tables**

Table 1 (Un) Documented foreign population.....	38
Table 2 Foreigner population by visa types in 2016.....	39
Table 3 Foreign spouse population, 2009-2016.....	41
Table 4 Country of origin of foreign spouses in 2017 .....	41

## List of Figures

Figure 1 Ansan and Siheung .....	17
Figure 2 A food factory.....	18
Figure 3 Ansan Global Multicultural Center .....	19
Figure 4 Siheung Migrant Community Center .....	20
Figure 5 A migrant neighbourhood in Ansan .....	21
Figure 6 Flyers in a bus stop near the industrial complex .....	23
Figure 7 A labour agency.....	25
Figure 8 In the factory's dormitory.....	27
Figure 9 A Korean cooking class.....	27

## **List of Abbreviations**

EPS    Employment Permit System

ITP    Industrial Trainee Programs

3D    Dirty, Dangerous, Difficult

## Acknowledgements

First of all, I thank all the research participants in South Korea. They spent time with me, and introduced me to their family, friends and neighbors. Without them, this research could not have been possible.

I offer my enduring gratitude to the faculty, staff and my fellow students at UBC, who have inspired me to continue my work in this field. I owe particular thanks to Dr. Jennifer J. Chun, whose penetrating questions taught me to think more deeply. I thank Dr. Wendy D. Roth for enlarging my vision and providing coherent answers to my questions. I also thank Dr. Gillian Creese. This research project first took shape in her course.

I thank the funding bodies whose grants and fellowships helped me conduct my field research and supported me while I was writing this dissertation: the Canadian Social Science Humanity Research Council (SSHRC) Doctoral Fellowship, UBC Liu Institute - Bottom Billion Field Research Grant, Doctoral Field Research Fellowship from Academy of Korean Studies (South Korea), Korea Foundation Graduate Student Fellowship (South Korea), Social Science Research Council (SSRC) Korean Studies Doctoral Dissertation Workshop, Doctoral Associate Fellowship from the Center for Global Social Policy: Gender, Migration, and the Work of Care.

I thank my dear friend Fazeela Jiwa for reading and commenting on several chapters. I thank my fellow graduate students; Bonggi Sohn, Jing Zhao, and Laksmi, for their support throughout. I must also thank the University of Groningen's Center for East Asian Studies for having me as a visiting researcher. Special thanks are owed to my parents, who have supported me throughout my years of education, as well as my brothers Hee-Gon and Hee-doo for buying me a new laptop computer!

Robert Prey and Alexandra Hanelle Lee Prey: without my loving family, I could never have finished this project. Alex: the best thing I've ever done is having you as my daughter. Robert: thank for reading and commenting on the entire dissertation, and for your unconditional love. You are an amazing human whom I admire. You are my mentor, my best friend, and my lover. More than my work, I dedicate to you.

## Chapter 1: Introduction: How Economic Migration Contributes to Racial Formation

On an afternoon in 2013, I was in a taxi heading to a foreign worker's welfare center located in the middle of a huge industrial complex near Seoul, South Korea. The taxi driver looked surprised upon hearing of my destination and responded by telling me that this neighbourhood was dirty and dangerous because there were so many *oegukin* (foreigners) working and living there. He was concerned for my safety as a woman and advised me to reschedule my meeting in a café or a restaurant in the city center. He added, those foreigners are mostly Chinese and *tongnama* (South and Southeast Asian) migrant workers.

While the word *oegukin* is still broadly used to refer to any non-Korean person in South Korea, the term *tongnama* is increasingly used to refer specifically to marriage immigrants and foreign migrant workers from South and Southeast Asian countries, who came to South Korea for work and to build families. In the Korean vernacular, *tongnama* was once a geographical term associated with the Southeast Asian region, but today *tongnama* is more commonly used in the media and by laypersons to refer to the thousands of foreign brides and foreign migrant workers who have moved to South Korea since the 1990s. The meaning and boundary of this social category may appear to indicate the geographical and national origins of these migrants; however, my research findings show that *tongnama* operates as a racial category that is marked by physical traits (brown skin, round eyes, small body) and cultural traits. It privileges South Koreans as a superior cultural and racial category while simultaneously subordinating immigrants and migrants from South and Southeast Asian countries.

Therefore, this dissertation examines the construction of *tongnama* as a new racial category in South Korea. This new racial category has emerged only in the past two decades since South Korea became a migrant-receiving country. Interestingly *tongnama*'s literal meaning is the region or people of Southeast Asian countries such as Vietnam, Cambodia, Thailand, the Philippines, and Indonesia, but this term also includes South Asian countries, such as Pakistan, Nepal, Bangladesh, and Sri Lanka.

The racialization of South and Southeast Asian migrants is linked to how Koreans create racial hierarchies to understand their position within new international migration flows toward more industrialized Asian countries, such as South Korea, Japan, Hong Kong, Singapore, and Taiwan. Racial categories in contemporary South Korea are continuously adjusting their boundaries due to increasing intra-regional migration and a growing second-generation of the immigrant population. The racialization of South and Southeast Asian migrants as one category reflects "the extension of racial meaning to a previously racially unclassified relationship, social practice or group" (Omi and Winant [1986] 2014:111). This process is systemically supported by the South Korean state and by individual actions of Koreans. Thus, the racialization of *tongnama* also reflects a broader process of a "racial formation" (ibid), which is shaped by the macro-level social structure of inequalities with those of micro-level signifying actions. The content and importance of racial categories, argued Omi and Winant (ibid) in their analysis of racial formations, are socially constructed and reconstructed by social, economic and political forces.

Yet, the process of racial formation taking place in South Korea exhibits a different trajectory from Euro-American racial formation. As scholars point out, the content of race and the process of racialization is historically and locally specific (Omi and Winant [1994] 2014, Miles and Brown [1989] 2003). In the U.S, the racial issues are still profoundly affected by the

history of slavery even after the massive influx of immigrants. On the other hand, in Europe, racism is more often perceived as the consequence of colonialism than slavery (Miles and Brown [1989] 2003).

While the legacy of European colonialism, American imperialism, and slavery is still influential in shaping the concept of race and racial hierarchies, new intra-regional migration flows in the Asia region - often characterized as marriage and labour migration towards more industrialized Asian countries (Constable 1997, Suzuki 2005, Lan 2008, Kim 2014, Cheng and Choo 2015) - require new approaches to the understanding of race. How can we understand the racial formation of South and Southeast Asian migrants in a country like South Korea: a latecomer to global capitalism, a society in dramatic transition from the traditional to the modern, and a people who believe that they are racial/imperial victims vis-à-vis “the West”?

To understand the racial formation of South and Southeast Asian migrants in South Korea, this dissertation takes into account two interrelated factors that shape dynamics of race and migration: South Korea's new position as a migrant-receiving country in international migration, and patriarchy as a system of organizing gender and migration flows. These two key sources illuminate how the concept of race and racial hierarchy can be shaped by exploitative capitalist practices regarding foreign migrant workers and state-facilitated gendered recruitment of foreign brides as the main body of immigrants. The state and its institutions play crucial roles as macro social forces in shaping the category and concept of race (Omi and Winant [1986] 2014). However, it is necessary to note that the construction of race does not happen separately at either the macro level or the micro level. Race is constructed not only through institutions such as the state apparatus, education, law or citizenship, but also through the cultural representation and everyday experiences of individuals (Omi and Winant [1986] 2014, Wimmer 2008, Roth 2012).

Thus, it is important to examine the dialectical process of racialization, from institutions and policy aspects to individuals' everyday experiences.

Although Omi and Winant's racial formation theory provides the analytical framework to examine racial formation of *tongnama* migrants in South Korea, it still focuses on locally specific cases within white settler countries, such as the U. S, Brazil, and South Africa. Thus, the main findings of this dissertation suggest that updating and revising Omi and Winant's racial formation theory with a case study of South Korea provides a powerful framework to rethink race and racial hierarchies as one of the main forms of inequality in a contemporary global context.

By revisiting the discussion of the political economy of race, which Miles and Brown ([1989] 2003) and Winant (2001) have importantly analyzed, and the role of patriarchy in the creation of racial hierarchies (Glenn 1999, Stoler 2002), this dissertation explores how the political economy of race and patriarchy work into the process of racial formation of South and Southeast Asian migrants. This dissertation also discusses how race gains its cultural meaning through references to other forms of inequalities on a national and global scale. Finally, this dissertation examines how making a new racial category is crucial for South Korea in reconstructing racial hierarchies on a global scale.

Racialization is a part of racial formation (Omi and Winant [1986] 2014), and racialization can take place on multiple scales and in multiple spaces. It happens in the workplace, family, media, education system, and even on the street. Methodologically, then, this research focuses on multiple scales from individuals' subjective understanding, everyday interactions, structured practices, to state policies that occur in diverse spaces of workplace, family, and neighbourhood.

## **1.1 Theoretical Background and Literature Review**

### **1.1.1 What Role Does Migration Play in Racial Formation?**

With the growth in international migration over the last three decades, immigration scholars argue that the concept of race and racial inequality are central to understanding the dynamics of migration and settlement (Espiritu 2003, Cornell and Hartmann 2004, N. Kim 2008, Roth 2012). In America, for example, race-based immigration quotas blocked the entry of Africans, Asians, and Latin Americans until the 1950s and 1960s. African-Americans were racialized as ‘Black’ due to the historical legacy of slavery, and racial segregation restricted their public activities. When race-based quotas were dismantled in the 1960s, and the American population became more racially diverse, racist portrayals fused into concerns over the social integration of immigrants. Sociological inquiries focused on how well or not well certain groups assimilated (Alba and Nee 2009), what factors shaped the “segmented assimilation” of the second generation (Portes and Zhou 1993), and reasons why certain groups experienced downward assimilation (Waters 1999).

Scholars ascribed the success or failure of particular racial and ethnic groups to traits that were assumed intrinsic to that ethnic/racial culture (Ogbu 1974, Lewis 1975, Herberg 1989). For example, Black and Latina women were stereotyped as welfare queens and associated with a culture that lacked a work ethic (Hancock 2004). Asians, on the other hand, were stereotyped as a model minority (Lee 1996). Their educational and economic attainments were explained as the result of unique Asian cultural values (Lee 1996, Tuan 1998). Thus, the nexus between racial formation and migration is central to understanding the experiences of stigmatized racial groups. Such interconnections historically took place in the context of colonialism, slavery, and capitalism, which were the main macro-structural motivations towards constructing categories of

race and accelerating racial discrimination throughout modern history (Wacquant 1997, Miles and Brown [1989] 2003, Omi and Winant [1986] 2014).

In contrast to the wealth of studies focusing on racial formation in western ‘settler’ societies, East Asia has long been neglected in studies of race. This is likely because academic studies of race heavily concentrate on the history and legacy of American slavery and European colonialism. The concept of race and racial formation has thus been much less examined in East Asian countries. Considered racially homogenous, East Asia is not typically viewed as a place where race operates as an organizing principle of social inequality (Diko’tter 1992, Takezawa 2005).

However, since the 1980s, large economic disparities between countries transformed South and Southeast Asian countries into major exporters of migrants to Japan, Hong Kong, Singapore, Taiwan, China and South Korea (Constable 1997, Suzuki 2005, Lan 2008, M. Kim 2014, Cheng and Choo 2015). Migration to industrialized Asian countries is characterized as labour and marriage migration. As these industrialized Asian countries assume their new position as migrant-receiving nations, ethnic and racial discrimination against labour and marriage migrants draw increasing public and academic attention (Lan 2008, Constable 2009, Lie 2014). In South Korea, for example, foreign migrant workers from South and Southeast Asia, and China, who work with only limited contracts for minimum wages in manufacturing, construction, agriculture, or service industries, are located at the bottom of the social stratum (Gray 2004).

In the Asian region, migration scholars (Constable 1997, Suzuki 2005, Lan 2008) point out that feminization of migration, which refers to an increasing number of women are seeking work in different types of occupations in foreign countries, is one of the prominent

characteristics of migration from South and Southeast Asia to industrialized East Asian countries. In South Korea, interestingly, feminization of migration happens through marriage migration more than through labour migration. These female marriage migrants are supposed to take the role of primary care-giver and child bearer in order to reproduce and to maintain the family, which is often seen as the basic unit of society (Freeman 2005, M. Kim 2014, H. Kim 2014).

Glenn (1992: 30) observed "the racial division of reproduction labor" in the United States, where "class-privileged women free themselves of the mental, emotional, and manual labor needed for the creation and recreation of people as cultural and social, as well as physical beings by hiring low-paid women of color." Building on the racial division of reproduction labour, Parrenas (2000) argues that in the international division of reproductive labour, hierarchies are formed between class-privileged white women in Europe and domestic workers who migrated for low-paid jobs from the so-called Third World.

In marriage migration, especially in the East Asian region, reproductive labour and unpaid care-work are considered the duty and responsibility of female marriage migrants, who are expected to perform the role of a good mother and a good wife. Piper and Roces (2005) argue that while migrant women in the Asia-Pacific region often use migration as a means to escape domestic work in their home countries, they are treated as good domestic workers (nannies, maids) or obedient wives under the patriarchal institution of marriage in the host countries. Lan (2008) examines gendered migration in Taiwan, focusing on Southeast Asian migrant women (domestic workers and foreign brides), whose bodies and sexuality are socially controlled for the labour market demand. In Taiwan, Indonesian women are portrayed as loyal and dutiful domestic workers who can provide a good service caring for the elderly, and

Vietnamese women are depicted as obedient wives. Building upon these studies, this research examines how capitalistic labour exploitation and gender inequality are interrelated in the process of racial formation in South Korea.

### **1.1.2 Importance of Temporary Migrants in Global Racial Inequality**

To resolve labour shortages, traditionally white settler societies such as the US, Canada, and Australia have received immigrants who come to live permanently. Therefore, the issue of immigration and race has to date largely been discussed regarding the social integration of immigrants. Thus, models of assimilation, such as conventional assimilation (straight-line assimilation) and “segmented assimilation” (Portes & Zhou 1993) are dominant in these white settler countries. This is because the supporters of assimilation theory see race as a matter of settlement and social integration of permanent immigrants who are supposed to lose their ties to their countries of origin over the course of assimilation.

On the other hand, transnational migration scholars point out that since many immigrants do not settle permanently in their society of reception, rather those immigrants travel back and forth between their countries of origin and the host countries, those assimilation theses are critically limited in their ability to explain global inequality, which fosters racial barriers. Sassen (1998) rightly points out that economic, military, and ideological links amongst countries are crucial to understanding the global scale of migration between the so-called First World and the Third World. Therefore, N. Kim (2008) argues that research on transnational migration should pay more attention to uneven power relations between states and global inequality structures. Scholars who study transnational racialization notice not only that the category of race and the meaning of race also travels back and forth along with those migrants (i.e., Espiritu 2003, N.

Kim 2008, Roth 2012), but also that transnational racialization is based on uneven power relations amongst states and occurs under the influence of global racial hierarchies (Espiritu 2003, N. Kim 2008).

However, although scholars of transnational racialization have opened up the debate over the transnational exchange of categories/meanings of race in the context of global racial inequality and imperialism, these studies still exclude a very important category of people: temporary migrant workers. Contemporary international migration is more and more characterized by ever-increasing temporary migration and the global scale of the migration circuit under neoliberal globalization (Sharma 2006, Rodriguez 2010). Neoliberal globalization accelerates the restructuring of production sites, the world market, and the labour market as well. Under neo-liberalism, the immigration system has been readjusted to address labour market demands more closely. Industrialized countries have adopted new strategies to survive severe global capitalist competition through increasing reliance on temporary migration. Temporary migrant workers are deprived of not only their legal rights but also any rights of cultural or political identity. Since temporary migrant workers are conceived of as temporary solutions to labour market gaps, they are regarded as disposable 'cheap labour.' Temporary migrant workers are considered non-political beings since they do not have any political rights, so it is not necessary to integrate them into the host society (Sharma 2006).

Temporary migrant workers exhibit the hypermobility that forms migration circuits. However, this hyper mobility is created by structural forces beyond their control, such as limited term contracts, the urgent need to sell their flexible labour, and deportability (Walters 2002, Sharma 2006, Rodriguez 2010). Moreover, they are the subjects of racial discrimination everywhere they go. The denial of citizen-like rights and permanent status for migrant workers

is based on the “disciplining of labouring subjects, with the maintenance of nationalized binary identities of national subjects and foreign objects with all of their racialized and gendered components, and with the expansion of global capitalism” (Sharma 2006: 136). Indeed, the increased reliance on temporary foreign worker programs has become a defining characteristic of contemporary global capitalism.

### **1.1.3 Updating Racial Formation Theory: Global Racial Hierarchies**

Over 20 years have passed since Michael Omi and Howard Winant’s influential racial formation theory was first introduced. Racial formation theory provides an innovative theoretical framework to move beyond outdated assimilation theories (Feagin and Elias 2013). While many earlier mainstream American scholars treated race as static and fixed, the theory of racial formation considers race as an outcome of racial formation, which is defined “as the socio-historical process by which racial categories are created, inhabited, transformed, and destroyed” (Omi and Winant [1986] 2014:55). They argue for the necessity of synthesizing race as both a matter of social structure and cultural representation of individuals (ibid:60). In this view, race is an element of a macro-level social process of racial formation. At the same time, race also shapes an individual’s identity at the micro-level through everyday experience. They define race as “*a concept which signifies and symbolizes social conflicts and interests by referring to different types of human bodies* (emphasis from the original text)” (ibid:55). When we see race in this way, it becomes a site of political and social contestation, which raises a question about the uneven distribution of power and resources, and the role of power in shaping the meaning and the boundaries of racial groups in society. This can “facilitate understanding of the nature of racism, the relationship of race to other forms of differences, inequalities, and oppression such as

sexism and nationalism [...]” (ibid: 56). Therefore, the racial formation approach is useful to understand not only the process of racialization of South and Southeast Asian (*tongnama*) migrants in South Korea but also to understand race as a form of social stratification which is a result of political and social conflicts over signifying groups of people.

However, racial formation theory is primarily based on the social contexts and history of white settler societies such as the U.S, Brazil, and South Africa where “racial domination” (Marx, 1998) has been long established, and where there is a comparatively strong racial segregation. Consequently, the binary racial discourse of Black/White is still dominant in racial formation theory, even though a significant number of people come from South America, Asia, and Africa as economic migrants. Thus, racial formation theory needs to consider how global economic hierarchies play into racialization within different national and regional contexts. Indeed, the increasing reliance on foreign migrant workers and immigrants to fill labor shortages and to solve the reproduction crisis is not a phenomenon limited to certain industrialized western nations any longer, but rather a defining characteristic of contemporary global capitalism, thus there is a great necessity to rethink racial formation in the context of contemporary global economic migration.

Then how can we situate racial formation in a broader context of migration under global capitalism? The studies of migration that utilize world system approaches provide insight into uneven power relations and hierarchies between states/regions on the whole under the global capitalism (Wallerstein 1974, Castells 1989, Sassen 1998, Rodriguez 2010). Scholars (Wallerstein 1974, Sassen 1998) have long pointed out the phenomenon of the international division of labour under global capitalism. Production sites are relocated from postindustrial countries in West Europe and North America to less developed countries in Asia and Latin

America in search of the cheaper locations in which to manufacture commodities. Sassen (1998:53) argues that the low-paid service industries in the global cities and the manufacturing industries in the traditional periphery draw immigrant labour, and they are "the systematic equivalent of offshore proletariat" under the global division of labour. Rodriguez (2010) documents that the practice of sending and receiving migrant workers itself becomes a "global enterprise" of labour. Thus, so-called developing countries like the Philippines act as "labour brokerage state[s]", actively mobilizing their citizens to produce desirable flexible and obedient labour commodities to sell on the world labour market, not only in Western Europe and North America but also in industrialized Asian countries like Japan, Hong Kong, Singapore, Taiwan, China and South Korea (ibid). While this scholarship discusses the fundamental relationships between migration and uneven developmental hierarchies amongst states, they nonetheless pay too little attention to the racial hierarchies that regions and countries represent.

To understand racial hierarchies on a global scale, post-colonial theories offer insight into how the ideology of racial hierarchies is produced and practiced by interrogating colonial knowledge production and the racialized modernity (Said 1978, Bhabha 2000, Chakrabarty 2007, Hesse 2007, Trouillot 2012). Post-colonial scholars (Chakrabarty 2007, Hesse 2007) argue that the invention of modernity was possible only through the creation of pre-modernity in Asia/Africa as its antithesis. While modernity is a signifier of the economic, political and cultural progress of the West, pre-modernity is a signifier of the lack of progress in Asia/Africa (Hesse 2007). While Asia and Africa are associated with inferior characteristics and images such as empty, ahistorical, static, retroverted, primitive, Europe is associated with superior characteristics and images such as, history, progress, dynamism, reason, and civilization (Said 1978, Bhabha 2000, Chakrabarty 2007, Hesse 2007). During this process, racial logics play an

essential role to construct colonial subjects and in materializing the imagined corporeal differences between colonizers and colonized. Once the West constructed Asian/African colonial subjects as ‘races’, this racial hierarchy was accepted as the natural order rather than a relational artifact in the colonial system (Hesse 2007). Consequently, geography became seen in a racialized sense; that what country and what region you come from signifies what race you are and where your race is located in the global scale of racial hierarchies.

However, these postcolonial studies, as important as they have been, do not adequately consider the significance of contemporary economic migration in shaping racial logics. Therefore, bringing world systems approaches and post-colonial theories together may be useful to examine how developmental hierarchies amongst states influence the global scale of racial hierarchies.

Winant (2001:20) suggests the idea of global racial formation, which incorporates Wallerstein’s world-historical perspective, better-known as world system theory into racial formation theory stating, “modernity is a global racial formation project.”

The claim that race was one of the central ingredients in the circular and cumulative causation of modernity hinges on the presence of racial dynamics, key processes of racial formation, in all the main constitutive relationships that structured the origins and development of the modern world system. These important relationships involved the making of new forms of empire and nation; the organization of new systems of capital and labor; and the articulation of new concepts of culture and identity. (Winant 2001:21)

Winant incorporates both the political economy of race and the cultural articulation of race in the modern world system within the racial formation framework that offers race as relational to economics, politics, and culture on a global scale. Although racialization is not an exclusively economic process, exploitative social relations of production are complementary and inextricable to racialization. Thus, the racialization of migrants has functioned to justify the capitalist exploitative labour practices and class differentiation (Miles and Brown ([1989] 2003):120).

Therefore, bringing the political economy of racism and the cultural articulation of racism back to the conversation is crucial to the understanding of a global racial formation under global capitalism, which results in producing, what I call “global racial hierarchies.” Global racial hierarchies, an ideological system based on racial hierarchies and developmental hierarchies amongst states, is critical to understanding contemporary global racial inequalities. The concept of global racial hierarchies allows us to pay attention to how contemporary international economic migration is deeply involved in the construction of race, and uneven power relations amongst states under global capitalism. Also, this concept allows us to see that racial hierarchies are socially constructed, and they change over time under particular conditions. In focusing on how Koreans conceive of the idea of global racial hierarchies, I attempt to update Omi and Winant’s (1994 [2014]) racial formation theory in the context of global economic migration.

#### **1.1.4 South and Southeast Asian Migrants in South Korea**

As one specific way of Othering, racialization imposes otherness on a certain group of people. Racialization is problematic because it includes a dialectical process of the conceptualization of the Self (in-group) as a superior race, which simultaneously solicits the conceptualization of the Other as the inferior race by attributing a positive evaluation to the Self and a negative evaluation

to the Other (Miles and Brown 2013 (1989)). Van Dijk (1993:20) points out that racism “affect[s] Other People primarily because they are thought to belong to another group, that is, as group members and not as individuals.” This means that a specific ethnic group is seen as “alike and interchangeable” (ibid:20). This process slots specific ethnic groups and individuals into the already existing “ethno-racial hierarchy, influencing social mobility, access to societal rewards and resources and overall quality of life” (McDonnell and de Lourenco 2009:239).

In South Korea, media representation of different races shows interconnections between race and class. Korean mass media portrays marriage immigrants and foreign migrant workers from Southeast Asia and rural China as a “new underclass” (Hong and H. Kim 2010, Y. Kim, Yoo and J. Kim 2009, K. Kim 2009, S. Kim and E. Kim 2008, Jo 2008). H. Lee, Yoo, and Ahn (2007) point out in their research on telecommunication, real estate and finance TV commercials that Korean characters are portrayed as adventurous explorers who embrace the underdeveloped Southeast Asian countries; as sophisticated cultural beings who share European cultural values; or as cosmopolitans who enjoy their transnational lives between metropolises. Korean commercials strategically use a racial hierarchy to highlight Koreans’ superior position to South and Southeast Asians and to equate their racial position to that of Europeans and North Americans (ibid: 497-8).

Scholars who have studied attitudes and social distance (Lew and T. Lee 2006, Hwang et al. 2007, In 2009, Lim and C. Kim 2011, D. S. Kim, D. H. Kim and Jung 2011, Han 2011) point out that Koreans have strong stereotypes and prejudices towards non-Koreans. Such stereotypes include ideas like: ‘White people are rational, talented, and confident, but Black, *tongnama* and Chinese people are irrational, untalented, and unconfident.’ Thus, Koreans feel the social distance to non-Whites much more strongly than to Whites. According to Hwang et al. (2007),

Korean youth in their 20s tend to be more open-minded to foreign cultures compared to older generations. However, this cultural openness is mostly toward North American and European cultures. Korean youth show less acceptance for South Asian, Southeast Asian, and Chinese cultures due to an association with marriage immigrants and foreign migrant workers in Korea. Lim and C. Kim (2011) point out that, while Koreans prefer white people to any other foreigners, there are also racial preferences within non-white foreign groups. Koreans have a more positive image of Japanese and international students compared to *tongnama*, Black, Chinese, and foreign migrant workers. Koreans prefer to be friends with Whites, African Americans, and Japanese, while *tongnama* and Chinese are less desirable as friends. Interestingly, Koreans have negative images of black Africans, but they are willing to be friends with African Americans due to their American nationality. D. S. Kim, D. H. Kim and Jung (2011) researched images of foreigners in Korea. While Americans are conceived of as masculine, confident, talented, attractive, and arrogant, *tongnama*, Chinese, Korean-Chinese, and North Koreans are feminine, inferior, untalented, unattractive, passive and gentle. According to Lew and T. Lee (2006), while Americans are represented as white, male, English-speaking, well-off, and elite, *tongnama* and Africans are darker skinned, non-English speaking, poor, and undeveloped.

## **1.2 Methods: Ethnographic Research**

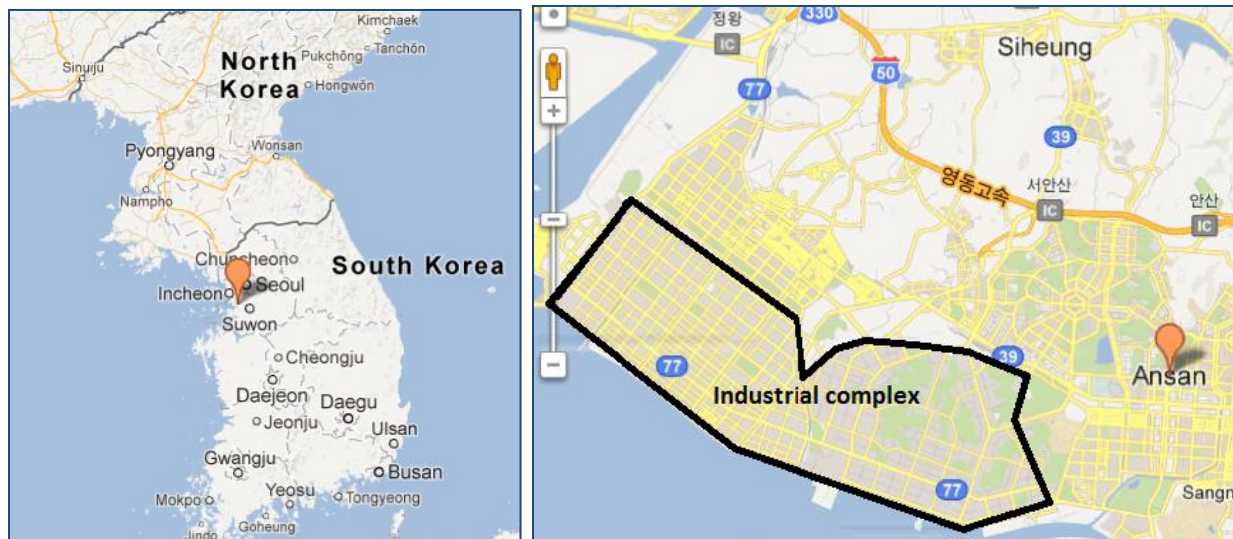
### **1.2.1 Data Collection**

This dissertation is based on ethnographic research conducted in two typical industrial working-class cities in South Korea - Ansan and Siheung - between September 2013 and May 2014.

Ansan and Siheung are administratively two different municipalities but there is basically one large industrial complex, which shares infrastructures and government facilities. A significant

population of immigrants and foreign migrant workers populate these neighbouring cities because of the industrial complex located there. In this industrial complex there are over 10,000 small and medium-sized factories.

**Figure 1 Ansan and Siheung**



- Source: Google Maps

I was interested in examining not only “what people say” about race but also “what people actually do” (Waters 2001: 11). While working alongside migrants in several factories, and participating in classes at the migrant centers, I observed everyday interactions and experiences amongst different actors in order to gain insights into the process of racialization. I spent nine months conducting this field research. However, it was not a new research site for me. As a native Korean, I have volunteered and worked at several migrant helping centers in Ansan city from 2002 to 2007. Thus, this research can be characterized as an example of an “ethnographic revisit” (Burawoy 2009).

The migration flows toward South Korea are characterized as labour and marriage migration. Because of the demographic composition of foreign migrant workers and marriage immigrants, I believed that the workplace and family were the best sites to capture the daily interactions between migrants and Koreans. Therefore, for the first half of the field research, I worked for several manufacturing factories as a factory worker alongside Koreans, immigrants, and foreign migrant workers of diverse ethnic backgrounds, such as Chinese, Korean-Chinese, Vietnamese, Cambodian, Filipino, and Mongolian. These factories included different subcontractors, which produced products, such as PCB (Printed Circuit Board), speakers, cosmetics, first-aid packets, and food.

**Figure 2 A food factory**



Hard-boiled eggs rolling along conveyer belts

While I worked as a factory worker, I could observe how migrants and Koreans interacted and treated each other on the factory floor. On top of this factory work, I interviewed factory workers (Koreans, immigrants, and foreign migrant workers) and management to gain

insights into how they think of each other, to what extent they mingle together, and their feelings of different races. Because I did not want to create any possible conflicts between workers and management from the factories I worked at, I recruited interviewees after I had completed all the factory work.

**Figure 3 Ansan Global Multicultural Center**



After several months of the factory work, I volunteered as a childminder at the Ansan Multicultural Family Support Center. I also attended some classes offered to female marriage immigrants and their families, such as Korean cooking classes, basic job training (cooking certificates and coffee brewing), childcare seminars, and language classes alongside Chinese, Korean-Chinese, Vietnamese, Filipina, Japanese, Mongolian, and Uzbek women. At the Center, the majority of programs were intended for female marriage immigrants under the official category of “multicultural family”: based on the assumption that marriage immigrants are women and full-time homemakers. Even though I am a native-born ethnic Korean, I was able to

take these classes with other female marriage immigrants, because of my “foreigner” husband. Therefore, my family was also officially categorized as a multicultural family.

Theoretically, foreign husbands can also use the services and classes in the Multicultural Family Support Center. However, they usually do not visit the Center because they see it as a place ‘for women’ due to its services oriented toward immigrant women. Instead, they use the Migrant Community Center, which is intended for documented and undocumented foreign workers who enter Korea on three to a five-year contract for manufacturing and service industries. The Migrant Community Center mainly provides labour counselling services on top of computer classes, driver’s license classes, martial art training, free medical services, and ethnic group meetings. These centers are open for any foreign migrant workers, but usually young male foreign workers hang out in the lobby more often than female foreign workers. I regularly visited the Migrant Community Center to meet male immigrants and foreign migrant workers.

**Figure 4 Siheung Migrant Community Center**



An information tent with free medical services for undocumented migrant workers who do not have medical insurance

I realized that the neighbourhood is also a very important site to capture the interactions between migrants and Koreans. Whenever I travelled by subway or bus with my toddler daughter, I noticed that my daughter always drew visible attention from people because of her

biracial look. Responses differed depending on whether they saw me as an Asian foreign bride with a non-Korean looking child, or whether they saw my daughter as a white *honhyŏl* (mixed blood) from a white father. Thus, I also included interviews with the Korean neighbours of marriage immigrants.

**Figure 5 A migrant neighbourhood in Ansan**



Labour agency and store signs in many different languages

As part of my ethnographic research, I conducted semi-structured interviews with 59 people - 40 local Koreans and 19 migrants from Bangladesh, Vietnam, Philippines, Cambodia, Nepal, and China. This includes interviews with Korean neighbours, Korean spouses and Korean in-laws of marriage immigrants, marriage immigrants, and foreign migrant workers. I asked them about their feelings about different migrant groups, their experience living together as a multicultural family, or working together as coworkers. Almost all long-term immigrants who have stayed in South Korea for over five years are fluent in Korean. Thus, I conducted interviews mostly in Korean unless they preferred to speak English. The interviews lasted from 1.5 hours to

three hours. All the interviews were recorded and transcribed. I also attended relevant social forums, public hearings, immigrant cultural events, activist meetings, and protests. I wrote field notes every night. I tried to use the qualitative analysis software NVivo to analyze my field notes and interview transcripts, but this software did not support Korean language. Thus, I manually coded the field notes and interview transcripts by adding annotations and topical summaries. As I coded the data, I found that many of the quotations and annotations could be grouped into similar thematic categories. These themes include the gendered process of racialization, local and global racial hierarchies, and the nature of ethnic and racial identities.

### **1.2.2 Ethnography**

I conducted ethnography across two research sites: factories and families. As Burawoy (2009: 88-91) points out, ethnography offers an opportunity to examine the “internal process” and “external forces” of social phenomena. According to Burawoy (ibid), internal process refers to what actually happens in the research sites, and external forces (external context) refers to the environment or system experienced as powers beyond the field sites, or powers that shape the field sites yet exist outside the control of the site. In my case study of racial formation of South and Southeast Asian migrants, examining the internal processes and external forces are essential to understanding how, why, and under what conditions this racial formation occurs. In addition, ethnography makes it possible to explore the structural/institutional conditions of racialization, and everyday experiences/cultural representations of the process of racialization, as Omi and Winant ([1986] 2014) point out. Reconstruction of reality and theory form part of the main aims of ethnography (Waters 2011, Burawoy 2009). In particular, it is important to situate interviews within specific institutional contexts. As Waters (2001: 11) points out, this is necessary in

particular to explore not only what people say, but also to understand their experiences and relationships with other people. For my case study, ethnography permits the examination of what people say about race and what people actually do in work or family interactions with immigrants, foreign migrant workers, and Koreans.

Therefore, ethnographic research in workplaces and families in Ansan and Siheung city offered me the ability to contextualize the lived reality of foreign migrant workers, immigrants, and Koreans, and the role of government policies. This also helped me to situate the findings from my semi-structured interviews and secondary literature research and helped me with the reflexive interpretation of the data collected.

Entry into the field is crucial for ethnographic-observation and semi-structured interviews. Based on my experience as a counselor assistant helping foreign migrant workers and foreign wives from 2002 to 2007 in Ansan, I knew that migrants' rights advocacy organizations were good places to meet migrants who faced problems such as unpaid wages, unfair treatment from management, and domestic violence. However, one significant drawback is that it is hard to meet Korean co-workers and Korean family members through these organizations. Usually, migrants' relationships with Korean employers and Korean family members are already aggravated because of the troublesome situations that brought them to these organizations in the first place. Therefore, I thought a better way to examine immigrants and foreign migrant workers' daily experiences and interactions was to enter a company or a factory to participate, observe and conduct interviews.

**Figure 6 Flyers in a bus stop near the industrial complex**



Flyers say “day workers and temp workers wanted”

Initially, I planned to work as a regular factory worker for 2 or 3 months at one of the small or medium sized factories which have a good mixture of Korean workers, foreign migrant workers, and immigrant workers in the industrial complex of Ansan-Siheung. However, I soon discovered that it was hard to enter a factory as a researcher. I contacted several factories to ask for their permission to work without pay as a factory trainee, but they all rejected my request to enter their factory. Factory owners and management do not trust outsiders, not only because of trade and technology secrets but also because of the legacy of militant labour union movements in South Korea. Especially in the 1980s, a large number of university students and activists went undercover in factories in order to organize workers. Moreover, a combination of legal and illegal labour practices are still prevalent in the industry, such as the illegal use of labour agencies, and the use of undocumented foreign migrant workers.

Using labour agencies as labour brokers – which in South Korea are better known as manpower firms or labour dispatch agencies (*p'agyönpch'e*) - became a common way to get

factory and other minimum waged casual jobs after the 1997 economic crisis. In the Ansan-Siheung industrial complex, there are around 10,000 factories and over 300 labour agencies that provide workers for the factories. Thus, I decided to find factory work in the same way that an immigrant woman or a married Korean woman would find a job after several years of childbirth and parenting.

Finding a job through these labour agencies was not difficult but finding a job in a factory which had a good mix of Korean workers and foreign migrant workers was not that easy. Managers of labour agencies tend to look down on job seekers based on the assumption that people who come to a labour agency for low paid jobs and day labour are most likely old and poorly educated, or legal/illegal foreign migrant workers. Moreover, labour agencies do not like it when job seekers ask questions. On several occasions labour agencies hung up the phone as soon as I asked about the working conditions and the names of the factories that they might send me to. After visiting several labour agencies, I soon learned that I should not ask any questions, I just needed to provide my personal information and wait until they assigned me. In this way, I could immediately work in a factory. My labour agency sent workers every day to a different factory unless a factory wanted to keep the worker.

Within the first two weeks, I worked for five different factories. These factories produce PCB (Printed Circuit Board), cosmetics, first-aid packets, clock packaging, and speakers. I worked only several days for each factory and then I was sent to another factory without any information. The labour agency usually does not inform their workers about which factory they would be sent to until the workers get on the shuttle bus in the morning.

**Figure 7 A labour agency**

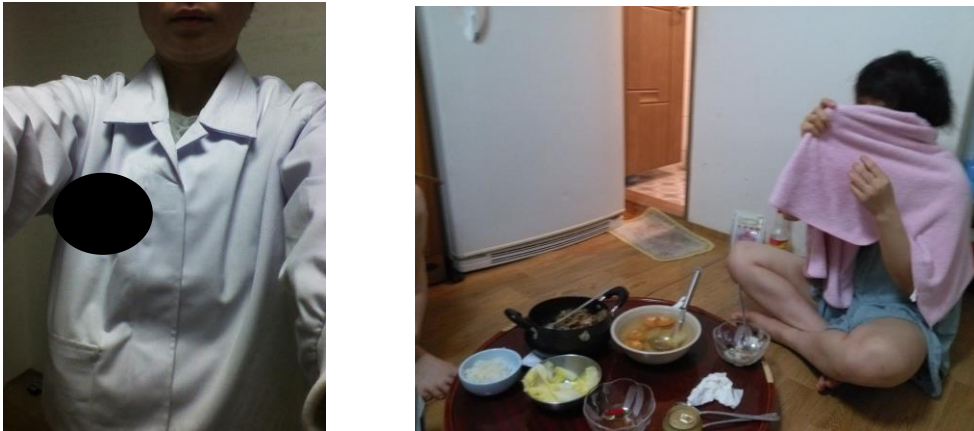


Waiting for job placements in front of the labour agency (left). The shuttle bus (right)

On the shop floor, temporary workers like me had no control over their work. The management of the factories often ordered overtime and workers had to accept; there was no other transportation from the factory except for the shuttle bus that the labour agency provided. Thus, every morning I assumed that I might have to work overtime. In the speaker company - a subcontractor of Samsung Electronics, I stayed for three weeks to observe interactions between Korean workers and Korean-Chinese workers, but I eventually quit in order to find a factory, which might have a better mix of foreign migrant workers.

After about five weeks of working for several factories as a temporary worker, I found a job as a regular worker in a hard-boiled egg packaging factory that had foreign migrant workers from Vietnam, Cambodia, Mongolia, and China. I worked as regular worker for 2 months until my toddler daughter joined me in South Korea. Luckily, I could also stay in the factory dormitory for free with the foreign migrant workers. Including overtime, I worked 14 hours per day, from 7am to 9pm, packaging hard boiled eggs in this factory.

**Figure 8 In the factory's dormitory**



The author as a factory worker (left). In the dorm room having a late meal with Vietnamese workers after over-time work (right)

After working in factories, I carried out participant observation at the Multicultural Family Support Center - a settlement organization in Ansan city. With some help from my previous network, I could work with Chinese and Filipina immigrant women as a volunteer for a child-minding program at the Center. I also took several classes and participated in events with marriage immigrants.

**Figure 9 A Korean cooking class**



Migrant brides taking videos of cooking lessons

While at the Center, I regularly chatted with visitors in the lobby or in the cafe. As my husband was not in South Korea with me during this part of my field research, my daughter often accompanied me to the classes and interviews whenever I could not arrange childminding for her. Interestingly, I found that my status as a mother of a biracial child offered opportunities to get closer to female marriage immigrants. I had asked them to hang out with me or have a coffee sometimes, but they often said no to me. However, when they found out that I also have a foreign spouse and a biracial child, they often asked me to show some photos of my daughter. They seemed curious about my daughter's appearance and they invited my daughter and me over to their homes for playdates and family occasions like birthday parties. Sometimes we went on picnics with our children to the local museum and parks.

Finally, I visited migrant advocacy organizations in Ansan, such as the Ansan Migrant Community Service Center (run by the city of Ansan to provide administration services for new immigrants and foreign migrant workers), the Cambodian Worker's Network, the Korean-Chinese Association in Ansan, and the local police station. I also attended events for migrants; such as picnics, the world migrant workers' day event, anti-racism protests, and some ethnic group events for Cambodian and Burmese workers.

### **1.2.3 Interviews**

From 2013-2014, I conducted semi-structured interviews with fifty-nine people; most of whom resided in the Ansan and Siheung area. I interviewed nineteen migrants from Bangladesh, Vietnam, the Philippines, Cambodia, Nepal, and China. Fifteen of them were long-term immigrants who had stayed in South Korea for over five years and spoke fluent Korean or

English.<sup>1</sup> Since migrants from the Philippines preferred to speak English, I conducted interviews with them in English, otherwise I conducted interviews in Korean. Four of them had been in South Korea less than three years. Some had enough Korean language skills to communicate but some did not. Therefore, if they could speak English fluently, I conducted interview in English.

I interviewed forty local Koreans who had sufficient interactions with migrants from their work, extended family, community organizations, or neighbourhood. As I conducted my field research, I had to adapt to local situations and needed to continuously modify my approach. I learned that the majority of residents in Ansan and Siheung had some experience working in a factory because of the industrial complex nearby. Moreover, many Korean residents of this area had interpersonal connections to marriage immigrants as family members, relatives, or neighbours. Therefore, I tried to recruit interviewees as randomly as possible at the beginning of my interview phase. I talked to taxi drivers, passengers in subway trains, visitors to community centers and settlement institution users. When I had recruited enough random interviewees, I used snowball sampling to recruit new participants through my interviewees' networks.

Although I did not plan to have group interviews, two of my Korean interviewees in their late fifties voluntarily spread the word about my research and helped me form several interview

---

<sup>1</sup> Once I interviewed a Vietnamese woman with the help of a Vietnamese interpreter. I noticed that my interviewee looked uncomfortable and the interview did not go very well. A few days later, the Vietnamese woman wanted to have a follow up interview without the interpreter. Even though her Korean language skills were not that strong, the interview went much more smoothly than the first interview. After learning from this experience, I did not use interpreters anymore. However, I still think that if I had been able to interview more recent immigrants and short term foreign migrant workers, my research might be able to show more diverse voices from different groups of people. This is one of the methodological limitations of this doctoral research project. I assume that a larger research project involving several researchers who have diverse language and cultural backgrounds would minimize this kind of problem. This also requires a shift in the design of the research project, towards doing research “with” instead of “on” the subject.

groups. They explained that although an academic interview had sounded somewhat intimidating to them, they enjoyed being interviewed and sharing their thoughts. Because of this, they wanted to introduce more people to this opportunity. After conducting several group interviews through their network, I had to ask my informants to not arrange any more group interviews to avoid relying on one or two informants excessively.

Through the interview process I also found that Korean informants who are closer to my parents' age tended to accept my interview requests more easily. Since this generation highly values education, providing favours to students for educational purposes is highly encouraged. Interviewees from this older generation often said that they participated in my research not only to help the younger generation, but also to contribute to Korean studies. They seemed to see my research as a way to promote South Korea. These remarks often left me feeling somewhat uncomfortable as I suspected that my project would not be able to satisfy their hopes.

The respondents can be roughly divided into five groups: Korean factory workers; foreign migrant factory workers; marriage immigrants; Korean family members of marriage immigrants; and civil workers or staff members who work with migrants at institutions in the Ansan and Siheung area. However, the boundaries of these groups are often blurry. For example, I met several Korean factory workers to ask about their experiences working with foreign migrant workers. Soon I found that they are also husbands or relatives of marriage immigrants. Similarly, all the foreign husband interviewees initially came to South Korea as a foreign migrant worker, and the majority of them still worked in factories. Several female foreign migrant workers came to Korea through the Korean guest worker program - the Employment Permit System (EPS) and ended up marrying a Korean man, so they became immigrants through marriage. Regarding their socio-economic characteristics, only two of the interviewees could be

considered close to the lower middle class based on their education level, their occupation, and their partners' occupations. The vast majority of the Korean and marriage immigrant informants came from a working-class background. In Ansan-Siheung there are several middle-class suburb neighbourhoods and newly developed areas to attract white-collar office workers and professionals. However, the majority of my research respondents reside in working-class neighbourhoods near the industrial complex. Even in these neighbourhoods there are several new high-rise apartments and condominiums; enough to wonder why these places have such poor reputations. According to several informants and taxi drivers, although these neighbourhoods look decent, they have a comparatively high proportion of social housing and co-op housing.

I asked my informants questions about two broad themes: immigration and race. The questions about immigration inquired into their daily experiences of working or living with people from different ethnic and national groups, interpersonal relationships, multiculturalism, and their personal immigration history (if the informants were migrants). The topic of race included questions about national, ethnic, and racial identity and subjective understandings of race. If the informants desired, I met them at their homes. Most of these informants are women who have young children, so meeting at their homes was easier as their children could play nearby. For male informants and group interviews, I suggested meeting at the cafeteria of the Multicultural Family Support Center which is cozy and quiet.

#### **1.2.4 Issues in the Research: Being an *Ajumma* Factory Worker and the Mother of a Biracial Child**

Since Patricia Hill Collins (1986:14) introduced the concept of the “outsider within status” —a researcher’s ironic but special standpoint on self, family, and society, a researcher’s

marginality is considered as having the advantage of allowing more reflexive research. For example, a black female researcher has the ability to understand the cultural context of black women's experiences, but at the same time she is an outsider to the wider society, as a black female researcher who constantly experiences personal alienation and exclusion in academic settings. She thus has the ability of the 'stranger' to observe things in the wider society that the 'insiders' of the society may not be able to see. Outsiders of the wider society, such as women, immigrants, ethnic/racial minorities, sexual minorities, and political minorities, have a more conscious awareness of their marginalized standpoints compared to insiders who are perceived to have power over the outsiders. The "outsider within status," therefore, provides insight into uneven power relations between the researcher and the researched, and "the interlocking nature of race, gender, and class oppression" (ibid:19).

I found that a researcher's "outsider within status" - a methodological perspective provides me the ability to see the Korean society from an outsider or marginalized perspective as a mother of a biracial child, as a wife of a foreign man, and as a female factory worker while reading the detailed texture of a dominant culture or social structure as a native Korean.

In the 1980s, I grew up in a working-class neighbourhood in a satellite city of Seoul. Because of my childhood upbringing, I assumed that I could understand working class people quite well. Indeed, my family's class background helped me understand their life experiences and feelings. However, becoming an irregular factory worker, especially an *ajumma* (a married woman over thirty) factory worker was a very different experience. As I tried to get jobs at factories I experienced derogatory treatment because of my gender, age, marital status, and assumed class background. As a factory job seeker, I was seen as a poorly educated *ajumma*,

whose husband was likely incompetent, and who was probably desperate to find any work to make ends meet.

I was often lectured about planning my life better by the managers at labour agencies. On the shuttle bus, I often overheard the shuttle bus driver - a man in his late 50s - loudly commenting in front of a bus full of female workers on how dumb women were. A factory manager propositioned me, assuming that I was a pitiful *ajumma* worker who might be struggling in her marriage. I could see how people changed their attitudes according to their perceived status of me. Several Cambodian workers called me, *sönsaengnim* (teacher, often used for showing respect) when we met through a migrant worker advocacy center. Soon after when I started working in factories, they started calling me *ajumma*.

During the first phase of my fieldwork, I could see how my social position as an *ajumma* factory worker is deeply related to the gendered vocational hierarchy. As St. Louis and Barton (1998: 3-4) point out, while people are generally aware of their social position concerning others, those in the center often fail to realize the full extent of power dynamics compared to those at the bottom margins because they benefit from these power relationships. At the same time, those at the margins either try to find ways to join those in the center or accept the fact that they will never be able to become part of the center. In this sense, as a researcher, I was glad that I could work as an *ajumma* worker because my experiences would help me develop a more accountable and reflexive research project. However, while I agree with Lee's (1973, cited from Collins 1999) suggestion that assuming a position of marginality attenuates imbalanced power relations and may spark new insights, being dismissed and belittled because I was an *ajumma* factory worker is a bitter experience.

After my field work in factories, I moved to another site; the family. When research moves from the more traditional single site to multiple sites, the researcher needs to be reflexive of corresponding power shifts and shifts in positionality.<sup>2</sup> A researcher's position is not fixed, and the researcher must negotiate these power shifts continuously to understand how they affect the process of knowledge production.

I revealed my identity as a researcher as I started meeting people for interviews, visiting settlement institutes and NGOs, and participating in classes and events. Different from the first phase of my fieldwork in factories, I did not receive much derogatory treatment from my informants. Instead, they called me teacher (*sŏnsaengnim*) to show some degree of respect. However, after my daughter joined me in South Korea, I could sense my social position shifting again as the mother of a foreign-looking biracial child. Since I had finished my factory work, and since my husband was not with us during my field research, I moved to my parents' place with my daughter. During this period my parents and I often had to deal with derogatory comments and curious glances at my child.

In general, Koreans treat multicultural families somewhat better when it involves a North American or a European foreigner, as they assume a higher social and economic status. I thus expected that I would not experience discomfort in my hometown because my child is a white *honhyŏl*. So it was a surprise to suddenly be faced with such derogatory treatment. Soon I

---

<sup>2</sup> Maher and Tetreault (1994: 22) define positionality as the "knower's specific position in any context as defined by race, gender, class, and other socially significant dimensions." hooks (1984) illustrates positionality by employing 'margin' and 'center' as descriptors. These spatial descriptors help to illuminate how positionality can be used to reveal the imbalance of power in relationships. hooks (ibid) describes how those who occupy 'center' positions tend to force others, such as people of colour or the poor, into marginal positions.

discovered that many people, especially older generations of Koreans around the age of my parents, saw me as the Korean nanny of a white child, or as a *tongnama* mother with a non-Korean looking child. I also discovered that there is still cultural stigma against the family of a Korean woman and a white man because this union reminds older generations of Korean sex workers near the U.S military camps. Indeed, my hometown has a Korean air base where the U.S Air Force is located, and a red-right district. My parents' place is only 2kms away from both locations.

After my daughter joined me, I learned about my new social category, *tamumhwa* (multicultural family) through the child care subsidy programs. For example, I learned that my family is *tamumhwa* when I registered my daughter on the wait lists of public daycare centers. The director of the public daycare center told me that my family falls in the category of *tamumhwa*, so my daughter could get priority, which is the same benefit offered to underprivileged families, such as single-parent families, low-income families, and disabled parent-families. The same day I visited one more public daycare center to register for the waitlist. This time, I told them that I have priority as a *tamumhwa* family. The director asked me "ah, you are a foreigner?" I was surprised and told her that I am Korean, but my husband is a foreigner. After looking at my child, the director added, "oh, your husband must be a Russian or Uzbekistani man" implying that this could be the only explanation for why we had chosen to stay in South Korea.

As I mentioned above, I was often misrecognized as a foreign bride from Southeast Asia. Elderly women in my neighbourhood often asked me if I am a foreign mother. On one occasion, a Korean grandmother offered a can of juice to my daughter and said to me, "Are you a foreigner? I am sorry that the Korean winter is too cold for you. You must come from a very

tropical country." I did not want to embarrass her, so I pretended to be a foreign mother. I responded to her, "Actually I come from a place that is quite cold, like South Korea." While some people showed me their generosity, others openly stared at my daughter and me.

During my field research, I could clearly see that my relationship to the research site, my own position, and my degree of marginality changed as I was moving from working in factories to interviewing people in family contexts. Therefore, the "outsider within status" perhaps helped me to see "the interlocking nature of race, gender, and class oppression" and to "determine what the links are among these systems" (Collins 1986:19). In doing so, a researcher can have insights that the researcher would not otherwise have had.

### **1.3 Chapter Outline**

In the following pages, this dissertation examines the centrality of economic migration for theorizing racialization and racial formation in South Korea under global capitalism.

Chapter 2 provides the background information on South Korean state intervention in migration flows and the settlement process.

Chapter 3 offers a historical background of race and the contemporary socio-economic contexts of South Korea as a multiethnic/ multicultural society. This chapter also discusses the main process of racial formation of migrants and how ethnic status is slotted into the Korean ethno-racial hierarchy, which is essential to the discussion on Koreans' understanding of global racial hierarchies.

Chapter 4 explores the racialization of South and Southeast Asian migrants in family life by examining the primarily female migrants, and therefore gendered marriage migration in relation to Korean patriarchy. This chapter shows how patriarchy, as one of the most influential

social institutions in South Korea, plays a crucial role in the process of racialization through what I call patriarchal racialization. Patriarchal racialization is a gendered racialization process whereby for foreign brides, patriarchal gender roles are emphasized to minimize racial differences and to reproduce patriarchy as essential and ahistorical. At the same time, for foreign husbands, racial differences are emphasized to exclude them socially from the national community. Thus, children of a foreign mother are seen as racially closer to Koreans than the children of a foreign father based on the belief in paternal blood lineage that blood passes down through father's line.

Chapter 5 explores the racialization of foreign migrant workers from South and Southeast Asian countries at 3D factories (difficult, dangerous, dirty) by examining state labour policy and the experiences of foreign migrant workers, immigrant workers, and Korean workers. This chapter shows that South and Southeast Asian workers are structurally racialized to justify exploitation and discrimination in the low-paid job market. The production of cheap, obedient, and flexible foreign migrant workers helps Korean factories to survive severe global competition. I show how Korean employers prefer foreign migrant workers and immigrants to native-born Korean workers to fill out extremely low-level jobs. I document the tensions and stereotypes amongst groups and analyze the interpersonal, cultural and structural racism experienced by foreign migrant workers.

Chapter 6 ties the themes together and addresses the theoretical implications of these findings for a more global understanding of race, which is crucial to understand the link between contemporary economic migration and global capitalism.

## Chapter 2: New Migration Flows and the State's Intervention

### 2.1 Economic Migrants in South Korea: Foreign Brides and Foreign Migrant Workers

Korea has often been referred to as one of the very few countries that is racially and ethnically homogeneous (Kymlicka 2007). Until the early 1990s, there were only a few foreigners who resided in South Korea, and they made up of only 0.1% of the total population. They were mostly foreign government officials, businessmen, Christian seminaries, and the U.S armed forces. However, since the 1990s a rapidly expanding immigrant and foreign migrant worker population has led to an increased awareness that South Korea is becoming more ethnically and racially diverse (Seol 2010, S. Kim et al. 2010, Bang et al. 2010, Hong and H. Kim 2010, Prey 2011). The foreign population is rapidly increasing, with over 2 million foreigners residing in South Korea. Although this represents only about 4 percent of the total population, this is a dramatic change from 1990 – a 40 percent increase in their share of the population.<sup>3</sup>

**Table 1 (Un) Documented foreign population**

	(unit: person)				
	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Total Foreign Population	1,576,034 (100%)	1,797,618 (100%)	1,899,519 (100%)	2,049,441 (100%)	2,180,498 (100%)
- Long-term	1,219,192 (77.4%)	1,377,945 (76.7%)	1,467,873 (77.3%)	1,530,539 (74.7%)	1,583,099 (72.6%)
- Short term	356,842 (22.6%)	419,673 (23.3%)	431,646 (22.7%)	518,902 (25.3%)	597,399 (27.4%)
Undocumented	183,106	208,778	214,168	208,971	251,041

• Source: Statistics Korea (2018), Foreign population (*Ch'eryuoeguginhyŏnhwang*)

---

<sup>3</sup> Statistics Korea (2011) 2010 The Korean Social Index  
[http://www.kostat.go.kr/portal/korea/kor\\_nw/2/1/index.board?bmode=read&aSeq=245833](http://www.kostat.go.kr/portal/korea/kor_nw/2/1/index.board?bmode=read&aSeq=245833)

- Note 1: The overall number of foreigners only includes foreigners with holding visas. Long-term refers to foreigners who stay longer than three months, and short-term refers to foreigners who stay less than three months.
- Note 2: Undocumented foreigners refers to foreigners who overstay without renewing their visa status or permits.<sup>4</sup>

In South Korea, low skilled foreign migrant workers and marriage immigrants are the major groups of foreigners. Roughly, 30% of the foreign population is made up of migrant workers in the manufacturing, construction, and agriculture industries (Statistics Korea 2017). Although this thesis focuses on foreign migrant workers who are not ethnic Koreans, given that the latter are often seen as foreign workers, this visa category makes up around 50% of the foreign population when they are included (see Table 2).

**Table 2 Foreigner population by visa types in 2016**

(unit: person)

Total: 2,049,441 (100%)							
Marriage immigrants	Low skilled foreign migrant workers	Ethnic Koreans with foreign nationality	International students	Business and trade person	Professionals	Adoptee, family of foreigners	Others
251,569 (12.2%)	592,958 (28.9%)	372,533 (18.1%)	76,040 (3.7%)	13,327 (0.7%)	27,528 (1.3%)	166,335 (8.2%)	549,151 (26.9%)

Source: Statistics Korea (2017) Foreign population by visa types (*Ch'eryujagyökpööl Ch'eryuoeguginhyönhwang*)

---

<sup>4</sup> Statistics Korea estimates the undocumented foreign population using entry and departure records. Although South Korea is a peninsula, entering South Korea via land is not feasible because of the highly militarized border with North Korea. Since the only two ways to enter South Korea are via seaports and airports, tracking entry and departure records are comparatively well controlled.

Foreign migrant workers first began coming to South Korea in 1988, the year of the Seoul Olympics when Korea's relative wealth was revealed across Asia. Until this time, Korea was a migrant-sending country, with thousands of Korean construction workers toiling in the Middle East, and nurses and miners working in Germany. By the late 1980s, Korea had shifted towards becoming a migrant-receiving country. Around this time, the manufacturing and construction industries in South Korea were suffering from severe labour shortages as young Koreans began avoiding so-called 3D jobs (dirty, dangerous, difficult). The migrant worker population increased quickly over a short period, to the point where there are now over half a million documented migrant workers, and roughly 200,000 undocumented workers, in a country of 51 million.

The growth in the migrant worker population is primarily due to labour cost-cutting and Koreans' unwillingness to work in 3D jobs due to social stigma and lower wages. Foreign migrant workers in the manufacturing, construction, fishing, agriculture, and service industries come to South Korea from all over the world, but primarily from Asian countries such as China, Vietnam, Thailand, Indonesia, the Philippines, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Nepal, Sri Lanka, and Cambodia. In South Korea, there are several foreign labour programs, such as the Employment Permit System (EPS) for low-skilled workers, the Visit and Work program for ethnic Koreans with foreign citizenships as low-skilled workers, the Professional Employment program for highly educated professionals and English teachers (HRDKorea 2013). The majority of the low skilled foreign migrant workers come through the Korean guest worker programs: the EPS and the Visit and Work.<sup>5</sup>

---

<sup>5</sup> EPS: Employment Permit System accessed on May 15, 2018, <https://www.eps.go.kr/eo/EmployPerSystem.eo?tabGb=01>

Marriage immigrants are predominantly female. In 2016, marriages between a Korean man and a foreign woman comprised 83.4 percent of the total number of international marriages, while unions between a Korean woman and a foreign man made up the remaining 15.6 percent. In the mid-1990s, Korean bachelors began importing foreign brides from countries like China, Vietnam, the Philippines, and Thailand in increasing numbers. This resulted from a number of factors, including a surplus of bachelors in South Korea and a lack of marriageable Korean women for rural farmers and working-class men (M. Kim 2014). The number of marriage immigrants has grown as more Korean women pursue careers and resist patriarchal marriages. Dangerously low fertility rates and a rapidly ageing population has prompted the South Korean state to actively facilitate the recruitment of foreign brides as a substitute for Korean women.

Foreign husbands' nationalities are mainly Chinese, American, Canadian, Japanese, and Australian. Since revisions in the Nationality Law in 1997 and 2000, which offers a spousal visa to both foreign brides and husbands equally, some of the foreign migrant workers who initially entered South Korea through the EPS remained in romantic relationship with Korean women, and permanently settled in South Korea after marrying Korean women (Kwak 2018).

**Table 3 Foreign spouse population, 2009-2016**

[unit: person / percent]

		2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
<b>Total</b>		125,087 (100)	141,654 (100)	144,681 (100)	148,498 (100)	150,865 (100)	150,994 (100)	151,608 (100)	152,374 (100)
Sex	Male	15,876 (12.7)	18,561 (13.1)	19,650 (13.6)	20,958 (14.1)	22,039 (14.6)	22,801 (17.8)	23,272 (15.3)	23,856 (15.6)
	Female	109,211 (87.4)	123,093 (86.9)	125,031 (86.4)	127,540 (85.9)	128,826 (85.4)	128,193 (82.2)	128,336 (84.7)	128,518 (83.4)

Source: Statistics Korea (2017). Marriage immigration trends (*Kyŏrhoniminja hyŏnhwang*)

**Table 4 Country of origin of foreign spouses in 2017**

[unit: person / percent]

Total international marriages 20,835			
Korean man + Foreign woman	14,869 (100%)	Korean woman + Foreign man	5,966 (100%)
Vietnam	5,364 (36.1%)	China	1,523 (25.5%)
China	3,880 (26.1%)	U.S	1,392 (23.3%)
Thailand	1,017 (6.8%)	Canada	436 (7.3%)
Japan	843 (5.7%)	Japan	311 (5.2%)
Philippines	842 (5.7%)	Australia	203 (3.4%)
U.S	541 (3.6%)	Others	2,101 (35.2%)
Cambodia	480 (3.3%)		
Others	1,902 (12.7%)		

Source: Statistics Korea (2018). International marriage trends (*Kukcheгыөрhon hyönhwang*)

The South Korean government predicts that the number of foreign brides will increase mainly due to demographic factors: the low fertility rate, the rapidly ageing population, and gender asymmetry according to the Multicultural Family Policy Committee in 2010.<sup>6</sup>

However, many critical scholars (Park 2005, McDonald 2009, Bae 2009, 2010, Cho 2010, Han and Chun 2014) argue that we need to pay attention to gender inequalities and the traditional patriarchal system in the family and the labor market when attempting to identify the source of the ‘reproduction crisis’ that leads to the importation of foreign brides. The Korean state treats the family as a basic unit of economic growth (Bae 2010). Especially the patriarchal family model, which placed a male at the top of the family structure, has been the basic model used to organize Korean society and economy (Cho 2010). Therefore, the state’s control over the female body and in particular her fertility is crucial in managing the patriarchal family structure, the labour market, and the nation’s economic development. However, Korean women today are

---

<sup>6</sup> Multicultural Family Support Policy Master Plan 2010-2012 by Prime Minister’s Office and Relevant departments.

increasingly resisting traditional patriarchal roles of wife, mother, daughter-in-law and primary caregivers by prioritizing careers, minimizing interactions with in-laws, having fewer children, and remaining unmarried.

The distorted gender ratio and shortage of marriageable Korean women is a result of gender-selective abortion. Research explains the sex-ratio imbalances as a key structural condition of international marriage migration (see Chan 1991, Glenn 1992 in the cases of the U.S; see Lan 2008 for the case of Taiwan). In South Korea, the sex-ratio imbalances are mainly due to gender-selective abortion of female fetuses, which is illegal but commonly practiced due to the traditional cultural preference for sons. For example, for over 30 years the sex ratio always surpassed the natural birth ratio from the early 1970s until late 2006 (Bae 2010). Some years display an extremely distorted ratio. In 1975, there were 112.4 boy babies born for every 100 girl babies (sex ratio 112.4:100), and in 1990 the sex ratio was 116.5:100 (ibid).

Socio-cultural transformations also contribute to the reproduction crisis in South Korea. Amongst young families, a double income and fewer children have become more desirable. This indicates that higher educated Korean women are pursuing career aspirations, financial and personal independence from the traditional in-law relations, and equal marriage relations with their husbands. This is partly due to their demands for more gender equality, and partly because of the disadvantages they still face in both the household and the labour market. While the male breadwinner ideal is still pervasive, women's income has become crucial, especially in the city because it is difficult to support a family on a single income. While Korean women's labour market participation has increased in the past few decades, it is still lower than men's<sup>7</sup>, and

---

<sup>7</sup> In April 2018, Korean women's labour market participation rate was 59%, while labour market

gender-segregated labour markets have exacerbated the exploitation of women and discriminatory hiring practices (Han and Chun 2014). Although Korean women's education levels surpassed that of men<sup>8</sup>, there remains a significant gender wage gap.<sup>9</sup>

On top of this, despite a gradual improvement of Korean men's participation in housework and parenting, the sexual division of labour in the household still reinforces women as a primary caregiver. For those working women, thus, family responsibilities usually constitute "the second shift" (Hochschild and Machung 1989). One of the coping strategies Korean women employ is to have fewer children. They also try to minimize their traditional domestic roles as a daughter-in-law. Furthermore, Korean women are also increasingly delaying marriage or not marrying at all. According to a 2015, while 54.8 percent of male respondents answered that the overall cost of marriage is their main reason for delaying marriage, 58.9 percent of female respondents said that they delay getting married because of unequal gender roles regarding housework, child care, and in-law-oriented marriage life.<sup>10</sup> Therefore, scholars suggest that the Korean state needs to introduce more gender-equal family and labour policies.

Instead, the Korean state has turned to foreign brides to increase the fertility rate and has amended the citizenship law to make the importation of foreign brides easier for Korean bachelors. The Korean government encourages foreign brides to have children by providing necessary services and benefits under the new family policy and the Multicultural Family

---

participation amongst Korean men's was 79%. (Statistics Korea 2018, Employment trends)

<sup>8</sup> In 2013, 74.5% of female high school graduates went to colleges or universities and 67.4% of male high school graduates went to colleges or universities. (Statistics Korea 2015, Statistics and women's life).

<sup>9</sup> On average, Korean women receive 68% of Korean men's average wage in 2016. (Statistics Korea 2017, Social indicators in 2016)

<sup>10</sup> Maekyong Economy Weekly. Cover story on April 16, 2015.

Support Act. As a result, the number of foreign brides has been dramatically increasing every year. International marriages now make up 8% of the total number of marriages in South Korea (Statistics Korea 2018). In interregional and international migration, the role of the state is growing more critical in initiating, selecting, retraining, and ending migration flows (Teitelbaum 2002). In the following section, I demonstrate the Korean State's intervention in migration flows by looking at migration policies.

## **2.2 Korean State Intervention in Migration Flows**

### **2.2.1 Gendered Immigration, Citizenship, and Settlement Policies**

In the case of the U.S, immigration policies historically excluded women of colour to prevent non-white family formation. For example, Asian women were not allowed to enter the U.S in the early decades of immigration even long after the importation of Chinese and Japanese male workers (Thai 2008). On the contrary, South Korean immigration policy is oriented towards female marriage immigrants. Contemporary Korean immigration policy is highly inclusive of female migrants from different racial and ethnic backgrounds, despite strong undercurrents of ethnonationalism and the myth of homogeneity.

South Korean immigration policy is based on two interrelated gender ideologies; blood is passed down paternally and a wife is considered under her husband's control. First, Koreans' belief that blood passes down through a father is essential to understanding gendered immigration and citizenship policies, which are inclusive of foreign women but exclusive of foreign men. Until 1997, a foreign bride could automatically have attained Korean citizenship upon marriage to a Korean husband, but a foreign husband was only allowed to get a temporary visitor visa. In many cases, foreign husbands had to re-enter South Korea every three months to

renew their visitor status (Jung 2007). Since they were officially tourists, the majority of foreign husbands were not allowed to get jobs in South Korea until the Korean nationality law was revised in 1998.

While the children of a foreign bride and a Korean man were Korean citizens, the Korean government did not recognize the children of a foreign husband and a Korean woman as Korean citizens (Jung 2007). According to the Korean nationality law, the children of a foreign father were foreigners following their father's nationality (ibid). Therefore, they had to register as foreign nationals even though they were born in South Korea and their mother was Korean. Therefore, if children with a Korean mother and a foreign father wanted to register as Korean, the couple needed to have a legal divorce even though they remained in a *de-facto* marital relationship (ibid). In 1998, the Korean nationality law was revised, but instead of allowing fast-track citizenship for both foreign brides and foreign husbands, the South Korean government discontinued automatic citizenship for foreign brides (H. Lee 2008). Thus, both foreign men and foreign women now have to wait at least two years before applying for Korean citizenship.

Since 2005 the Korean government has instituted policies to deal with these new families of international marriage, which are now officially called "multicultural families" (*tamunhwa gajok*). While immigration and citizenship policies sanction entry and legal status in the country, the Multicultural Families Support Act is a settlement policy to help marriage immigrants and their Korean families' successful integration into Korean society.

The Multicultural Families Support Act is a result of the realization of Korea becoming a multicultural and multi-ethnic society. In 2006, South Korean president Roh Moo-Hyun passed two new acts: "Act on the Social Integration of Mix-Race Families and Immigrants," and "Act on Foreign Wife Integration." President Roh declared that the "the trend towards multi-

race/multicultural society is irresistible" and therefore "it is high time to incorporate multicultural policies. The Ministry of Education and Human Development also announced a shift in civic education textbooks from an emphasis on mono-ethnicity towards multiculturalism and the values of tolerance" (H. Kim 2007: 65). This is a rather drastic departure from previous educational content, where the most important topic in the civic textbook was how distinctive and unique Koreans are from other ethnic groups in the world and how lucky Korea is to be ethnically homogeneous. In 2008, the Multicultural Families Support Act was passed, and the law installed the Multicultural Family Support Centers.

There were 211 Multicultural Family Support Centers throughout the whole country by 2013. Under the supervision of the Ministry of Gender Equality and Family, these Centers offer standardized programs. They provide assistance programs mainly for female marriage immigrants' successful integration to Korean family culture and society. Therefore, the centers provide free Korean language and culture classes, Korean cooking classes, drivers' license classes, computer classes, legal aids for domestic violence, child-rearing seminars, speech clinics for children, and simple job training. Primarily, the free Korean language and culture classes offer a waiver of the Korean proficiency test when immigrants apply for Korean citizenship. There is no doubt that the multicultural families support centers greatly assist the settlement of marriage immigrants on a daily level.

However, the logic of the Multicultural Families Support Act and the actual programs put marriage immigrants and their families into a separate category of 'multicultural family' alongside their racial, gender, and class status. Interestingly, according to the Support for Multicultural Families Act, the subjects of integration into Korean society are not only the marriage immigrants themselves but also their Korean spouses and Korean born children. By

legal definition, a multicultural family means a family of a union between a Korean citizen and a marriage immigrant, a union between a natural born Korean citizen and a naturalized Korean citizen, and a union between two naturalized Korean citizens. Thus, a standard Korean family is narrowly defined as a family of two ethnically, legally, and culturally Koreans and their Korean-born children. A family with any ethnic, legal, and cultural non-Korean components falls into the category of multicultural family. This narrow legal definition distinguishes a multicultural family from a standard Korean family. Thus, multicultural family support centers mainly provide social integration programs for so-called multicultural families, of which one or more family members are native Koreans.

Government welfare programs also play an essential role in disseminating the social images of multicultural family throughout Korean society. For example, until 2018 when the Korean government introduced the universal child care benefit, Korean families had to prove their low income to receive welfare benefits (i.e., childcare subsidies), but a multicultural family could get benefits regardless of their income level. Eventually the term ‘multicultural family’ is socially translated into a low-income family. Koreans often use the term *tamunhwa* to refer to a multicultural family in a neutral sense, but at the same time, they use the term *tamunhwa* in a derogatory way to imply a certain degree of underprivilege.

### **2.2.2 Korean Guest Worker Program: The Employment Permit System**

In the early 1990s, the Korean government started importing low-skilled foreign migrant worker for the manufacturing industry when irregular/precarious employment (*bijönggyujik*) began dramatically increasing, and as neo-liberal economic policies were introduced in South Korea. Beginning in 1993, as a form of irregular employment, foreign migrant workers came through

the Industrial Trainee Programs (ITP), the earlier version of low-skilled foreign labour importation. Originally, the ITP was intended to transfer skills to students from less-developed countries for intra-regional economic co-operation. However, the ITP was abolished in 2007 because an excessive number of foreign industrial trainees escaped from their programs and became undocumented migrant workers (HRDKorea 2013:3).

Since an increasing number of small and medium-size factories used trainees as cheap labour, these programs became a *de facto* channel for recruiting low-skilled foreign migrant workers (Gray 2004, K. Park 2005, S. Lee 2007, Seol 2000). However, foreign industrial trainees were officially students, not workers. Therefore, foreign trainees were not subject to the Labor Standards Act. Because foreign trainees were not workers, they only received a monthly allowance, instead of wages, that was roughly 30-40% of what an undocumented foreign worker could earn from a factory for similar work (S. Lee 2007). On top of that, the majority of foreign trainees entered South Korea through expensive private legal and illegal migration brokers. Consequently, foreign trainees voluntarily became undocumented workers and stayed until they could make enough money to support their family back home and to pay back the debt that they owed migration brokers (ibid). In 1997, 32% of foreign trainees left their workplace and became undocumented workers (Ministry of Justices 1998). Moreover, inhumane treatment and abuse of foreign trainees became a major social issue (Doucette and Prey 2010, HRDKorea 2013). Thus, the Korean government gradually reduced the ITP and eventually decided to abolish it in 2007.

To replace the ITP, the Korean government introduced the Employment Permit System (EPS) in 2004 to recruit low skilled foreign migrant workers (ibid:3). One of the main characteristics of the EPS is the substantial involvement of the South Korean government. The government highly regulates the population of the foreign workforce, entry processes, labour

relations, legal status of workers, and entry and departure processes. Low skilled foreign migrant workers come to Korea on 3- or less than 5-year limited term contracts under the EPS through the governmental Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between Korea and 16 countries: China, Vietnam, Philippines, Indonesia, Thailand, Cambodia, Laos, Nepal, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Pakistan, Myanmar, East Timor, Mongolia, Uzbekistan, and Kyrgyzstan. Under the EPS, foreign migrant workers can be protected by the Labor Standards Act, Minimum Wage Act, Industrial Safety and Health Act, and can access social benefits such as medical insurance, industrial accident compensation insurance, and national pension.<sup>11</sup> However, the EPS does not allow foreign migrants to change their workplace except in cases of unpaid wages, physical or sexual harassment, or factory shutdown. Thus, the immobility of foreign migrant workers is often criticized by human right organizations in South Korea.

To prevent overstay after foreign migrant workers' contracts end, and to make sure they return to their home countries, the Korean government installed additional regulations, such as mandatory return insurances and the quota system of foreign workforce. The mandatory return guarantee insurances of the EPS include Departure Guarantee Insurance (similar to a retirement bonus) and Guarantee Insurance (for the case of unpaid wages) that employers should buy for foreign migrant workers. Foreign migrant workers should also buy two other insurances, Return Cost Insurance (for one-way airfare) and Casualty Insurance (in case of death or serious disease). These insurance savings are used for return expenses. A foreign migrant worker can receive all the remaining funds after their departure from South Korea. These insurances are intended to

---

<sup>11</sup> Introduction of Employment Permit System from the EPS official website accessed July 2 in 2018 <https://www.eps.go.kr/ph/index.html>

guarantee foreign migrant workers' return to their home countries by preventing any excuse to overstay in South Korea.<sup>12</sup> On top of that, the Korean government operates the quota system in order to regulate the population of the foreign workforce and to prevent overstays of foreign migrant workers by forcing migrant-sending countries' active intervention in the successful return of migrants. Each year, the Korean government announces the size of the workforce for each MoU country's government based on an assessment of the entry and departure records of the foreign workforce. To avoid being disadvantaged by the quota system, migrant-sending countries try to ensure the successful return of migrants to their home countries.

It should be mentioned that ethnic Koreans from China and from former Soviet Union countries like Uzbekistan and Kirgizstan typically enter South Korea through the Visit and Work program under the EPS. These ethnic Koreans are descendants of Korean emigres who fled from Japanese colonialism to China and Russia in the early 1900s. Visit and Work allows ethnic Korean descendants with foreign nationality to work as unskilled and low skilled workers in manufacturing, construction, agriculture, fishing, and service industries for three years (HRDKorea 2013:3). While the EPS does not allow foreign migrant workers' job mobility, Visit and Work allows ethnic Koreans to freely search for jobs and to change workplaces within the accepted category of jobs. Ethnic Koreans from China (*chosŏnjok* or Korean-Chinese) are the majority of migrants in the Visit and Work program.

---

<sup>12</sup> Guide on EPS 4 Major Insurances from the EPS official website accessed June 28 in 2018 <https://www.eps.go.kr/ph/index.html>

### 2.3 Conclusion

This chapter has explored how racialization of South and Southeast Asian migrants as *tongnama* depends on structural arrangements, such as the government-controlled importation of migrants, immigration law, and settlement policies. The Korean State plays a crucial role in the racialization of South and Southeast Asian migrants by setting up the institutional conditions that affect the life of migrants. The State actively recruits migrants for its economic and social needs, and carefully selects migrants under certain criteria by controlling its borders and by utilizing citizenship and settlement policies. Immigration policy and citizenship are crucial tools for differentiating who is, and who is not, a member of the national community. While the Korean State does not allow labour migrants' settlement and only uses their labour through the Korean guest worker program – the Employment Permit System, the State actively recruits marriage immigrants, mostly foreign brides to remedy its declining population size. In turn, the term *tongnama*, which was previously understood in a geographical sense, has gained a new racial meaning.

The following three empirical chapters will show how a combination of physical traits and the conceived economic power of each group operates during the racialization process in the micro-space of family, workplace, and within broader Korean society.

## Chapter 3: The Racialization of Migrants - an Outcome of Post-

### Industrialization

Korean society is culturally indulgent to commenting on the appearance of others. Even though commenting on appearance is beginning to be considered an intrusive and improper manner amongst younger generations, this is still seen as a way of showing care and intimacy to family members, friends, colleagues and neighbours. During my field research, I received comments from my family and friends on my tanned skin and ‘natural’ face. They advised me that I needed to take better care of my skin, otherwise people would misrecognize me as a *tongnama* foreign bride, or *chosŏnjok* migrant worker. I was surprised - not because people commented on my looks - but because they use ethnic and racial analogies to describe less desirable skin and style. Koreans used to insult those with darker skin by comparing them to farmers - which implies cultural hierarchies between the urban and the rural - now they were using foreign migrants from South and Southeast Asia or China as the point of reference. Indeed, it is not difficult to observe how Koreans understand South and Southeast Asian and rural Chinese migrant workers in South Korea. However, I could not help wondering what people actually mean by *tongnama* skin colour and ‘style’, and why their light brown or brown skin is less desirable? Is it only about skin colour and style? Or do such physical markers matter because they imply the hierarchies between Koreans and migrants from what Koreans call *tongnama* countries?

This chapter examines the key aspects of racialization of Southeast Asian migrants as *tongnama* migrants. First, I discuss the historical context of how Euro-American racial logics were introduced in the late 19th century and how Japanese colonial power strategically re-appropriated these racial logics in order to make Koreans as colonial subjects. I also discuss

ethnonationalism and the legacy of the authoritarian regime as a culture of hierarchies. The racialization of *tongnama* migrants is deployed within South Korea's cultural system as common sense. In what follows, I will show how Koreans mobilize Korean identity as an essential component of their community and nation, and how Koreans deliberately construct the *tongnama* Other at the same time. Then, I demonstrate that slotting ethnic status into a racial category is the key unit organizing South Koreans' understanding of *tongnama* migrants. I will demonstrate how economic developmental hierarchies are translated into ethnic/racial hierarchies on a global scale during the process of constructing migrants when South Korea sees itself as a post-industrialized and advanced capitalist country. This key aspect helps us to understand how the racialization of migrants takes place. Finally, I will discuss Koreans' understanding of new global racial hierarchies, and why South Korea needs racial others.

### **3.1 Historical and Cultural Background of Race in South Korea**

#### **3.1.1 Imported Racial Hierarchy: Legacy of Japanese Colonialism and the U.S**

##### **Imperialism**

Empirically, ethnicity is more predominant than race in East Asia. There is a firm belief in South Korea and Japan that they are homogenous one-nation-countries even though each country has ethnic minorities (Lie 2001, 2014). However, East Asian countries have produced racial others throughout modern history for diverse reasons, such as to defend themselves from European imperial invasions, to control their own ethnic minorities, and to justify their invasion of other parts of Asia. For example, before the onset of Western colonialism (European and American colonialism), there existed long-standing racial traditions in China (Dikötter 1992). According to

Dikötter (ibid), the Chinese racial tradition is a mixture of Confucianism (a cultural distinction between the civilized center and the barbarian periphery) and western idea of race (based on assumed biological differences). This conception of race played a role not only in building national consciousness but also in controlling ethnic minorities under the Han Chinese rule in the 19th century. At the same time, this Chinese version of a racial hierarchy (yellow and white people are on top; black, red and brown on the bottom) also ideologically served Chinese people in their fight to defend China's cultural superiority from western imperialism. In Japan, the categories of race and ethnicity served to control ethnic minorities, such as Ainu (indigenous people in Hokkaido), Okinawan people, burakumin, and Korean and Chinese minorities. It also played a role in constructing a homogenous national consciousness that was contrary to the reality of "multi-ethnic Japan" (Lie 2004). Similarly, in the 19th century, on the Korean peninsula, the concept of race first appeared as a defensive tactic against western imperial power and as a way to understand the national 'self' under the conditions of geopolitical conflict between the West and Japan (Schmid 2002).

The dominant western racial hierarchy that places the white race on top arrived in Korea belatedly through intellectuals who supported Western ideas of scientific progress and civilization in the late 19<sup>th</sup> Century (B. Chun 1995, S. Park 1996, N. Park 2002). This was during a period of political turmoil when western imperialism was threatening neighbouring Asian countries. According to B. Chun (1995), in the mid-19th century *Chosŏn* (the old name of Korea) had defined white people as barbarians. It is important to point out that white people were not conceived of racially at this time, as the concept of race itself did not even exist before *Chosŏn*

opened its markets to the imperial powers in 1876.<sup>13</sup> Since *Chosŏn* was under China's cultural/political influence for several hundred years, civilized beings and barbarians were distinguished according to whether they followed Confucianism manners or not. Since white people did not follow Confucianism, they were not recognized as civilized beings<sup>14</sup>. Thus, discrimination against others was based on cultural distinctions, not on any perceived biological differences.

However, by the late 19<sup>th</sup> Century, new geopolitical realities had forced dramatic changes to notions of race. After its treaty with Japan, *Chosŏn* was forced to sign more unequal treaties with Britain and America. This new position of subordination to the white race popularized the idea that white people should be placed on the top of a racial hierarchy that had Asians in the middle and black and indigenous races on the bottom. Western-influenced intellectuals argued that Korea should imitate Western civilization in order to ensure the survival of "the East Asian race" (B. Chun 1995, N. Park 2002). In particular, Yoon Chi-Ho<sup>15</sup> educated *Chosŏn* people on American conceptions of racial hierarchy through his newspaper, *The Independent*.<sup>16</sup> A column of *The Independent*, June 24 in 1897 describes different races in the following manner: "the black race is [...] more stupid than the Asian race and inferior to the white race. The indigenous race has a red face, and their appearance is similar to Asians, but they are inferior to Asians. [...]"

---

<sup>13</sup> Since 1876, *Chosŏn* was forced to open its market for Japan, America, Russia and European imperial powers.

<sup>14</sup> For example, the scholar Lee HangRo (1792-1868) argued that even though white people are skilled and scientifically advanced, they cannot be civilized beings in the same way that we don't consider bees to be human beings despite their amazing ability to produce honey. (Park and Yoon 1980:179)

<sup>15</sup> Yoon Chi-Ho was the first *Chosŏn* intellectual to study in the U.S (1888 – 1893).

<sup>16</sup> *The Independent* was founded in 1896. It was the first modern newspaper to be written in Korean and English. Other newspapers of the time were written in Chinese so that only intellectuals could access them. While illiteracy rates were quite high, *The Independent* was widely accessible for ordinary people who could read and write Korean.

The white race is the smartest and bravest amongst the races of the world.” (cited from B. Chun 1995:133)

Chun Bok-Hee (1995:127) points out that while the idea of race in Europe and America functioned as an ideology to prove the superiority of the white race and to justify colonization in Africa and South Asia, intellectuals of *Chosŏn* used the idea of race to explain the conflict between Asian countries and Western countries in the international politic arena. Some intellectuals of *Chosŏn*, like Yoon Chi-ho, used the idea of race and argued the solidarity of Asian people as one race to defend Asia from invasion by the white race. However, while this early idea of race may have been useful in mobilizing self-defense against imperialism, it soon combined with Social Darwinism to accept the logic of imperialism (ibid: 144). The colonization of Korea by Japan from 1910-1945 heavily depended on this notion of race as it gave the Japanese Imperial State legitimacy.

It is important to point out that conceptualizing race was an elite intellectual discourse as ordinary Koreans did not have much interaction with Americans and Europeans. The non-existence of racial minorities in Korea in the 19th and early 20th century meant that Koreans did not generate their own popular conception of race or ethnicity. Instead, following Jeon (2001:85) it can be said that “racism in Korea was the product of colonial modernization.”

It is also a very recent development whose boundaries are still taking shape to the ongoing influx of foreign migrant workers and immigrants. The boundary between Koreans and *tongnama* migrants is drawn with Koreans positioning themselves atop. Interestingly, the racial logic that Koreans are closer to Whites while *tongnama* migrants are closer to Blacks is very similar to the racial logic the Japanese colonial regime (1910-1945) applied to colonial Koreans. The Japanese conceived of themselves as the ‘whites of East Asia’ while colonial Koreans were

seen as ‘blacks’ (Chung 2004). In other words, Koreans were blackened under Japanese colonialism within the category of the East Asian race. Thus, differentiation within the category of East Asian had been more prominent during Japanese colonialism.

However, the relationship between American Whites and Blacks became more influential to Korean understandings of racial hierarchy after the Korean War (*han'gukchŏnjaeng*, 1950-3) (N. Kim 2008), even though Korea did not have a sizeable foreign population for a long time. Koreans were racialized through their imperial relationship with the U.S, so the imperialist racial formation they adapted was forged mainly through the U.S dominance over South Korea after the Korean War (Moon 1997, N. Kim 2008). For example, American media and TV networks like AFKN (American Forces Korea Network) exerted a strong influence over the conceptions of race and racial hierarchies in South Korea (K. Park 2007, N. Kim 2008). In response, Koreans strategically positioned themselves in-between whites and blacks, adopting racial prejudices against blacks (N. Kim 2008: 113). While this American racial hierarchy was imported into South Korea, Koreans’ own cultural system interpreted race more according to ethno-nationality, which is concerned with blood origins such as *tanil-minjok* (the single ethnic/race nation) (ibid: 23-4). Therefore, non-Korean people are generally placed the lump category of *oegukin* (foreigner) that works to create a clear boundary between Koreans and non-Koreans.

Since the 1990s though, after the influx of foreign migrant workers and immigrants, a new boundary has been inscribed into the category of *oegukin* (foreigner). This new group is *tongnama* (Southeast Asian) migrants from South and Southeast Asian countries. At the same time, the skin colour and physical characteristics of these migrants are used as markers to differentiate these migrants. As N. Kim (ibid: 27-33) points out, white and black colours were associated with social status in traditional agrarian Korean society long before Western racial

hierarchies were introduced. White represented higher social status, cultural sophistication, intellectualism, while the colour black represented lower social status, cultural vulgarity, and ignorance. This was because the ruling class had a relatively pale skin tone while peasants and labourers were tanned from working outside. Koreans consider themselves to have a relatively lighter skin tone compared to migrant workers and foreign brides from Southeast Asian countries and they think that this lighter skin tone is closer to the white race while the darker skin of migrants is closer to that of the black race. Thus, traditional Korean colour prejudice has fused with skin colour distinctions that were entrenched through Japanese colonialism and U.S hegemony.

### **3.1.2 Cultural Foundations: Korean Ethnonationalism and Authoritarian Culture**

Korean-ness is characterized by ethnonationalism, which underpins a strong undercurrent of ethnic homogeneity and Korean bloodism - the belief that every single Korean is a descendant of the same ancestor. However, Benedict Anderson (1983) points out that a nation is “an imagined political community” which is imagined by the people who believe themselves to be members of the same group. Along the same lines, Korean scholars (H. Cho 1998, D. Kim 2000, Ha 2012) argue that Korean ethnonationalism is a very modern invention and it was mobilized for several different political and geopolitical reasons. For example, Korean identity was actively reconstructed as a means of resistance against Japanese colonialism and American imperialism (Ha 2012). At the same time, Korean identity was used as a dominant ideology to mobilize the whole nation for rapid industrialization and economic growth (Yoon and G. Kim 2005).

In the early 1900s, Korean identity was mobilized as a resistance strategy against Japanese colonialism. Korean anticolonial nationalists essentialized Korean identity and tradition

in association with the ideology of pure blood to resist Japanese colonialism. H. Cho (1998: 89) argues that colonial Korea's defensive subjectivity lay between the aspirations of colonial modernization - with colonial elites strongly believing that Korea would become stronger with the help of Japan - and the anticolonial nationalism that totalized discourse within a fixed Korean identity and essentialized tradition. This tension between colonial modernization and essentializing Korean ethnonationalism remains even after the post-colonial era (ibid).

During the industrialization period of the 1970s, the authoritarian government mobilized Korean-ness as a developmental strategy under a command economy. Tambiah (1996) points out that Asian and African post-colonial states often promoted the ideology of ethnonationalism for nation-building and economic development. Korean scholars (H. Cho 1998, D. Kim 2000, Yoon and G. Kim 2005) also point out that in the post-colonial period the whole nation was mobilized toward economic growth and industrialization. To mobilize the whole nation, nationalist values like patriotism and individual sacrifice for the nation were prioritized. In particular, Korean ethnonationalism was emphasized to provide the ideological linkage between the Korean nation and the state. Koreans eventually came to believe in the political and biological conformity of the Korean nation-state (D. Kim 2000). Through this process, the Korean state exerted full control over the Korean economy and society until 1987 when the democratization movement swept over the country (D. Kim 2000, Koo 2001, Cho 2010). Economic exploitation of workers and the political oppression of citizens were justified as a noble sacrifice made for the nation's economic growth and modernization under the rhetoric of the glorious future of Korea (J. Lee 2004, Cho 2010). To mobilize and encourage the whole nation, the Korean state often presented North America and Western Europe as model societies that Korea could learn from, and one day possibly catch up to. As a result, while Koreans built a strong nationalistic tendency and a pride

in being *han'guksaram* (Korean), Koreans have also had an inferiority complex to North America and Western Europe because the Korean developmental discourses posited its own culture and society as traditional and behind the “West.”

In this sense, the 1990’s boom in Korean cultural movements, such as finding the Korean self and finding Korean roots and tradition, signifies the start of Koreans building confidence in their own cultural heritage and identity (H. Cho 1998). The desire to explore Korean traditional culture among the youth who yearned for strong cultural identity and pride emerged soon after South Korea achieved rapid economic growth (ibid). Koreans’ self-confidence in their economic success allowed South Koreans to view Korean culture, which had depreciated for a while, as a new resource that could appeal to the rest of the world. This 1990s discourse of Korean-ness resonated with the South Korean state’s policy slogan of globalization - *segyehwa* – the aim of which was not only to boost the economy but also to improve the image and reputation of South Korea.

### **3.1.3 Learning Race through Education**

Physical characteristics are often used as markers to justify racial boundaries. In South Korea, skin colour is often used as a means of collective representation, even when the skin colour differences between people are not obvious. I found that when people use skin colour to mark boundaries, they mean general phenotype. Almost all Korean interviewees responded that skin colour is the most important standard to divide White, Black, and Asian races. They often explain that race is about skin colour. The following excerpt from a group interview with Korean women demonstrates this point.

Lee: What could be the most important thing when you define race?

Mrs. Kim: It is skin colour.

Mrs. Choi: Yes, skin colour.

Mrs. Seo: Because it is visible.

Mrs. Choi: I think everyone would say the same answer.

Mrs. Kim: I think so too.

(Korean women, Mrs. Seo, age 63, Mrs. Choi, age 59, Mrs. Kim, age 54)

As this conversation shows, skin-colour differences may be evident and visible for Koreans who believe that race is about skin colour distinction. However, in reality, there is no clear boundary between different skin colours. How then can we understand that almost all Korean interviewees divide the world's population into categories organized by skin colour, such as black, white, and Asian? Why does everyone respond with much the same answer? I soon found that education plays an essential role in disseminating racial categories in South Korea. This explains why South Koreans still use the simple colour distinction of racial categories when it comes to categorizing races even though South Koreans have developed detailed cultural cues to distinguish Koreans from Chinese and Japanese for example. Many Korean interviewees commented that they learned about black, white, and Asian race from their elementary school text books. Mr. Park who has a high school education remarked:

Mr. Park: I learned these things, for example, race, black, white, Asian, skin colour from school. It isn't my judgement. So I thought that you had a hidden intention behind when you asked me how I define race.

(Mr. Park, Korean male, ex-auto factory worker, age 39)

Korean public elementary school textbooks used to teach that races are divided by skin colour into white, black, and Asian – distinctions which initially reflected 19<sup>th</sup> century's Euro-American views on races. Therefore, the majority of Koreans understand race as a category of skin colour distinction.

In immigrant hosting societies, it is well known that public education is one of the main sites where ethnic and racial stereotypes are reproduced. Osunde, Tlou, and Brown (1996) point out that the attitudes and knowledge of school teachers are very influential in teaching students about racial stereotypes. Griffin et al. (2006) found in their research on Australian students that the attitudes of school teachers affect students' negative or positive attitudes towards Asia. The education system in South Korea also reproduces racial stereotypes and portrayals. For example, the social studies school textbooks of elementary and secondary schools from 1996 to 2007 described Africa with phrases such as “previously colonies of Europe,” and “poverty, civil wars, and refugees” (D. Kim and Han 2012).

In 2005, the Ministry of Education and Human Development announced a shift in civic education textbooks from an emphasis on mono-ethnicity towards multiculturalism and the values of tolerance (H. Kim 2007: 65). Therefore, the younger generation of children in South Korean schools may have greater values of tolerance to differences. However, education is still a vital domain for reproducing racial prejudice and categorization by skin colour even after incorporating multicultural contents in civic education textbooks since 2007. The following handout from an elementary school – the intention of which is to learn about cultural diversity – provides a snapshot of how race is taught in class.

[Figure 1] A class handout



Source: K. Lee 2012.

Note 1. This handout was used in 2012 in an elementary school to teach cultural diversity. It explains the racial characteristics of Asians, Whites, and Blacks. The handout instructs students to colour the skin and hair accordingly. The handout says that the yellow race lives in Asia, whose features are characterized by yellowish skin, a broad forehead, small noses, and black straight hair. The white race live in Europe, North and South America, and North Africa. They have pale skin, a big nose with a long face, mild curly hair, blue and light brown eyes. Finally, the black race live in Africa and North America. They have copper brown or dark brown skin, flat noses, thick lips, and short curly hair.

This class material, which reflects teachers' stereotypes and knowledge about race, teaches racial categories to young students. According to research on elementary school textbooks from grade one to three conducted by a migrants' human right group in 2012<sup>17</sup>, school textbooks that are supposed to teach cultural diversity and multiculturalism contain racial stereotypes about foreign mothers, their children, and people from South and Southeast Asian countries. In the illustrations and pictures in the school textbooks examined in this study, while white Europeans and white North Americans are delineated as tourists and international students, Southeast Asians and Africans are depicted as factory workers with darker skin. According to the report, theses

<sup>17</sup> 02/28/2012. Busan Ilbo.

illustrations misrepresent the reality that Asians make up of 85.2% of foreign tourists, and 92.4% of international students in South Korea.

### **3.1.4 The Role of Media**

According to recent research on media and race (Kim and Cho 2010, H. Kim 2017), following school textbooks, the media is the second most important channel for learning about ethnic and racial stereotypes in South Korea. Stuart Hall (2000:273) argues that “amongst other kinds of ideological labour, the media construct for us a definition of what *race* is, what meaning the imagery of race carries, and what the “problem of race” is understood to be. They help to classify out the world in terms of the categories of race.” Indeed, the mass media is one of the essential domains for spreading out racial ideologies. N. Kim (2008) argued that since South Koreans are heavily exposed to American TV and film - which portray the normativity of white America and the inferiority of non-white America - South Koreans take racial inequality for granted.

G. Han (2003) analyzed the representations of foreign residents in South Korea and found that while white people are depicted as highly educated and sophisticated, Africans and Southeast Asians are portrayed as unsophisticated or as objects for laughter. This hierarchy is also easily observable through media representations, as Y. Kim, Yoo, and J. Kim (2009: 25) write in their study of Korean soap operas; “Generally, white men represent traditional bourgeoisie, and Japanese, Taiwanese and Chinese are represented the middle class with new money, but Chinese migrant workers and South and Southeast Asian men are omitted.” Recent research on media and ethnic and racial stereotypes (H. Kim 2017) backs up this point: South Koreans consider white people from North America and Europe as admirable, Asians from

economically developed countries (e.g., Japan, Taiwan, Hong Kong, China) as competitors, but Southeast Asians are viewed as illegal migrants or objects of sympathy.

Not only Koreans but also immigrants learn race through the mass media. While many immigrant and foreign worker interviewees did not even know the word, *tongnama*, some immigrant interviewees - especially those who have been exposed to Korean mass media more often and who have more interactions with Koreans - have learned the term *tongnama*. A Vietnamese immigrant, Hong, who married a Korean man, explains how she learned the word *tongnama* from her neighbours and from TV news.

Lee: Have you thought of yourself as *tongnama*?

Hong: Yes, I have. I heard *tongnama* from Korean people a long time ago soon after I came to Korea. On one occasion, there was a Cambodian woman near me, and Korean people thought this woman was me. They said, "oh, you guys look similar because you are *tongnama*." It was the first time to hear of *tongnama*, and I thought that maybe I am *tongnama*. Also, then I heard it again from the TV news.

Lee: What was it?

Hong: Well.... In the TV news, when foreign workers have some complaints. I heard from the TV news about *tongnama* foreign workers' protest for unpaid wages.

Lee: Did the TV news use the word, *tongnama*?

Hong: Yeah, it did, and I thought that I am *tongnama*.

(Hong, Vietnamese female immigrant, age 29)

Long-term immigrants, who have a higher level of Korean language proficiency and a more comprehensive understanding of Korean culture, learn the term and the meaning of *tongnama* as

they become more integrated into Korean society. Some immigrants, like Hong, accept this concept as they learn it, but some immigrants show discontent with this concept because of its negative portrayal of South and Southeast Asians.

Thus, both Korean public education and mass media teach race and racial ideology. Significantly, Korean education and mass media are influenced by old Euro-American racial categories and racial logics, which are organized by skin colour distinctions, racial attributes, and racial aptitudes. As N. Kim (2008: 11) explains however, "none of the cultural representations would carry the force that they do unless they made sense within South Korean cultural logics." Thus, by reorganizing the imported Euro-American racial logic with the Korean cultural system of ethnonationalism and hierarchism, South and Southeast Asian migrants are slotted into a new category of *tongnama* in South Korea.

### **3.2 Mobilizing Korean Identity to Secure Resources**

Constructing national, ethnic, and racial identity is one of the strategies to access, or limit access to social, economic, and political resources. Throughout the recent history of racial identity formation, diverse forms of capitalism and immigration have been deeply involved with the formation of ethnic and racial identity not only for minority groups but also for dominant groups. Bonnett (1998) argues that British working-class people mobilized white identity to increase chances to access welfare resources under welfare capitalism. In Britain, for example, white identity used to be considered bourgeoisie identity, so working-class people were marginal to whiteness. However, British working-class people actively mobilized white identity when non-white immigrants arrived in Britain (ibid). Similarly, in the 19<sup>th</sup> century U.S, Italian and Irish immigrants were not considered as racially white, but they were included in the white

community when Asian and African immigrants arrived (Roediger 2002). Another interesting study (Hage 2005) shows how Christian Lebanese people, conventionally considered as a non-white group, actively construct themselves as European and white to separate themselves from Muslim Lebanese during the capitalist economic transformation of their country in order to take better economic and social positions.

Immigrant receiving countries often show aggressively defensive positions against immigrants and perceived challenges to their social and economic status (Bonnett 1998). As the foreign population increases, Koreans' understanding of immigrants and foreign migrant workers has gradually changed. Until the end of the 1990s, Koreans did not perceive immigrants and foreign migrant workers as social threats, and instead showed paternalistic sympathy based on the social images of foreign migrant workers as the helpless victims of labour exploitation and sex trafficking (G. Han 2003). However, Chung et al. (2016) show that Koreans started perceiving immigrants and foreign migrant workers as potential social and cultural threats by comparing several sets of national surveys from 2003 to 2015. According to their policy report, in 2012 around 35.4% of respondents agreed that immigrants were social burdens and threats. In the subsequent survey in 2015, this rate increased to 46.7%. Similar to what these surveys indicate, my Korean interviewees often expressed apprehension about perceived threats, such as economic burdens, political mobilization, social disorder, and intergroup crime. However, while Koreans seem to be socially and culturally overwhelmed by the increasing foreign population, in general Koreans do not consider immigrants and foreign migrant workers as job competitors because the majority of immigrants and foreign migrant workers are concentrated in low wage jobs or so-called 3D jobs, which Koreans avoid. Therefore, although working class Korean people, especially those who work in the 3D jobs, may experience job competition within the

minimum wage jobs, for average Koreans the worry of economic burden does not come directly from the job competition. Instead, it is related to the public social images of immigrants and multicultural families, so-called *tamunhwa* as low-income families and as welfare recipients, who may reap the benefits of welfare programs and who may need more social services than average Korean families.

When anti-immigrant sentiment and working-class racism arise from the distribution of welfare resources, then Korean identity becomes essential for protecting the family, community, and nation from immigrants and multicultural families. The growing negative sentiment about immigrants and multicultural families is also associated with the perception of reverse discrimination; that those groups may receive social benefits more than native Koreans do. Ms. Yang, whose younger brother once married a Filipina wife but is now divorced, explains her feeling of potential reverse discrimination onto Korean people concerning the distribution of welfare resources.

Lee: In your opinion, what could be the positive things about becoming a multicultural society, and what are your concerns about becoming a multicultural society if you have any?

Ms. Yang: I guess the benefits are to experience many different cultures without going abroad. But the drawbacks... I worry that Koreans might get fewer welfare benefits if there are too many foreigners and immigrants. Look, there are quite many community centers and multicultural family centers in Ansan for foreigners and multicultural families. These people move to Ansan to use these centers. These centers provide subsidies and free programs at the municipal level and

national level as well. Of course, as multicultural families and foreigners get more benefits, then we Koreans will receive fewer benefits.

(Ms. Yang, Korean woman, age 36)

Like Ms. Yang, several Korean interviewees expressed their concerns that free social programs may spoil immigrants and multicultural families, and eventually cause reverse discrimination onto underprivileged Koreans, such as low-income family, elderly poor, and orphans. Mr. Sang, a volunteer of Red Cross Korea also expressed a similar concern saying, “even though there are quite a lot of Korean people who need better welfare support, they are neglected compared to multicultural families and immigrants.” He hopes that Korea will become an advanced welfare state like northern European countries so that Koreans and immigrants would equally enjoy the social benefits. While Mr. Sang and Ms. Yang both express concern over the usage of welfare resources, Ms. Yang’s concerns are closely related to the perception that Koreans are taxpayers and immigrants/multicultural family are welfare receivers. For working-class Koreans, what immigrants and multicultural families receive is what they lose. The feeling of unfairness reinforces anti-immigrant sentiment concerning competition for scarce resources including status, institutional access, and education.

When educational competition gets severe, racial and ethnic identity becomes important to take a better position in the competition. Scholars (Frey 1979, Olzak, Shanahan, and West 1994, Renzulli and Evans 2005) document how racial/ethnic identity becomes predominant in education to maintain perceived social status. For example, in America “whites get social status not only from the neighbourhood they live in but also from the quality of the schools their children attend” (Renzulli and Evans 2005: 399). White Americans make decisions on residential

and school choice based on the actual or potential exposure of their children to ethnic minorities (James 1989).

Since Koreans traditionally treat education as the main social ladder for upward mobility and also the essential means through which to maintain status, there is a culture of competitiveness from early education to university, which is often described with the term “education fever (*kyoyungnyol*)” (Seth 2002). Korea’s “education fever” is understood as one of the reasons why Korea could have achieved unprecedented economic success in such a short time. It also often causes public scandals, for example, some affluent families use fake residency to illegally transfer their children into schools in highly reputable school districts. Even though there is always an internal educational migration flow of young families, who move to a reputable district or city to provide a better education for their children, immigrants and multicultural families were not seen as a cause of the internal educational migration until recently. However, a new educational Korean flight is beginning to emerge in the inner-city neighbourhoods near Seoul and Ansan, where immigrants, multicultural families, and foreign migrant workers are densely populated.

According to the newspaper, *Segye Ilbo* in November 2017, some Korean parents pulled their children out of an elementary school in an inner-city neighbourhood of Seoul, where relatively higher numbers of children of multicultural and immigrant families reside. These Korean parents worried about the low quality of education and the poor reputation of the school. As more multicultural children enrolled in this school, more Korean parents pulled their children out. The conversation with Mrs. Ko, who has two school-age children, shows her motivations for moving from “an immigrant neighbourhood” to “a more reputable neighbourhood” in Ansan. Since the housing prices in this newly developed neighbourhood are quite expensive, Mrs. Ko’s

family was not able to buy a new home even after selling their old house in the immigrant neighbourhood. In the end, they decided to rent a high-end four-bedroom apartment instead.

Lee: Do you know anyone who moved to another district where there are not many multicultural families?

Mrs. Ko: Well... We did. I didn't want to do that, but my husband... My husband said, "why does this school have so many *tamunhwa* (referring to children of multicultural and immigrant families)? We need to move to a better neighbourhood. Look, isn't it too obvious, the quality of this school?" So, we sold the house and then moved into the better neighbourhood. Actually, there was an aggressive kid in my son's class, and his mother was a darker skinned foreigner. In general, Korean mothers complain if there are *tamunhwa* kids in the same class with their kids. Korean mothers think that *tamunhwa* kids can be needy in class and our kids may learn bad behaviours from them.

(Mrs. Ko, Korean female cooking class instructor, age 38)

Mrs. Ko moved to this newly developed neighbourhood where *tamunhwa* and foreign migrant workers are not likely to be residing because of the higher housing and living costs. Although moving into this middle-class suburb is pricey, they are quite satisfied with the new neighbourhood because of the better quality of school education, accessible private after-school tutoring industries, and trendy lifestyle. Like Mrs. Ko's family, many parents would share the same concern for the perceived potential educational disadvantages that their children may experience. Korean parents, who believe that multicultural children and immigrant children

induce the low quality of education, also would believe that this might lower the chance of their children getting into a reputable university. Another Korean mother in her mid-30s, Mrs. Chun sympathizes with her Korean friend whose children attend schools with multicultural children commenting, “I understand my friend’s concern... If my children have to go to a school, where there are a lot of foreign mothers and *tamunhwa* kids, I would also worry.” This Korean flight is not a widespread social problem yet. However, Mrs. Ko and Mrs. Chun's comments show how parents’ educational aspirations reinforce the symbolic ethnic and racial boundaries, and how Korean parents perceive immigrants and multicultural family to be a threat to their actual and potential social status.

Political participation may be no different. Within the context of institutional political participation, several Korean interviewees expressed their anxieties surrounding potential competition with immigrants and the second generation of multicultural families. Historically racist immigration policies have mobilized diverse strategies to restrict immigrants and ethnic/racial minorities from gaining political power. There is, for example, evidence of the United States limiting minorities’ and immigrants’ right to vote, including African Americans, Native Americans, and Chinese and Japanese Americans until “The Civil Rights Act of 1964” was passed and even beyond that.<sup>18</sup> Conversations with several Korean interviewees show Koreans’ fear of losing control to immigrants and the second generation of multicultural families. These Korean interviewees have high school or community college degrees, and they have elementary school children.

---

<sup>18</sup> From a section of “History of voting rights” in Mass Vote, a grassroots political advocacy group in the U.S.

Mrs. Park: I agree that they (immigrants and multicultural children) need to enter Korean political institutions to make their own voice. Anyways we Koreans may not be able to understand what they need. But, but.... only if they will not become the leader of Koreans.

Mrs. Sung: Quota restrictions would be okay to manage their political participation.

Mrs. Joo: I don't know about the politics, but I think a few of them is okay. Multicultural children can become politicians soon. Anyways they are Koreans as well. But I am not sure about immigrant politicians. They are not really Koreans. This will deeply disturb our Korean identity and our roots. To be honest, I wish we maintained the Korean blood and lineage. The reason why I said that I accept *tamunhwa* children is, because we cannot avoid the current situation of international marriages and immigration to Korea. But this doesn't mean that I support them to become politicians and gain political power. In 20 or 30 years, we Koreans may become the minority and *tamunhwa* will become the majority. Then we will lose the Korean identity. Because of this reason, I am actually against the political participation of immigrants and *tamunhwa* children. Maybe I am too conservative though.

Mrs. Park: I agree with you. In the worst case, we may have to fight against the party of foreigners (meaning, immigrants and multicultural children).

Mrs. Sung: That will be chaos. That's why we need to make a quota system. We need to make sure that only a few of them can participate in politics.

Mrs. Park: Yes, we need to set a clear bar, which allows them to climb only to a certain level.

(Korean women, Mrs. Park, age 34, Mrs. Sung, age 35, Mrs. Joo, age 36)

Although Koreans recognize the legal membership of immigrants, the above conversation reveals how Koreans understand immigrant political participation somewhat differently. While these Korean interviewees acknowledge the lower level of political participation of immigrants and multicultural children, they understand this as a threat if immigrants and multicultural children get institutional political power. For these Korean interviewees, changes of perceived ethnic/racial status and power relations mean social disorder that Koreans should prevent. Thus, these Korean interviewees suggest setting a glass ceiling and a quota system against immigrants and the second generation of multicultural families to reserve resources for those whom they consider real Koreans. Especially for working-class Korean people, like these interviewees, who are already disadvantaged in competition with middle and upper-class people for jobs and education, protecting the current political power dynamics may increase their children's access to resources in the future. According to scholars who study the sociology of emotions (Kemper 1978, Turner and Stets 2005, Cederman et al. 2010), such negative emotions are often aroused when a person or a group face an actual and potential loss of power (authority) and status (prestige), which change the distribution of resources. Korean working-class people, like Mr. Han (Korean taxi driver, age 58), have deep frustration and feeling of unfairness that they now have to compete for the resources against a group of immigrants and the second generation of multicultural families, which Koreans have not considered as their competitors before. Thus, these working-class Korean people do not think that restrictions on the political right of minorities reinforce political inequality; instead, they understand this as a way of protecting their rightful claims as Koreans for their family and community.

Interestingly, the majority of Korean interviewees group immigrants and the second generation of multicultural families into one category - *tamunhwa* - even if they were born in

Korea and one of their parents is native Korean. This shows that the ideologies of Korean blood and ethnonationalism are still influential to South Korea. Thus, for Koreans those who believe the narrow definition of being Korean - that only a Korean person who is ethnically, legally, and culturally native may have full loyalty to the Korean nation – there is no doubt that they are politically in the in-group. On the contrary, immigrants and second generation of multicultural families are viewed suspiciously as potential political threats to the Korean nation because they may be legally Korean, but they may not fully embrace Korea ethnically and culturally. This implies that they may have less civic spirit and loyalty to the Korean nation. Until 2010, for example, the Korean military did not accept the *tamunhwa* people and *honhyŏl* - literally meaning ‘mixed blood’ for the mandatory military service if their skin colour is visibly different from native Korean. The military service law was revised in 2010, so now the Korean military recruits soldiers from the second generation of immigrants and multicultural families.

In sum, until Korea opened the border for economic migrants to fill up labour shortages and for foreign women to fill the bride deficit, Korean-ness was understood without much association with racial identity. However, Koreans actively reconstruct Korean-ness to deal with the new ethnic, and racial diversity as marriage immigrants and foreign migrant workers arrived. In the contemporary context of economic migration to Korea, Korean identity is mobilized to access diverse forms of economic, social, and educational resources, and Korean identity is also used to justify limiting the access of immigrants and multicultural families to these same resources.

### 3.3 Making the *Tongnama* Other

#### 3.3.1 Travelling and Travel Writing

Travelling and travel writing is one of the symbolic ways to create “less developed” spaces and sites. Pratt ([1992] 2008: 3) claims that European travel into and exploration writing about non-European parts of the world around the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century created the imperial order for Europeans at home. Today’s imperial eyes look out on “less developed” spaces and see sites for industrial outsourcing, plantations for genetically modified monocrops, and dumping grounds for toxic waste (ibid:xiii). Travelling and travel writing in contemporary South Korea deliver the very same ideology to create *tongnama* as a less developed space. During my field research, many interviewees went on vacations or aid trips with churches or developmental NGOs to Southeast Asian countries. Southeast Asian countries and China have become popular vacation destinations for South Koreans because these destinations are relatively affordable and geographically closer to South Korea. In particular, budget package tours with relatively cheap accommodations are popular for Koreans. Korean aid-volunteers also tend to visit remote villages where infrastructure needs an update at their expenses.

I found that there are two different patterns of how Korean interviewees reflect on what they saw and what they understood about the places they experienced during their trips. This suggests that travel can have opposite effects. Travelling can confirm and reinforce the existing stereotypes of South and Southeast Asian countries. At the same time, it helps people realize the truth of what might have been false rumours or exaggerations and encourages people to develop connections and sympathy. Mr. Sang’s experience show that while he developed sympathy and connections to the people whom he helped, he also saw what South Korea achieved in comparison to the remote villages where he volunteered. He worked for an auto factory for about

18 years before he started his own pig-farm in the outskirts of Ansan city. As an active volunteer for Red Cross Korea, he joined several overseas aid trips to Cambodia and the Philippines on his own expense.

Lee: How did you feel when you went there for aid work?

Mr.Sang: Those places are very behind. It is almost like the Korean countryside in the old days. When we had meal services, there were always commotions like pushing each other without waiting in line. I really felt sympathy for them. At the same time, I realize how happy we are and well-off compared to them.

(Mr. Sang, Korean male pig farmer, ex-factory worker, age 44)

Mr. Sang's description of his aid-activities in Cambodia and the Philippines resembles the images of white American soldiers passing around aid-supplies, such as chocolate, sugar, and powdered milk to the local Koreans during the Korean War (*han'gukchŏnjaeng*). K. Choi (2009: 41) points out that in the 1960s the American soldiers exercised their material power over the local Koreans, which reinforced the racial images of white American soldiers as benefactor and ruler, versus Koreans as beneficiary and subject. Although Mr. Sang's generation and the younger generation have not directly experienced such material deficits, the refrain of "South Korea, once the world's second poorest country is now one of the world's biggest economies" is repetitively used to emphasize Korea's economic success. J. Han (2015) points out that South Korea's economic success allows Koreans to feel responsible for the poor in less-developed countries. Mr. Sang's motivation for the overseas aid activities may be personal, but what he saw during his aid-activities reminds him of why he needs to help people in these countries. At the same time, seeing the poverty of others reminds him of how happy Koreans are. Another

interviewee, Mrs. Chun also learned about Southeast Asia through budget group tours to *tongnama* countries.

Mrs. Chun: I travelled to *tongnama* countries like Thailand and the Philippines. Some places are quite modern, but behind these modern places, so many local people are suffering from poverty. So then I realized, these are the poor people come to Korea for a better life. I saw several shantytowns behind the buildings while I was sightseeing. Oh my god, people lived in tin houses that looked like ones that we had in the 60s right after the Korean War. I was so shocked, really.

(Korean woman, Mrs. Chun age 35)

For Mrs. Chun, the travel to Southeast Asian countries seems to help her develop sympathy toward the people in the “shantytowns” and migrants in general. She tried to not generalize Southeast Asia as a place of poverty by mentioning the different local economic conditions. At the same time, she also compared the presence of “shantytowns” in *tongnama* countries to the one in the 1960’s South Korea. Korea is delineated as a country that overcame poverty long ago and has now progressed into prosperity. Mr. Sang and Mrs. Chun remarked, “they” live in the past that “we” have already overcome. Portraying poverty as an undesirable condition of a painful past allows you to see what you have recently gained (J. Han 2015).

However, these perceived images of poverty are often exaggerated, as another interviewee, Mrs. Kyung (age 54) points out, "I heard these countries are dirty, and some places have toilets without doors. People would believe it if you haven’t visited there. But when I travelled, every place I visited was quite clean and nice.” Similar to Mrs. Kyung’s comments,

one Chinese foreign worker, who worked for a travel agency in China before coming to South Korea, complained that Korean people who use cheap group tours usually stay at cheap hotels and eat cheap meals because they are cheap, but these people then believe that all of China is cheap and cruddy.

### **3.3.2 Symbolizing the Ordinary and the Deviant: Normative Judgements**

Symbolizing the ordinary as a normative value plays an important role in constructing the Other and Self (Bonette 1998). To inscribe a new social meaning to the term *tongnama*, selective imageries and beliefs work to construct *tongnama* as deviant. In contrast, Koreanness is normatively considered ordinary and decent. As Hage (2005: 186) puts it, “the perception is the product of their practical experience.” Images and beliefs of *tongnama* that Koreans strategically choose are fundamentally limited as they are derived from their practical observation and experiences of everyday life. With strategically selected images and experiences, certain characteristics of foreign workers and immigrants from South and Southeast Asian countries are emphasized to make sense of these beliefs within Korean racial logics. For example, the tension around littering problems reveals how Koreans understand foreign workers and immigrants from South and Southeast Asia and from rural China through practical experiences of everyday life.

When I visited W district in Ansan – where there is a dense population of foreign migrant workers and immigrants - I noticed that there were piles of garbage in black plastic bags on the street. Banners were hung nearby the garbage piles, warning “No Littering” in Korean, English, Chinese, and Vietnamese. The banner also included some information about disposal regulations and the amount of fines when not using a paid trash bag. A speaker repeated a recorded warning of disposal regulations. I could also see a CCTV nearby. In my interviews, several Koreans

complained about foreign migrant workers and immigrants' poor manners about littering and public sanitation. Mrs. Hyun and Mrs. Kong demonstrate this point.

Mrs. Hyun: We should use a paid clear trash bag. Otherwise, the city won't pick up the garbage. Now there are quite a lot of foreigners in my neighbourhood. Before they moved in, we didn't have the garbage problem, but now I can see piles of garbage in black plastic bags in front of buildings.

Mrs. Kong: Foreigners are like that. Probably every neighbourhood where lots of foreigners are living would have the same garbage problem. We keep the rules. We bought paid trash bags because we are Korean. But these foreigners just use black plastic bags from supermarkets and then dump on the street. Frankly speaking, they are shameless.

Lee: Maybe they don't know the disposal rules?

Mrs. Kong: No way, they still dump in a black plastic bag even after they were told.

Mrs. Hyun: They knew the rules, but they don't keep the rules because they are cheap.

(Korean women, Mrs. Hyun, age 54, Mrs. Kong, age 47)

In this conversation, Mrs. Hyun and Mrs. Kong both use the word 'foreigner' to refer to foreign migrant workers and marriage immigrants from Southeast Asian countries and China. These Korean interviewees contrasted the positive characteristics of being Korean and the negative characteristics of being foreigners by using normative judgements. For people, who believe Koreans' moral superiority over foreign migrant workers and immigrants, Koreans are decent members of society, but foreigners are not.

A police officer - Mrs. Kim - from the W district police station explained how littering caused tension between Korean residents and foreign residents in daily life. According to her, the littering problem is a matter of civic education on basic social manners and public rules, which need to be learned from an early age. She emphasized, “the change of consciousness is an outcome of repetitive education. But these foreigners were not trained in that way, because their countries have different social and cultural conditions. So, many of them still don’t understand the basic public rules and manners, which seem to be so natural for Koreans.” She added, therefore, the police station and the district office regularly hold public campaigns to teach foreign residents from South and Southeast Asia and rural China about basic public manners, such as proper disposal treatment, recycling, and the public transportation rules, which, she hopes, eventually will help prevent the possibility of foreigners’ crime in this neighbourhood.

Like the police officer’s concerns, many Korean interviewees associated foreign migrant workers and immigrants from South Asia, Southeast Asia, and rural China with a crime. Specifically, Korean women interviewees often express their fear of being victims of crimes committed by male foreign migrant workers.

Lee: You mentioned that you would not dare to go to W district.

Mrs. Hwang: Yes. Because W district is known for its heavy crime. You might already watch TV news about these cases. There were several murder cases already. It is too scary. I can’t imagine myself visiting there. I don’t like crimes committed by foreigners.

Mrs. Chun: We have a lot of Chinese and Southeast Asian foreign workers because of the industrial complex nearby. In my case, when I was a single girl, a bunch of young

foreign men, looked like Filipinos, followed me. I was super scared. And on another occasion, some foreign guys followed me again. If they asked me to have a coffee or something, then I would think they were interested in me. But one of the guys stared at me fiercely and followed me. I felt something terrible would happen. So I ran to a telephone booth, locked the glass door, and called my friend. They eventually took off after staring at me for a while. You know what? When foreign men follow you, you can't be calm. It is so scary. That happened during the daytime, but that still gave me tons of chills.

(Korean women, Mrs. Chun age 35, Mrs. Hwang age 38)

As Mrs. Chun describes, during my field research I often heard from my Korean factory co-workers, neighbours, and female friends about Korean women's fear of foreign men. A recent survey on Korean multiculturalism documents that there is growing public concern about foreigners' crimes in spite of official annual crime reports claiming that the crime rate of foreigners is always lower than the domestic crime rate (Y. Choi and S. Kang 2012).

Media scholars (Gilliam et al., 1996, DeCuir and Dixson 2004) point out that portrayals of crime and race in mass media influence elevated fears of victimization among viewers, and that news programs often misrepresent certain ethnic and racial groups as the perpetrators. Korean mass media portrays foreign migrant workers from South and Southeast Asia, and rural China in association with illegality more often than their actual crime rate (S. Kim and E. Kim 2008). Therefore, ethnic and racial stereotypes of foreign migrant workers and immigrants, which Korean interviewees already learn through media, are reaffirmed through Korean interviewees' selective practical experiences.

### 3.3.3 Performative Characteristics of Race: Hairstyle and Fashion

While skin colour is understood as a typical racial marker, performative characteristics of race are also used to draw a symbolic racial boundary in a hierarchical way. In this sense, not only skin colour but also hairstyle and fashion are used as a signal of membership within a specific ethnic or racial group. Roth (2012: 154-5) calls this “performing race”: using subtle cultural cues, such as hairstyle, dress, and gesture to indicate identity and belonging. These subtle cues often rely on the observer’s stereotypes and assumptions about different ethnic and racial groups. Many Korean interviewees said that they could guess people’s ethnicity and nationality by using a combination of skin colour and cultural cues, such as makeup, hairstyle, and dress.

Lee: When you see foreigners, can you guess where they come from? Or their ethnicity and nationality?

Mrs. Hyun: Yes, I can. First, their skin colour is different from Koreans. For example, Vietnamese or Indonesian’s skin colour and appearance are visibly different from Korean.

Mrs. Kong: Chinese people have the very same skin colour as Korean, but I can identify them from their makeup, hairstyle, and fashion.

Mrs. Hyun: Yeah, it is hard to explain, but somehow their style is different. Simply put, the way they dress up is a little bit outdated. But their style is getting better as they stay here longer.

(Korean women, Mrs. Hyun, age 54, Mrs. Kong, age 47)

As this conversation shows, certain styles and fashions lead Koreans to classify immigrants as members of certain ethnic and racial categories. During my field research, I often heard the very same stories from Korean interviewees, factory co-workers, and neighbours about Southeast Asian women's skin colour and styling. While the narratives typically include positive evaluations of Koreans' whiter skin colour, attractiveness, and stylish dress, Southeast Asian women are described negatively as darker, unattractive and unstylish. Thus, for Koreans who believe in the advancement of Korean beauty and fashion, immigrant women's unattractive characteristics can be minimized if they whiten their skin colour like Korean women and follow the newest Korean styles of hair and dress. These performative characteristics are used to indicate not only group identity but also cultural hierarchies between Koreans and South and Southeast Asian migrants in a symbolic way.

Therefore, certain characteristics of Southeast Asian migrants are emphasized to separate them from what is considered ordinary and normal in the symbolic order of things, the social norms, and even the performative characteristics. Making the *tongnama* as "the Other" includes the creation and maintenance of imaginary representations of migrants from South and Southeast Asia, which is the other side of the imaginary representations that constitute the Korean-Self.

### **3.4 Slotting Ethnic Status into a Racial Category**

The literal meaning of *tongnama* means Southeast Asia or people from Southeast Asia.

However, Korean interviewees and long-term immigrants use *tongnama* to refer not only to Southeast Asia but also to South Asian countries such as Bangladesh, Pakistan, Nepal, India and Sri Lanka. Therefore, interviewees from Bangladesh and Nepal - commonly known as South Asian countries - identify themselves as people from *tongnama* countries. Moreover, some

Korean interviewees even include China and Mongolia in *tongnama*. On the surface, this seems to indicate a misunderstanding of geography, but this interpretation misses how the racialization process works. Racialization is a form of categorization. Jenkins (1994: 201) argues that “while social groups define themselves, their name(s), their nature(s) and their boundary(s), social categories are identified, defined and delineated by others.” Thus, racialization is “problematic when social actors are characterized by others in a way that is inconsistent with their own self-identity” (MacDonnell and de Lourenco 2009: 239). During the process of racialization, immigrants and migrants are slotted into levels on the Korean ethno-racial hierarchy depending on skin colour, ethnicity, nationality, and immigration category.

As Edward Said ([1978, 1979] 1994) analyses in his book *Orientalism*, the “West” imagines and depicts the “Orient” as the inferior other in arbitrary ways that reflect their economic and political necessity. For several Korean interviewees, like Mr. Jang, the term *tongnama* is strongly associated with the perceived group position of foreign migrant workers and foreign brides. For these Korean interviewees, *tongnama* includes some East Asian and Eastern European countries, which are geographically obviously not a part of South and Southeast Asia. Mr. Jang who worked with diverse foreign migrant workers for several decades presented his opinion in the following excerpt:

Lee: In your opinion, which countries belong to *tongnama*?

Mr. Jang: There are many countries. Vietnam, Thailand, Bangladesh, Indonesia, Mongolia.

Lee: Is China *tongnama*?

Mr. Jang: Yes, China is *tongnama*. Uzbekistan and Russia too.

(Mr. Jang, age 59, male Korean factory worker)

Although they were not the first countries that came to mind for him, Mr. Jang includes China, Mongolia, Uzbekistan and Russia in the category of *tongnama*. This may be due to Mr. Jang's lack of the geographical knowledge. However, the conversation with Mr. Jang shows that he understands *tongnama* based on his interactions with foreign migrant workers from all different part of Asia and the former Soviet Union through his factory job. For him, *tongnama* means people who came to Korea as foreign workers. During my field research, I found a similar tendency among other Korean interviewees. They identify *tongnama* by naming the countries where they believe foreign workers and foreign brides would come from without considering geography. However, it was entirely unexpected to hear some Korean interviewees include China and Russia, more precisely the former the Soviet Union in *tongnama*. Because China is considered an East Asian country and in terms of physical appearance, Chinese are similar to Koreans. Russians are less similar, it would appear. Ms. Yang, a sister-in-law of Filipina marriage immigrant comments, shows how and why some Korean interviewees think China and Mongolia are part of *tongnama*.

Lee: In your opinion, which countries belong to *tongnama*?

Ms. Yang: China, Philippines, and countries like them. Is Japan *tongnama*?

Lee: I don't know.

Ms. Yang: Hum... I think Japan is not *tongnama* because Japan is wealthier than us. Also, I would include Bangladesh, Pakistan, India, Indonesia, Cambodia, and Vietnam, something like this.

(Ms. Yang, Korean female, age 36)

Ms. Yang includes South and South Asian countries in *tongnama*. She also includes China but excludes Japan based on her subjective images of each countries' economic power. For her, one of the main criteria of *tongnama* is the perceived economic rank of each country or region. For those Korean interviewees, if a country exports massive number of migrant workers abroad, this indicates its economic weakness to other countries. Thus, these Koreans believe that China and the former Soviet Union countries must be located below South Korea on the global developmental hierarchy because foreign migrant workers and foreign brides come from these countries, even though China and Russia are leading economies in the world. For example, Mr. Kang (age 45), who married a Chinese woman from a small farming village, describes his Chinese wife's hometown, "Roughly ten years ago, China was still behind, I mean, their lifestyle. I could see chickens in the yard. Cows were mooing. And people were still using bullock carts." For Mr. Kang, a small farming village in China where his wife came from represents China.

Mr. Kang's comments reveal a critical aspect of how Koreans' interactions with the people from very particular classes and segments of those migrant sending societies, a Chinese woman from a small farming village in Mr. Kang's case, stand in for the entire nation. As a result, these Koreans associate the country with a less developed status in their mind, even if this is not empirically entirely accurate.

In general, Korean people also do not include China and Russia as a part of *tongnama*. The majority of Korean interviewee use the term *tongnama* to refer to migrants from South and Southeast Asian countries. Thus, I do not read Mr. Jang and Mrs. Yang's comments as evidence of China and Russia in the category of *tongnama*. Instead, Mr. Jang and Mrs. Yang's comments

tell us about how the perceived image and status of migrants can affect Koreans' understanding of migrant-sending countries' status. For example, the lower-class status of migrants in their home countries affects Koreans' understanding of migrant-sending countries' racial status that migrants impose on members of those societies. Therefore, for some Koreans those who believe that South Asia, Southeast Asia, China and Russia are less developed countries, everyone in these countries is getting tarred with the same brush.

Most Korean interviewees understand *tongnama* as a racialized social category, which combines appearances with social status and immigration status. Although people from South and Southeast Asian countries have diverse social and economic backgrounds, and the majority of international students in Korea are from Southeast Asian countries, most Korean interviewees understand *tongnama* as foreign migrant workers and foreign brides. A group interview with three Korean women resulted in the following exchange:

Lee: What images come to your mind when you hear *tongnama*?

Mrs. Park: Um... *tongnama* reminds me of foreign workers who don't have money from less developed countries.

Mrs. Sung: For me, it reminds me of international marriage. I don't think *tongnama* countries are poorer or less-developed. I think that international marriages make people think *tongnama* countries are poor. Probably the majority of people in these countries wouldn't be like the ladies who came to Korea for international marriages.

Mrs. Joo: For me, it is still less-developed countries, which need some help from Korea.

(Korean women, Mrs. Park, age 34, Mrs. Sung, age 35, Mrs. Joo, age 36)

As Mrs. Sung points out, the lower social status of foreign migrant workers and foreign brides overrepresents migrants from South and Southeast Asia, and this imposes the racial status of these countries in South Korea. Therefore, while *tongnama* remains a geographical term to refer to the Southeast Asian region, the term *tongnama* has gained a new socio-racial meaning since after Korea began receiving migrants from South and Southeast Asian countries and China. Some long-term immigrants also understand *tongnama* this way. Udaya, a Nepalese immigrant, who has a Korean wife and a child with her, shows this point clearly:

Udaya: One day on a subway train, I saw some Koreans avoiding sitting beside some foreign workers. Those workers looked like people from Bangladesh, Pakistan, Vietnam, and the Philippines. I was standing near the train doors, so I could overhear these Koreans complaining between them that *tongnama nodongcha* (South and Southeast Asian worker) were stinky. Those workers looked like they had just left their factory. Probably they didn't have time to make themselves clean.

Lee: How did you feel after overhearing these Koreans?

Udaya: I thought that these Koreans used the word *tongnama* to refer to foreign workers who work in factories. I felt that the word *tongnama* has a negative meaning. But everyone is different. Some people from *tongnama* are highly educated, and some people could be of low quality. So, I hope Koreans don't say *tongnama* people are usually like this or like that.

(Udaya, Nepalese male immigrant, age 30)

The conversation with Udaya shows how racial meanings attach to a group during the racialization process, and how immigrants also learn these racial meanings through daily interactions and encounters with Koreans as they integrate into Korean society. As Roth (2012) points out, generalizing physical characteristics of a particular group of people is one of the most common ways to draw a racial boundary between people. Miles and Brown ([1989] 2003: 52) also claim that “people have continued to identify the Other by reference to phenotypical features that therefore serve as indicators of an alleged significant difference.” The way “the Other” is represented is closely related to how “the Other” is imagined (Said 1978). In South Korea, the thought of *tongnama* as a unitary place and people is based on an imaginary representation in a hierarchal way. The following conversations with Korean interviewees show how Koreans conceive of *tongnama* bodies through the lens of a developmental hierarchy of countries.

Lee: What images come to your mind when you hear the term *tongnama*?

Mrs. Jeong: Well, some physical characteristics? Some images like short height, the double eyelid, and darker skin.

Mrs. Kyoung: Some images like they are living in poverty.

Mrs. Jeong: Undeveloped countries, and small bodies.

Lee: What do you think about their temperament?

Mrs. Kyoung: Nice and docile. Generally nice.

(Korean women, Mrs. Jeong, Mrs. Kyoung, both 55 years old)

These Korean women connect the physical characteristics of *tongnama* (small body, dark-skinned) to the imagined docile temperament and economic developmental status. The image of *tongnama* as small, dark-skinned, poor, undeveloped, and docile South and Southeast Asians resembles European and American colonial/racial logic about racial and ethnic minorities. While the relationship between migrant-hosting Asian countries and foreign workers/marriage immigrants looks different from the relationship between European colonial powers and the colonized, the logic of modernity functions in much the same way by creating racial others. The skin colour and physical characteristics of migrants are racial markers used to differentiate people from South and Southeast Asia as *tongnama*. Koreans consider themselves to have a relatively lighter skin tone and better body type compared to migrants and they think that this light skin tone is associated with modernistic cultural advancement while the darker skin of migrants is related to backwardness and underdevelopment.

As the earlier conversation with Udaya shows, long-term immigrants who have stayed more than five years, who speak Korean fluently, and who have more chance to interact with Koreans on a daily basis understand the term *tongnama* and its negative connotations. Many foreign migrant workers and marriage immigrants who have lived in Korea for a comparatively short time, who do not have much interaction with Koreans, or who do not speak Korean fluently, do not know even the term *tongnama*. Although one's understanding of *tongnama* differs according to the individual's personal experiences and their perceptions, long-term immigrant interviewees notice how Koreans use the term *tongnama* with negative connotations. The following excerpts are from two separate conversations with Bangladesh immigrants, Ali and Masum. Both know how Koreans understand *tongnama*, but they show slightly different

personal understanding of *tongnama*. Ali and Masum had both lived in South Korea for over ten years when I met them.

Lee: Have you ever thought that you are *tongnama*?

Ali: I don't feel personally offended by the word *tongnama*. But I used to think I am Asian, but Korean people suddenly called me *tongnama*. So I learned all these *tongnama* things in Korea.

Lee: How did you feel when you heard of *tongnama*?

Ali: I just thought that Korean people don't know geography very well. You know Koreans are easy going, so I didn't think of it deeply. (laugh)

Lee: Then, when you hear the word *tongnama*, what images come to your mind?

Ali: Ummm... well. A little bit, a sort of looking down on me. Korean people assume that *tongnama* people are all labourers, even if you come as a student for education.

(Ali, Bangladesh male immigrant, age 32, 13 years in South Korea)

Although Ali seems to understand the negative association with *tongnama* in South Korea, he does not articulate *tongnama* with racialization. In his eyes, *tongnama* is closer to a description of a location of Southeast Asia in a geographical sense. Ali even deliberately tries to overlook the moments when he heard the term *tongnama*. On the contrary, another Bangladesh immigrant Masum provides an interesting contrast by strongly expressing his discomfort at being called a *tongnama*.

Lee: Have you ever thought that you are *tongnama*?

Masum: Never. I've never thought of myself in that way. But I heard Koreans call me *tongnama*. That sounds like a swear word to me. They could say Southeast Asia and stop there. But Koreans usually add like, "they came to Korea to work cause their countries are poor." I can feel that Koreans look down on us. And then they always add "those kids are from *tongnama*" That's why I feel *tongnama* is a swear word. It is not the same as Southeast Asia.

(Masum, Bangladesh male immigrant, age 35, 13 years in South Korea)

Masum also learned the term *tongnama* from Koreans' usage with negative evaluations of foreign migrant workers from South and Southeast Asian countries. As Masum remarks, *tongnama* is also different from the English term Southeast Asia. For him, *tongnama* is a derogatory term but the English term Southeast Asia is more neutral. Masum explained how he constantly experienced discriminatory treatments from his Korean colleagues at work, and from random Korean university students through online chatting apps. He explained that he used chatting apps to try to make male Korean friends outside the factory, but Korean university students usually dismissed him if Masum introduced himself as Bangladesh. To figure out if this was his misunderstanding, Masum did his own experiments with the chatting apps. He found that Korean university students accept him as online friends if Masum introduced himself as North American or European, but if he revealed his Bangladesh nationality, he was usually defriended immediately. Through these experiences, he also learned how Koreans differentiate Americans and 'white people' and people from South and Southeast Asia in a hierarchical way.

Masum: I know that Americans and white people have a good education, good money, and a higher position. I admit that we have no good education, no good money. But I don't like Koreans look down on me. I feel that Korean people treat us like we are at the bottom, and Americans and white people are above.

(Masum, Bangladesh male immigrant, age 35)

As Masum comments show, there are different social images of 'white people' and *tongnama* people that imply a hierarchical sense of group positions of each group in South Korea. While 'white people' in South Korea are associated with positive images of middle-class professionals or at least English teachers from North America, Britain, and Australia, *tongnama* people in South Korea is associated with negative images of low skilled foreign migrant workers or foreign brides from lower income countries. A university student, Subin explains.

Lee: if you were going to date someone from a foreign country, which country or race comes to mind when you imagine that person?

Subin: Well... I know this would sound terrible and sounds like racial discrimination.

But somehow, somehow white people have better impressions compare to people from *tongnama* or Africa. My university has several white professors and sessional instructors (giggle), and they are tall and good looking (giggle). In my eyes, white people look better than other races.

Lee: Then, what about Southeast Asians as a dating partner?

Subin: Um... *tongnama*. I can't answer because I've never imagined the possibility.

(laugh)

(Subin, Korean female 4<sup>th</sup>-year university student, age 22)

With the positive evaluation of ‘white’ people’s class position and appearance, Subin’s comments show that the perceived position of each group is not solely about class, it is interrelated with racial hierarchies. While immigrants like Masum and Ali seem to understand the negative association with *tongnama*, they do not see *tongnama* as a racial category. However, Subin uses *tongnama* as if it is a racial category.

In South Korea, immigrants and migrants are racialized for their ethnic status or nationality. In general, nationality is not often viewed as race, but in some cultures, people use nationality labels to classify races. In doing so, they adopt a cultural definition of race (Roth 2012). For example, Roth (ibid) finds out that Puerto Rican and Dominican immigrants in New York assert their races as ‘Puerto Rican’ or ‘Dominican’ by using a nationality-based racial schema that associates racialized characteristics with specific nationalities, a schema that they already had in their home countries before they immigrated to the U.S. Such “nationality-based racial hierarchies (ibid:129)” are also found in East Asian countries like Japan and South Korea. In Japan, people often use nationality or ethnic status in a racialized way (Takezawa 2005). In Korea, people often use a nationality of a migrant as one of the indicators of their group position in the Korean ethno-racial hierarchy system. The ideology of economic development is deeply ingrained in Koreans’ understanding of global racial hierarchies. With its negative characteristics and imageries, the category of *tongnama* implies a lower position within the racial hierarchy compared to Koreans. Mrs. Jeong and Mrs. Kyoung make the following remarks:

Lee: How would you feel if your children introduced someone from South and Southeast Asian countries as their marriage partner?

Mrs. Jeong: Oh, well. Not sure... I don't think *tongnama* could be a good match for my family.

Mrs. Kyoung: Me too. I've never imagined this possibility.

Mrs. Jeong: I might be unhappy if it would happen. The reason is that *tongnama* has the image of a little bit underdeveloped place, and also it is economically a little bit lower than Korea.

Mrs. Kyoung: I think so too. Well, *tongnama* is... Europe and North America have the image of wealthy countries, like America, Canada, and Australia. I know that not everyone is well off there, but at least Koreans generally think these countries are better than Korea. But, you know, people think *tongnama* is a little bit poor.

(Mrs. Jeong, Mrs. Kyoung, Korean women, both 55 years old)

For the majority of Korean interviewees, like Mrs. Jeong and Mrs. Kyoung, the perceived racial category is not solely skin colour or appearance. For them, each race and nationality imply a different level of superiority or inferiority, which is based on a combination of economic hierarchies and racial hierarchies. Although European and North American countries have a non-white population, Koreans tend to imagine Europeans, North Americans, and Australians as white people. Koreans understand Whites as the dominant race of these regions and connect this to the advanced developmental status or comparatively higher economic ranking of these countries in comparison to *tongnama* and African countries.

The racialization process is dialectical. Some long-term immigrants notice how Koreans slot immigrants and migrants into the Korean ethno-racial hierarchies. The following

conversation with a Vietnamese immigrant who acquired Korean citizenship and a Korean name -Sunhee after marrying a Korean man shows this point more clearly. She was working as an assistant for a local government job center when I interviewed her.

Lee: In your opinion, how would you define race? What would be the criteria to divide people into the groups like White, Asian, and Black?

Sunhee: Criteria? I told you. There are three groups of people in my opinion. Including every race, wealthy people and people of high social position, ordinary people in the middle like us, and foreigners and poor people in the low level.

Lee: Who are the wealthy and high position people?

Sunhee: Wealthy countries like America and wealthy high position Koreans.

Lee: Then who is in the middle group?

Sunhee: Just ordinary people like my husband. I think most Koreans are in this group.

Neither rich nor poor.

Lee: Then does it depend on an individual's economic power, or a country's economic power?

Sunhee: First is a country. A country's economy is more important. Even if I was well off in Vietnam, here people don't acknowledge whether I was well off. Koreans see me as Vietnamese.

Lee: Did you think like this when you were in Vietnam? Or did you start thinking this after you came to Korea?

Sunhee: After I came to Korea. In Korea, because people look down on me because of my nationality.

(Sunhee, Female Vietnamese immigrant, age 31)

Sunhee divides people into three hierarchical groups, which are based on the racial and economic status on a domestic and global scale. This statement about interconnected understandings of racial status and global economic status is not rare. Indeed, Koreans often conceive of their nation's status as a middle power on the global economic and political stage. Therefore, *tongnama* is situated by comparing South and Southeast Asian countries to Western European and white settler countries, such as the U.S, Canada, and Australia. The discourse of economic development is used to justify Korea's status in the racial hierarchy, which helps to draw a boundary between Korean and South and Southeast Asian migrants. Therefore, race is linked to the hierarchical relations of superiority and subordination not only through skin colour or body types but via a combination of physical traits and the conceived economic power of each group on a national and global scale.

### **3.5 Racial Strategy: Positioning within New Global Racial Hierarchies**

During the afternoon break, while I was working at a hard-boiled egg packaging factory in 2013, a Vietnamese woman in her early thirties was saying goodbye to Korean workers as her contract ended. While she passed around bottles of orange juice, Korean workers gave her well wishes. The floor forewoman, a 60-year-old Korean lady, warmly patted the Vietnamese worker's back and kindly said to her.

“Have a nice trip to Vietnam. Vietnamese will achieve successful industrialization sooner or later as Korea did in the 70s. Then your people won't need to go to foreign countries to

work. Look at what Korea has achieved. Vietnam follows Korea as Korea follows Japan.”

Like this comment, the sentiment that “Korea is about 30 years behind Japan” (G. Han 2015:3) is quite a common narrative in South Korea. Interestingly Koreans add new narratives, such as “Vietnam follows Korea” to the old narrative. For those who believe in a linear progression of economic development, South Korea’s recent economic achievements allow Koreans to think of themselves as being socially and culturally more advanced than migrants from Southeast Asian countries. As the Korean female foreman said, South Koreans locate themselves higher than less-developed countries. N. Kim (2008:85) analyzes South Korea’s position, writing “[d]espite their pride, South Koreans also constantly engaged the downside of their colour-class-ethnonational order: their position not on top but in the (invisible) *middle* of the racialized, gendered global economic order.” While Koreans indeed believe that they have a higher position than *tongnama* or Africa in the global racial hierarchies, this self-claimed position can be read as an active racial strategy that Koreans mobilize for several reasons. I argue that Koreans’ self-claimed higher position allows them to escape from racial trauma vis-à-vis the West.

During my fieldwork, I unexpectedly encountered the Korean older generation’s racial trauma, experienced from the unequal relationship with American soldiers during and after the Korean War. Initially, I met a Korean mother-in-law, Mrs. Kum (age 82) to ask about her experience of living with her Vietnamese daughter-in-law. However, once the interview started, she changed the topic to the Korean War and war-related sexual violence. Mrs. Kum was a 17-year-old teenage girl in a small farming village when the Korean War broke out in 1950. I quickly realized that she is still traumatized several decades after the war.

Mrs. Kum: Every day the U.S soldiers came to the village to check out people. One evening, the Americans and blacks suddenly appeared everywhere in the village, but I had no time to hide. My mother quickly hid me under her long *hanbok* (traditional Korean outfit) skirt. The soldiers were repeating, girls, girls, where are girls? My mother didn't move at all, and she was standing like this for a long time until all the soldiers were gone. Then I hid in a big sauce jar for a while. But we had to escape from the village. The soldiers came almost every day. A lot of girls in my village got raped by the American soldiers and blacks. They all lost their virginity.

(Mrs. Kum, Korean woman, age 82)

To save her, Mrs. Kum's family escaped from the village in the middle of the winter and had to sleep outside on the road. Mrs. Kum described white American soldiers as Americans, and African American soldiers as blacks. As N. Kim (2008) points out, the majority of Koreans learned about America through American mass media, such as television and movies that dominated the Korean airwaves. Mrs. Kum's experience is not an isolated case or unique to her. There is a thick body of literature on Koreans' racial trauma about the U.S military after the Korean War. One of the most popular themes of the Korean War literature was about the plight of Korean sex-workers and labourers near the US military camps (K. Choi 2009, D. Lee 2015). Korean writers in the 1950s and 1960s suffered from an inferiority complex in relation to white Americans. However, South Korean writers could not openly express their discontent about the U.S military because of South Korea's heavy dependence on the U.S. military for security and

economy. As a way to express their discontent about “being racialized within their own territory” (N. Kim 2008), Korean writers often delineated African American soldiers as cruel blacks instead of criticizing white American soldiers’ power abuses in South Korea. K. Choi (2009: 39) points out that this shows how Koreans made black American soldiers a scapegoat to compensate for the nation’s inferiority complex and racial trauma.

Interestingly, South Koreans see Japan as higher than Koreans are within global hierarchies, but still a bit below Whites/Europeans. According to research on Korean university students’ perceptions of six foreigner groups (D.S. Kim, D. H. Kim and Jung 2011), the Korean participants answer that Americans and Japanese are more likely to see themselves being higher than Koreans based on the perceived images of economic development and modern culture of the U.S and Japan. However, Japan follows the U.S in the research participants’ perceived ordering of different groups. On the other hand, the Korean participants answer that *tongnama*, Chinese, Korean-Chinese are more likely to feel inferior to South Koreans.

While Koreans have an inferiority complex vis-à-vis the West, particularly the U.S, and Japan, Koreans have more recently started believing that Korea is the middle or upper middle class in the global economic hierarchy. This perception began to take shape after foreign migrant workers and immigrants started to arrive from South and Southeast Asian countries. Connecting class position and racial markers is a typical strategy to claim a group’s superior or inferior position (Lie 2001, Glenn 2002, N. Kim 2008). In the case of Korea, interestingly the connection between class position and racial hierarchies includes not only the domestic social status but also the global scale of economic and racial order. N. Kim (2008: 84) analyzed Koreans’ obsession with global economic rankings and national/racial hierarchies stating that “Koreans believe that South Korea is more middle class and whiter than the third world nations from which the foreign

workers hail in the world system.” As part of Koreans’ new racial strategy, improving South Korea’s position also helps Koreans gain recognition as members of the first world. Based on the combination of global class position and global racial hierarchies, Koreans see North American and western European countries as role models because of the economic status of these countries, which implies social advancements and modern culture. According to this hierarchy, Korea hopes to be recognized as part of the first world, or at least closer to the first world than other Asian nations. Mr. Sang, who runs a small pig farm after working in an auto factory over 18 years, made these remarks:

Mr. Sang: Anyways, Koreans are genetically smart, so we could achieve economic development in a short time. Now Korea’s economy size is around the top 10 in the world. But many countries still don’t know Korea’s achievement well. We didn’t adequately promote ourselves. We are like a frog in the well.

Lee: You mean that Korea has been underestimated on the world stage?

Mr. Sang: Yes. We may look like an economically developed country, but we are not that influential in the world yet.

(Mr. Sang, Korean male pig farmer, ex-factory worker, age 44))

Like Mr. Sang, many Koreans believe that Koreans’ inherited intelligence greatly helped to achieve the rapid economic growth. This kind of belief resonates with the Korean government’s emphasis on the importance of human resources and Koreans’ high intelligence, which was used to mobilize Korean people during the industrialization period in the 1970s and 80s. In the mid-1990s, globalization became a new development slogan in South Korea. Globalization was

introduced to the public as a new policy slogan, *Segyehwa* (globalization), and one of the goals is to improve the image of Korea, which eventually would help to increase Korea's global influence. A group interview with Korean women in their mid-thirties makes this point. They all had one or two school-age children from the same neighbourhood. For them, Korean identity, national strength, and Korea's global competitiveness are inseparable.

Mrs. Park: I hope we can speak Korean anywhere in the world.

Mrs. Joo: Then we have to be competitive. If we promote our own values and self-respect, if we become a powerful country, the world will come to us, and try to learn our things and our language.

Lee: I see. Whose competitiveness by the way?

Mrs. Park: Our country's.

Mrs. Joo: And, we need to raise children to be competitive and send them to the world.

Then who knows, possibly Korean language could be one of the universal languages in the future. Then the world would try to learn Korean. Like Jewish people take over the important positions all over the world, if Korean children take important positions, they will represent Korea. I wish that Korean people play important roles on the global stage for the future of Korea.

(Korean women, Mrs. Park, age 34, Mrs. Joo, age 36)

Like Mr. Sang, Mrs. Park, and Mrs. Joo, many Koreans think that South Korea, in general, is underestimated by the world compared to its economic size and the advancement of its technology. This sentiment is not limited to a group of nationalists. Instead, the Korean state and

Korean people share this nationalistic sentiment. Nowadays, the Korean state actively promotes the image of Korea as a country of advanced technology and cutting-edge pop-culture with the well-maintained traditional culture. For example, the Korean government ran the Presidential Council on Nation Branding from 2009 to 2013 to increase the rank of the Nation Brand Index by promoting Korean food, K-pop and e-sports (Keith 2009). Besides the fact that these cultural products open up new markets, promoting Korean cultural products is also a new symbolic way of transforming people's recognition towards South Korea. While reinventing Korean-ness is closely related to Korea's collective strategy to survive in the global market, reconstructing Korean identity acts to draw the symbolic boundary between Koreans and racial others to access or to limit the social, economic, and political resources in Korean society. Therefore, these efforts are understood as a collective strategy for the survival of the Korean nation under global competition.

### **3.6 Conclusion**

This chapter has examined the dialectical process of mobilizing Korean identity and constructing *tongnama* Other. First of all, certain characteristics of foreign workers and immigrants are strategically selected to emphasize and to make sense of these beliefs within Korean racial logics and cultural system. Constructing the *tongnama* Other involves normative values and performative cultural cues, which symbolizes Korean-ness as 'ordinary' and 'desirable' and *tongnama* as 'deviant' and 'unattractive' through their practical observation and experiences of everyday life. Second, throughout the recent history, Korean identity and Korean ethnonationalism were actively reconstructed for diverse reasons from a defensive strategy against 'western imperialism', and Japanese colonialism, to an economic strategy for successful

industrialization. Before immigrants and foreign migrant workers come to South Korea, Korean identity was not associated with racial identity. In contemporary South Korea, however, Korean identity becomes one of the ethno-racial domains to access or limit access to social, economic, and political resources from multicultural families, immigrants, and foreign migrant workers.

This chapter has also explored key aspects of the racialization of Southeast Asian migrants as *tongnama* by looking at how Koreans slot the ethnic status of migrants into the Korean ethno-racial system as South Korea - previously a migrant-sending country - becomes a migrant-receiving country. This process includes the inextricable relationship between economic developmental logics and ethnic/racial hierarchies on a global scale, what I call the global racial hierarchies. South Koreans' perceived ordering of different groups in the global racial hierarchies complicates the conventional racial hierarchies, which place Whites on top, and Asians/Blacks at the bottom. Using not only the conventional racial categories but also slotting nationality and ethnicity into the ethno-racial system, South Koreans place Whites on top, Japanese lower than Whites but above South Koreans. South Koreans are above *tongnama* and Black. Within the category of Black, African Americans are seen as higher than Africans because of their desirable nationality as the U.S citizen.

Racial formation of *tongnama* migrants is essential to South Koreans' perceived new global racial hierarchies. Without the racial formation of *tongnama* South Korea might not be able to improve its own status in the global scale. Therefore, the racial formation of *tongnama* is South Koreans' racial strategy to gain a better position in global racial hierarchies, and their desire to escape from an inferiority complex that has longed plagued Korea.

While Koreans think of themselves as victims of global racism *vis-à-vis* Japan and the "West", they adopt and apply "western" racial logic to make racial others in South Korea. In the

process of racializing *tongnama* migrants, the interconnected understandings of racial status and global economic status work by slotting the ethnic status of migrants into a racial category. Therefore, race is not solely about skin colour or body types. Instead, race is formed by combining physical traits with the conceived economic power of different groups on a national and global scale in a hierarchical way.

In the following empirical chapters, I will demonstrate how patriarchy and gender inequality affect the racialization of marriage immigrants (foreign brides and foreign husbands), and how capitalistic labor practices play a crucial role in drawing ethnic and racial boundaries at work.

## **Chapter 4: Racial Others within the Family - Gendered and Racialized**

### **Integration of Foreign Brides and Husbands**

On a sunny day in April 2014, outside the foreign resident district office in Ansan city, a Korean woman in her late sixties approached me and asked if I knew where she could register her Vietnamese daughter-in-law for a Korean language class. I had spent the past nine months observing various classes and activities geared towards immigrant integration at the Multicultural Family Support Centre nearby, so I offered to accompany her, her daughter-in-law and her son to the Centre. While we were walking, she began telling me about her new Vietnamese daughter-in-law, who joined their family about a year ago. Her daughter-in-law did not speak much Korean yet, but she seemed confident that she would learn quickly by taking some basic language courses. I mentioned that the Centre also offered a Korean cooking class, but that it filled up very quickly. The Korean lady said softly, “Oh, I see. It is popular as they need to cook Korean food for their family.” The Korean lady then looked at her son and his foreign wife with a big smile as they held hands while walking towards their car. As I dropped them off at the entrance, the Korean mother mentioned that she would be back to pick up her daughter-in-law after the Korean language class ended. Indeed, it is very common for a foreign wife to be under the tutelage of her Korean mother-in-law for the first couple of years of the marriage. Perhaps she smiled when she imagined her foreign daughter-in-law speaking good Korean, taking good care of her husband, and even cooking Korean meals after taking some classes provided by the Center. Perhaps she enjoyed picturing her son growing old with his foreign wife surrounded by their many children.

However, what if this Korean man had a Korean wife? Would the mother still accompany the couple and try to teach his new wife? Probably not. His Korean wife would no doubt complain. Would the Korean government still provide cooking classes for Korean wives who are not used to cooking? Probably not. The government would be criticized for patronizing women. Then why is this okay for foreign wives? Why does the mother assume the responsibility of teaching Korean culture to the foreign wife? Furthermore, I had never seen foreign husbands at the Center. Where were they? These curiosities eventually led me to questions that are more fundamental. Why do Korean men and their families import foreign wives even when having a foreign wife can diminish their social status? Why is the Korean government highly inclusive of female marriage immigrants from different racial and ethnic backgrounds, despite strong undercurrents of ethno-nationalism and the myth of ethnic homogeneity?

Since 2005, the Korean government has actively supported multicultural integration programs for marriage immigrants through Multicultural Family Support Centers. These Centers provide free Korean language classes, Korean culture classes, Korean cooking classes, parenting seminars, speech clinics for children, legal aid, translation services - usually in Chinese, Vietnamese, and Tagalog - and basic job training. There is no doubt that Multicultural Family Support Centers and their integration programs greatly assist marriage immigrants in adapting to Korean culture and society. Many couples of international marriages try to find housing near such locations. Yet, a closer look at whom the multicultural activities are geared for, and what they actually entail, reveals that multicultural programs are not about marriage immigrants' integration in a neutral sense. In fact, multicultural activities are geared towards strengthening patriarchal family relations, which Korean women today are increasingly resisting. The State plays a key role in reproducing patriarchal family structures, but parents of working class and

rural Korean men, especially mothers, also play an active role by driving the process of integrating foreign brides as dutiful, submissive and servile daughters-in-law.

Racial hierarchies and racial logics play a central role in reproducing patriarchal family structures in Korean male-headed families with foreign brides. Working-class and rural Korean men can only reproduce patriarchal family structures through marriage immigration with women from lower-income countries. At the same time, reproducing Korean patriarchy as essential and ahistorical requires minimizing the foreignness of foreign brides. Thus, parents and husbands emphasize the cultural and racial similarities between specific groups of foreign brides and Korean women. On the other hand, the racial differences of foreign husbands are underlined to amplify their foreignness.

I call this active process *patriarchal racialization*. Patriarchal racialization is a gendered racialization process whereby patriarchal gender roles are emphasized to minimize racial differences for certain groups that need to be integrated into the existing socio-cultural system. At the same time, the racial differences of other groups are maximized to amplify their "foreignness" to delay their integration into the society. Patriarchal racialization involves multiple actors; such as the State, community, and family members in the microsphere of the household. Patriarchal racialization reinforces the continued ethno-racial belief in patriarchal blood lineage: the belief that Korean blood passes down through the father's line. This belief creates a patriarchal biological link to the idea of race. The co-formation of patriarchy and racialization can be broadly observed even though the actual cases may appear differently in historically and locally specific contexts. Therefore, South Korea offers a prime example for studying how economic migration interacts with global systems of gender and racial inequality.

In South Korea, the official definition of a marriage immigrant is a foreign national who marries a Korean citizen regardless of their gender and country of origin. However, because of the lower-class positions of marriage immigrants in their home countries and the high ratio of female marriage immigrants, for the majority of Koreans, a marriage immigrant means a foreign bride from a low-income family from Southeast Asia or China.

In this chapter, I explore patriarchal racialization to show that racialization processes are gendered, and patriarchal structures of multicultural families are racialized. First, I examine the role of the State by looking at the institutional conditions of marriage immigration and gendered settlement services. Thereafter I discuss the two categories of foreign spouses, foreign brides and foreign husbands and their everyday life experiences.

#### **4.1 Theoretical background of Patriarchal Racialization**

As one specific way of Othering, racialization imposes otherness on a certain group of people. According to Omi and Winant (1986: 64), the category of race is an outcome of a racialization process, which involves “the extension of racial meaning to a previously racially unclassified relationship, social practice or group.” Similar to Omi and Winant’s definition of racialization, Miles and Brown ([1989] 2003:102) define racialization as “a dialectical process by which meaning is attributed to particular biological features of human beings, as a result of which individuals may be assigned to a general category of persons which reproduces itself biologically [...]”. Racialization is problematic because it includes a dialectical process of the conceptualization of the Self (in-group) as a superior race, which simultaneously solicits the conceptualization of “the Other” as the inferior race by attributing a negative evaluation to “the Other” (Miles and Brown [1989] 2013).

Building upon Omi and Winant (1994)'s racial formation theory, Kandaswamy (2012:12) argues that "racial formation is fundamentally a gendered and sexualized process." In this view, gender and race do not exist and create inequalities in isolation. Rather gender and race - as mutually constitutive powers - engage with one another in the distribution of uneven power and the creation of social inequalities. However, despite increasing recognition of the intersectional relations between gender and racialization, patriarchy as a social system of organizing gender and of privileging male authority is not typically analyzed in its co-formation with racialization. The role of patriarchy tends to be marginalized from the scholarly discussion of racialization, which overlooks the way various forms of patriarchy have intersected with other forms of inequalities such as racism.

The intimate space of home and family is an important site for reproducing not only gender hierarchies but also racial hierarchies under the patriarchal order (Collins 2001, Stoler 2002). The inseparable relationship between race and gender under patriarchal domination can be easily traced back to European colonial power in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. For example, Stoler (2002) examines how the management of sexual arrangements was fundamentally structured into the making of racial categories and racial hierarchies in colonial Indonesia by looking at sexual and racial dynamics among white Dutch men, white Dutch women, local Indonesian women, and mixed-race children. While returning to the Netherlands from colonial Indonesia with an Asian wife and mixed-race children was prohibited, Dutch bachelors in Indonesia were encouraged, or at least tolerated, to live with native Indonesian women. Their cohabitation was considered to help colonial development and expansion by stabilizing political order and colonial public health. When Dutch women entered colonial Indonesia, however, the boundary between white Dutch families and native Indonesians, and the hierarchy of the colonizer and the colonized

became much clearer. Mixed race children of Dutch men and native Indonesian women were located above the local population but below that of the Dutch colonizers. Thus, control over sexual activities, marriage, and reproduction was a critical colonial apparatus for constructing racial hierarchies between the colonizers and the colonized. Stoler (ibid:42) points out that “gender-specific sexual sanctions and prohibitions not only demarcated positions of power but also prescribed the personal and public boundaries of race.” Along the same line, McClintock (1995: 56) describes a patriarchal racial order in the 19<sup>th</sup> century Britain in her book *Imperial Leather*: “the English middle-class male was placed at the pinnacle of evolutionary hierarchy. White English middle-class women followed. Domestic workers, female miners and working-class prostitutes were stationed on the threshold between the white and black races”.

However, the main literature on racial boundaries under patriarchy is concentrated on 19<sup>th</sup>-century European colonialism (e.g., Stoler 2005; McClintock 1995). There is little literature on the intersections between patriarchy and racialization in relation to contemporary migration in East and Southeast Asia. Therefore, building upon the discussion on gendered racialization, this chapter shows how patriarchal family structures reproduce racial hierarchy, and racialization reinforces patriarchal order in the context of gendered migration in East Asia.

Patriarchal racialization is an intersectional process of categorization. Analytically the level of gendered and racial meaning during the process of patriarchal racialization becomes one of the important facets to produce gendered racial hierarchies amongst groups. This facet allows two different ideological meanings to create a seemingly natural system of hierarchies. The outcome of patriarchal racialization involves both the production of a new racial category and the inscribing of specific gendered rules within racial hierarchies. Thus, patriarchal racialization is problematic because it justifies the unequal distribution of access to resources, such as job

market and education, and social, economic and political power under the implicit and explicit patriarchal ideology and practices.

#### **4.2 The Role of the State: Gendered Settlement Services**

In this section, I explore one facet of how patriarchal racialization occurs – the state, which institutionally controls migration flows, the settlement process, and membership through the citizenship and settlement policies. In South Korea, almost every city has a Multicultural Family Support Center to assist marriage immigrants' successful settlement and their families' cultural adjustment to the new relationship. However, these government-installed Centers are very gender specific venues. In other words, the Center is a place for foreign brides and their children, but not for foreign husbands. For example, Nepalese husband Udaya (age 30), who is in his early thirties, did not go to the Center near his house. Right after marrying a Korean woman, he visited the Center to see if he could use its programs and services. However, he thought that there were no programs and services for him. He explained, "it seems mainly foreign ladies go to the Center because they need to learn how to look after their babies, learn how to cook Korean foods, and how to deal with their Korean family-in-law. I heard that their Korean mothers-in-law give them lots of stress."

Another foreign husband from Bangladesh, Ali (age 32) also did not use the Center even though he lived nearby one. Instead, he went to the Foreign Migrant Workers Welfare Center. During my field research, he was involved in a Bangladesh workers' group as a group leader. The group was organized by the local Migrant Community Center. This foreign migrant workers' center provides labour counselling, free Korean language classes, free computer lessons, a monthly free medical clinic, foreign workers' gatherings, and picnics. In the lobby,

there were always a bunch of young foreign males hanging out and drinking coffee from a vending machine. The majority of visitors at the Migrant Community Center were male migrant workers who came to South Korea with a 3-5-year contract. Every Sunday, Ali went to this center to help and to hang out with young Bangladeshi workers.

Although both the Multicultural Family Support Centers and the Migrant Community Center offer Korean language classes and some other useful services, the different centers function separately for two different streams of immigration: marriage immigrants and foreign workers. Moreover, these centers are highly gendered. Foreign husbands like Udaya and Ali still do not feel comfortable going to the Multicultural Family Support Center. Perhaps they see the Multicultural Family Support Center as not for them and see Migrant Community Center as their place.

By 2013, there were 211 Multicultural Family Support Centers across the country that had been installed under the Multicultural Family Support Act. These Centers are supposed to serve any family who is categorized as a multicultural family. However, not everyone does use these centers. The majority of the programs are designed to help foreign brides adapt to their Korean family's culture and for Korean-born children to improve their Korean language proficiency. Thus, they provide Korean language classes, cooking classes, child rearing and Korean culture classes based on the assumption that visitors to the Center are full-time homemakers and primary caregivers. The Center also organizes foreign wives as volunteers and connects them to local charity groups in order to enhance their social integration. However, it is rare for these Centers to provide services in the evening or during the weekend for foreign husbands who usually work in the factories during weekdays. Therefore, while these Centers teach specific gender roles to foreign wives through their settlement programs, the Centers neglect foreign husbands.

This gendered approach to marriage immigrants is clear even before foreign brides enter South Korea. Foreign brides are advised to take Korean cultural programs while they are waiting for their visas. There are several overseas Korean culture centers for new brides in the Philippines, Vietnam, and other countries. These overseas Korean culture centers provide an overview of Korean society and Korean culture. In particular, they provide the new brides with information on how to have a successful marriage with a Korean man; for example, how to manage in-law relationships, and how to behave properly as a wife and a daughter-in-law.

In South Korea, as mentioned earlier the official definition of a marriage immigrant is a foreign national who marries a Korean citizen regardless of their gender and country of origin. However, female marriage immigrants from Southeast Asia and China are over-represented in the marriage immigrant population, so for the majority of Koreans, a marriage immigrant means a foreign bride or an *oegugin myŏnŭri* (foreign daughter-in-law) from a 'poor family' of a lower-income country. On the other hand, Koreans tend to consider a foreign husband or an *oegugin sawi* (foreign son-in-law) as coming from an affluent family, or at least a decent family of a higher-income country. This is because the majority of foreign husbands are North Americans, Western Europeans, and Japanese men. Based on these gender biased public portrayals, while foreign brides are commonly misunderstood as obedient wives and good homemakers whose main duty is taking care of her Korean family, foreign husbands are expected to bring their Korean wives back to their country. Perhaps Koreans' gendered understanding of marriage immigrants affects the government settlement services. However, when we look closely at the citizenship and immigration policies, it is clear that the Korean state plays a critical role in reproducing patriarchal family relations by controlling marriage immigrants' gender composition. The state promotes importing foreign brides from lower-income countries but restricts the entry of foreign husbands. Accordingly, settlement

services are also geared towards foreign brides in order to strengthen the patriarchal family relations which contemporary Korean women are increasingly resisting.

### **4.3 The Micro-politics of Household and Reproduction of Patriarchy**

#### **4.3.1 Construction of Foreign Brides: Korean Men and Foreign Women**

On one occasion, I approached a Korean senior who came to the Multicultural Family Support Center to give a ride to his Cambodian daughter-in-law. Hoping to have a chat with him, I told him that I was also married to a foreign man. However, he coldly replied, “We are different from somebody like you who was able to make a choice.” He told me that his 40-year-old son, who works for a local factory, had to get married to a foreign woman from Cambodia because no Korean woman wanted his son. Although he was not happy with this international marriage, he had to accept it. He did not want his son to grow old as a bachelor, without a wife and children. Then, he walked away.

As this anecdote reveals, having a foreign wife is considered a less-than-ideal situation in Korea. Both Korean men and women would be stigmatized for remaining unmarried. However, Korean men feel the pressure of marriage more than Korean women do, so to remain unmarried is to be seen as a total failure as a man (M. Kim 2014). Symbolically, an unmarried man is to some degree infantilized (ibid). He is not seen as the patriarch of his own household or a “respectable family [man]” (Freeman 2005). An unmarried man is also not able to contribute to family traditions (i.e., preparing family events and ancestral worships), which heavily rely on woman’s work. Without a wife, therefore, it is not easy for a man to take an important role within the family and kin circle. In addition, the parents of an unmarried man often feel a

responsibility to make sure their son has a wife in order to continue the family lineage, so it is not rare for parents to initiate international marriage for their sons.

However, international marriages, especially between a Korean man and a foreign woman from China and Southeast Asia, are stigmatized. Having a wife from a lower income country signals a man's incompetence in the Korean marriage market compared to his middle-class white-collar counterparts and hurts a man's honour and his family's pride. The following interview quote shows how Koreans characterize international marriage and stigmatize Korean husbands and foreign wives.

When I heard about them, ladies who come through marriage from *tongnama* (South and Southeast Asian countries), I feel so sorry for them. Well, Koreans, I think Korean people are terrible because actually Korean men buy these women with money. Marriage should be based on love, but this is almost the same as buying slaves because Korean guys pay money to bring these ladies here.

(Mr. Kim, Korean male shuttle bus driver, age 59)

As this passage reveals, international marriage is seen as buying a wife from a 'poor country.' This stigma is partly based on a view of marriage choice that values modern marriage as romantic love and the free choice of two individuals but devalues arranged marriages or traditional marriages as an institutional arrangement for economic exchange (Giddens 1992). Yet arranged marriages or using commercialized matchmaking services within South Korea are still considered ways of meeting partners without such stigma. When it comes to the economic exchanges of marriage, the notion of "buying a wife" may not be so distant from the practice of

arranged marriages or using matchmaking services. However, international marriages of Korean men and foreign women from Southeast Asia and China disproportionately take on such negative social stigma compared to domestic arranged marriages. This is partly due to stereotypes of foreign brides which are heavily influenced by the victim discourse that a foreign bride comes from a 'poor' family of a lower income country, who had to sell herself to a man to feed her family back home (Constable 2005). Her natal family's economic status and her country's developmental status are used to reinforce victimizing a foreign bride as a commodity or a victim of sexual exploitation. Thus, international marriages between a Korean man and foreign woman are seen as not only a deteriorated version of traditional marriages but also a type of human trafficking that implies the unequal exchange of a Korean man's money for a foreign woman's intimate care and sex.

In order to escape this perceived social stigma, Korean husbands and foreign wives mobilize defensive discourses. I observed that they often emphasized a wife's agency in her choices: for example, that a foreign wife can refuse if she does not like the Korean man. They also defend themselves by criticizing Koreans' double standards, which accept Korean couples' use of commercialized matchmaking services as a way of meeting a partner, while stigmatizing international marriage as commodified marriages. In addition, Korean men also mobilize masculine discourses to escape from the stigma, such as representing themselves as saviors of women from less developed countries (M. Kim 2014), or blaming unmarried Korean women for being too demanding, self-interested, avoiding responsibility and too materialistic (e.g., "the

kimchi girl”, or “the soy bean-paste girl” controversies).<sup>19</sup> They believe that in any case, these kinds of Korean women would not be a good match for them, and they seek a young foreign woman who is more innocent, selfless, frugal, and obedient. Korean husbands who chose international marriages often express that they could get a much younger and more attractive foreign woman instead of an old, demanding Korean woman already past her marriageable age.

In South Korea, the category of foreign bride includes women from Southeast Asian countries, China, and Korean-Chinese women (*chosŏnjok*). Koreans generally believe that Korean-Chinese brides and Southeast Asian brides are from a low-income family of a low-income country, so those brides may have the same economic motivation to marry up to Korean men. However, the belief that *chosŏnjok* and Koreans are of the same ethnic group allows Korean men and their families to minimize the perceived foreignness and cultural differences of *chosŏnjok* brides. This also allows people to believe that the second or the third generation of the union of a *chosŏnjok* woman and a Korean man will be culturally and biologically fully Korean.

Nonetheless, the stigma of buying a wife and being sold for money negatively affects both Korean husbands and foreign wives, and their family relationship. Foreign wives are often viewed suspiciously - women whose main intention may be using an innocent Korean man to snatch money and run away after acquiring residency or Korean citizenship.

One afternoon, I saw several Korean seniors with their foreign *myŏnŭri* (daughter-in-law) from the Philippines, Vietnam, China, Cambodia, and Uzbekistan in front of a Korean language

---

<sup>19</sup> “The kimchi girl” (*kimchi-nyŏ*) and “the soybean paste girl” (*toenjang-nyŏ*) are derogatory terms to call ‘uppity’ Korean women. Since the late 2000s, both terms gained the misogynistic tendencies. The kimchi girl refers to a Korean woman who puts all the burdens on a man in dating or marriage but demands equal rights when it is convenient for her. The soybean paste girl refers to a Korean woman who is shallow and lavishly prefers expensive high-end products. (For further analysis see Song 2014)

classroom at the Multicultural Family Support Center. It is common for Korean parents to drop off and pick up their foreign *myŏnŭri* from these classes, while the Korean husbands are at work. One old Korean lady near the elevator looked very nervous, so I asked her if everything was okay. The Korean lady told me that her foreign *myŏnŭri* wanted to come to the class by herself. After sending her *myŏnŭri*, the Korean lady came to check if her *myŏnŭri* was in the class. However, her *myŏnŭri* had not yet come to the class. A few minutes later, her foreign *myŏnŭri* walked out of the elevator with some grocery bags, and the Korean lady exhaled a long breath. I could overhear the Korean lady saying “Oh my god, why are you late? My heart just about stopped! You should tell me if you wanted to go grocery shopping.”

It is very common for a Korean husband and his family to be anxious about the intentions of a foreign wife. Thus, a Korean husband’s control over his foreign wife is easily justified until his foreign wife proves her genuine intention of marriage and building a family. To prove her genuine intentions, a foreign wife is expected to become pregnant immediately upon her arrival, to learn Korean language and culture, to accommodate Korean in-laws, and to avoid meeting people of her own ethnic community. In particular, pregnancy helps a foreign wife prove her intention of integrating into Korean family culture and Korean society. Practically, the Korean government provides benefits for a foreign wife from the beginning of pregnancy, such as fast-track residency and citizenship, childcare subsidies, and a free home visiting doula. Giving birth to Korean children signifies that she is ready to accept Korean family culture, and she can gain recognition as a mother within the Korean family structure.

Until a foreign wife proves her genuine intentions, a Korean husband and his parents tend to test her by controlling money, restraining social activities, and controlling sexuality. For example, Korean husbands or their mothers manage the home economics and give a foreign wife

only a small monthly allowance to prevent her from stealing money and escaping. Often a foreign wife is not allowed to get a job, or to meet people except while attending Korean language or Korean cooking classes. This is because the Korean family worries that their foreign wife could get involved in an affair or be exposed to information about runaways and divorcees. Ironically, these suspicions often cause serious tensions and conflicts between Korean husbands and foreign wives, sometimes resulting in divorces or runaways (Freeman 2005). Sometimes foreign wives interpret their Korean husbands' suspicion as a way of showing his affection and concern about his wife. On top of that, Korean parent-in-laws' interferences, such as frequent visits, phone calls, comments on housework and parenting style often aggravate their family relationships.

However, some international marriages between a Korean man and a foreign woman from Southeast Asian and China are relatively free from these tensions and Korean in-laws' interferences. These marriages are so-called 'love marriages' (*yōnaegyōrhon*), which means a marriage without the involvement of a commercial marriage agency or a matchmaker. Although there is always social stigma against foreign brides from Southeast Asia and China, when it comes to love marriage, and when a foreign bride financially contributes to the marriage process, such as buying furniture and household goods, suspicion from in-laws is greatly reduced, helping to build a relatively better family and in-law relationships. Also, Japanese brides who marry Korean men for a religious reason mostly through church-arranged marriages, are also relatively free from the social stigma and the intention tests. According to M. Kim (2014), Koreans generally believe that Korean men married up and Japanese wives married down since Korea's economic status is considered lower than Japan's.

#### 4.3.1.1 Hierarchies of Foreign Wives

While a Korean wife is ideal, if an international marriage is necessary, a foreign wife's nationality and her homeland's relative economic status are influential in determining her position in the hierarchy of foreign brides. The relative desirability of a foreign wife depends on her country of origin, whether she comes from a relatively developed country or a less developed country, and what ethnicity or race these countries represent. Mrs. Ko's comments show this point well. As a Korean cooking class instructor, she has taught female marriage immigrants for several years through local community centers and the Multicultural Family Support Centers in Ansan and Siheung.

Quite a lot of people pretend their *myŏnŭri* (daughter-in-law) is from Japan or America. This is because they think countries like Vietnam are economically less developed countries. So they lie that "my *myŏnŭri* is from Japan" even though their appearances are different. This is true of one of my Vietnamese cooking class attendees. She couldn't tell the neighbours that she is Vietnamese, in consideration of her Korean mother-in-law's reputation, so she just lives as a Japanese *myŏnŭri*. I felt really sorry for her.

(Mrs. Ko, Korean female cooking class instructor, age 38)

As this conversation reveals, a foreign wife's nationality and her homeland's economic status become crucial components in securing a Korean man's honour and a Korean family's pride. However, the majority of international marriages are unions of rural farmers or working-class Korean men and foreign women from Southeast Asia and China. Western European or North American wives who reside in Korea are not common. These Korean husbands of Western

European or North American wives are usually professionals – or at least middle class.

Therefore, there is a clear class division in the international marriage market along the husbands' privileged class position and perceived hierarchies of wives' country of origin. Based on this hierarchy, expectations toward foreign wives differ. Wives from Western Europe and North America are treated as bi-lingual, cosmopolitans, and members of the global elite without much expectation of their domesticity (Hong and H. Kim 2010). A Caucasian wife is seen as more cultured and sophisticated. This is in sharp contrast to the way that wives from Southeast Asia are treated, as obedient wives and good homemakers whose main quality comes from their domesticity. Therefore, the relative under-development of a foreign bride's home country and her natal family's class background contributes to the expectation of their domesticity and loyalty to the Korean family.

Mrs. Yang's case illuminates not only nation-specific global economic hierarchies, but also the level of poverty within a country of origin, and how these shape the expectations of marriage immigrants' domesticity. Mrs. Yang's younger, disabled brother had a Filipina wife, but they divorced after four years of marriage. All her siblings had initially protested when her mother arranged the international marriage for her brother. However, they reluctantly agreed to the idea when their mom explained she would not be able to take care of their brother soon. After the divorce, her aged mom is again taking care of her disabled brother and his young daughter. Mrs. Yang recalled that her mother chose a Filipina woman expecting the woman's loyalty to her Korean family.

They had communication problems because of my brother's disability. But I think the main reason (for their divorce) ... well, other Filipina wives are doing well because they

come from really poor families in the Philippines. They really need to send money back home. That's why they do their best for their Korean family and raise kids well too. But her family wasn't really poor. My mom regrets choosing her based on her pretty and innocent looks. Things could be better if my brother had an ugly woman from a really poor family in the Philippines."

(Mrs. Yang, Korean woman, age 36)

In this interview, the Korean in-laws demonstrate a belief that the husband's unfavourable qualities in the domestic marriage market - such as disability and his working-class family background- are compensated by his Korean nationality in the international marriage market. The husband's Korean nationality and its legal and potential economic advantages are understood as resources he can offer his Filipina wife. Regardless of the class status of a Korean family, Korean husbands and in-laws believe that they are superior to their foreign wives based on their nation's position in the global economic hierarchy (Abelmann and H. Kim 2005, M. Kim 2014). On top of this, the option of buying the "poorest of the poor" foreign bride reveals that not only her home country's economic status but also how the individual level of poverty within her country of origin works to construct the perceived inferiority of a foreign bride.

Korean husbands are able to exercise his power in the intimate relationship.

While Koreans generally believe that these foreign wives would benefit from learning Korean culture and traditional gender roles, Koreans characterize *tongnama* (South and Southeast Asian) women and *chosŏnjok* (Korean-Chinese) women somewhat differently. Mr. Kang (age 45), who married a *chosŏnjok* woman and has two Vietnamese sisters-in-law, illustrates this point clearly.

Mr. Kang: If a Korean man and his parents have strong personalities, well, a *tongnama* woman would be better for him. But if they have soft personalities, a *chosŏnjok* woman would be fine.

Lee: Why is it like that?

Mr. Kang: Because *chosŏnjok* women are good at cooking and learn Korean things very quickly. But, there are things you should know about them. They will say “no” if they don’t agree. If you don’t accept their hot temper, they may leave, or that may cause a family quarrel. On the other hand, Vietnamese women are softer, so they may be suitable for a man with a strong personality. But Vietnamese women need a longer time to adjust to Korean culture. It takes quite a bit of time for them to learn Korean foods too.

(Mr. Kang, Korean male factory worker, age 45)

Mr. Kang’s comments on the temperaments of *tongnama* and *chosŏnjok* brides may be based on his own family interactions, but his view reveals a lot about how Koreans conceive of foreign brides and what Koreans expect to them. In this conversation, the main comparison points are women’s temperaments -such as docile or stubborn personality- and the ability to learn the Korean culture -such as Korean language and Korean foods. While *chosŏnjok* women are portrayed as stubborn, hot-tempered, and somewhat independent, *tongnama* women are characterized as mild and docile but somewhat slow learners.

These expectation of foreign brides’ domesticity and loyalty to the Korean family are closely related to the Third World images of foreign brides. Vietnamese marriage immigrant

Hong's case illustrates this well. Hong has two children with her Korean husband who is a factory worker. In the past, she worked as a Vietnamese interpreter at banks and district offices for newcomers. When I interviewed her, she was working for the district public health center. She recalled how she met her Korean husband and why he chose her during his marriage trip to Vietnam.

I asked him after we got married. Why did you choose me? Why didn't you choose one of the pretty girls? Several girls cried because they didn't get selected. That day, I was wearing Ao Dai (traditional Vietnamese dress) with long black loose hair. My husband said that he liked the image of me in white Ao Dai and that I looked like Korean girls used to look: neat and simple. He said that he doesn't like girls in sexy outfits. He likes simple style, like Korean girls in the past.

(Hong, Vietnamese female immigrant, age 29)

Hong was thus seen as an innocent girl who appealed to a sense of nostalgia for the past. While contemporary Korean women represent the spoiled present (dirty and complicated), Hong represents the past (traditional, neat, and simple); a woman who conforms to the values of traditional gender roles. The idea that more traditional foreign brides are more appealing to Korean men and his families reveals the developmental logic of racism. The discourse of past and futurity is a key element of the developmental narratives (J. Han 2015). J. Han (2015) points out in her article of Korean and Korean American short-term missionaries in African countries "Our Past, Your Future" that seeing underdevelopment and poverty of others offers an opportunity to reflect on what you have recently gained and what you are currently enjoying.

Therefore, placing a marriage immigrant woman in the territory of the past is essential to recognizing the present superior position of Korea. The portrayal of foreign brides from Southeast Asia as docile, innocent, nostalgic, and exotic women resembles European and American Orientalism. In this sense, the logic of modernity functions in much the same way, by creating foreign brides in migrant-hosting Asian countries as inferior others.

#### **4.3.1.2 Performing Traditional Gender Roles**

Corresponding to this social expectation, migrant women have to learn to adjust by identifying as ‘the good wife’ and mother. As Hyun-Mi Kim (2014) points out, however, migrant women are neither from the past nor intrinsically obedient and traditional. Rather many of them have previously experienced more gender equal relationships under the socialist regime or matriarchal family culture of their home countries. They, thus, have to adapt to Korean gender roles and perform ‘the good wife’ in order to integrate into Korean society. Filipina migrant Susanne’s case illustrates this well.

Susanne and her Korean husband Young-Hoon live on the outskirts of the city, with two young children (Min-Ju and Min-Hee) and Susanne’s Korean mother-in-law. Before the interview, Susanne served warm tea and cookies, as any host would treat her guests. We were in the middle of the interview when Young-Hoon came into the living room. Immediately he interrupted Susanne:

Young-Hoon: Min-Ju’s mom!

Susanne: Yes?

Young-Hoon: Serve the homemade mook (acorn jelly) for the teacher.

Susanne: Okay. I will serve mook later after this interview.

(she tries to return to the interview)

Young-Hoon: Where is mother?

Susanne: At the community center (tries to return to the interview again)

The interaction between Susanne and Young-hoon was very natural and typical in a Korean way. Susanne was addressed by her son's name, Min-Ju. In Korea, addressing a mother or father by their first child's name is very common because within the family structure their parental role is considered more important than their own individuality. As well, asking one's wife to serve the guests or checking up on other family members indicates that serving and taking care of family members are the wife's duty.

This kind of interaction between married couples is typical in Korean households. However, Susanne recalled that it took years to adapt to the Korean way of interacting with other Korean family members, especially with male figures. There were lots of arguments and tense situations until she finally adapted her husbands' family culture:

When I just got married, I could not understand my father-in-law at all. He asked me to serve every little thing, like serving water or coffee whenever he needed it. And my husband asked me to do everything for him too. In the Philippines, all the boys know how to do household work. But Korean men, they asked me even to serve water. I felt that it's very unfair. One day I talked back to my father-in-law. This made him angry, and he overthrew the dinner table. It was tense. I was so frustrated and angry because of this culture where women should serve men. Why did they ask me to bring water in the

morning? (laughs) Now I understand it is just Korean culture. I learned that respecting seniors and listening to them is part of Korean culture. Also, I learned cooking, and serving meals are a wife's duty. I think I have already adapted to the Korean culture well.

(Susanne, Filipina female immigrant, age 33)

Susanne expressed that she has a good relationship with her Korean mother-in-law, and her neighbours complemented her cooking and hard work, saying she was just like a Korean. She seemed well-integrated into traditional Korean family culture. At first, she protested against traditional gender roles because she saw that it was an exploitation of women within the family. But she eventually accepted her role in the family as she understood it was Korean tradition and a cultural difference between the Philippines and Korea. Not every foreign bride accepts this traditional gender role though. For example, the patriarchal family culture of rural farmers and working-class men is one of the main complaints of foreign women about their marriage lives and patriarchal expectations often cause family troubles or divorces (Freeman 2005, Yu 2010). However, when a foreign bride adapts patriarchal gender roles, they tend to have a comparatively peaceful marriage life and decent relationships with their in-laws.

Performing the good wife and mother means taking over the primary caregiver role. Housework, care work, parenting, child education, and socializing for the extended family are essential to maintaining a Korean family. Vietnamese marriage immigrant Hong's case illustrates this point well. Hong married a Korean man when she was 21 years old. She was the last child out of six in Vietnam, so she was not used to cooking and housework. While working part-time as a Vietnamese interpreter for the district public health center, Hong does all the housework, parenting, and care work for her two children. She also prepares huge meals for the family's

ancestral worship table four times a year. In her Korean extended family, there is another Korean *myŏnŭri* (daughter-in-law) who could possibly help to prepare the ancestral worship tables, but she stopped participating in family events after Hong came into the family. Now Hong is the only woman in her Korean extended family, and she prepares ancestral worships for her Korean husband's ancestors, and parents-in-law who passed away long before she came to Korea.

During my second New Year family gathering in Korea, I got scolded by my husband's oldest brother because I could not cook Korean food and properly set the ancestral worship table. At that time, I had a 3-month-old newborn baby, and she was crying all the time. I had to cook while I was holding a crying baby. My husband came to the kitchen to help me, but he also got scolded. We were told that kitchen work is a woman's job so a man should not enter the kitchen. Whew~~, I realized this was a *shijipsari* (Korean women's marriage life). I cried every day and regretted marrying a Korean man. But, I've tried hard to gain recognition. Now the oldest brother likes me a lot because I take care of all the ancestral worships. I cook Korean food, and I don't ask my husband to help with the housework, at least in front of his brother.

(Hong, Vietnamese female immigrant, age 29)

In her case, not only does her Korean husband relegate reproductive labour to Hong, but the other Korean *myŏnŭri* in the family does so as well. In particular, major Korean traditions, such as New Year, *Ch'usŏk* (Thanksgiving) and *Chesa* (ancestral worship) rely heavily on women's work: cooking, cleaning, serving family and relatives. Hong undertakes these roles,

which even the other Korean daughter-in-law gave up, to get recognition as a member of the Korean family.

Besides the family, the community is also an important site where a foreign bride has to perform her domesticity and traditional gender role. Parreñas (2008:9) calls this, "the force of domesticity" which is "the continued relegation of housework to women or the persistence of the ideology of women's domesticity, in the labour market, the family, and the migrant community, as well as in migration policies and laws." Foreign wives of Korean men have always been able to attain residency or citizenship more easily than foreign husbands. However, legal residency or citizenship is not directly translated into social membership or belonging. Korean society only accepts foreign wives who perform the role of the good wife and mother. The following two cases provide a good comparison:

All my neighbours are very nice to me. Nowadays even, I get compliments from neighbours and seniors. Last time, I treated them to lunch, and they said, "Minju's mom (referring to Susanne) cooks Korean foods well, and it is delicious."

(Susanne, Filipina female immigrant, age 33)

Across from my house, there is a family of an old lady, her son, his foreign wife and their baby. The old Korean mother has to cook Korean foods for herself and her foreign daughter-in-law cooks separately. It doesn't sound right. I feel sorry for the old lady. Of course, there must be cultural differences, but I wish the foreign *myŏnŭri* cook Korean foods and serves her mother-in-law. But it looks like she is not willing to do this.

(Mrs. Jeong, Korean woman, age 54)

For foreign wives, one way of integrating into Korean society is performing these expected gender roles. As these cases reveal, judgements about migrant women are based on their domestic performance; such as cooking Korean food and taking care of in-laws. The good wife, the good mother, and a good *myŏnŭri* (daughter-in-law) translate into the decent neighbour, and the good immigrant. Thus, gender ideology functions as a normative tool for foreign wives' social membership within the community.

While foreign brides are integrated into Korean society if they accept the role of a good wife, Korean husbands also have to perform the traditional gender role of “the respectable family man” (Freeman 2005). While a Korean husband relegates reproductive and domestic labour to his foreign wife, he is expected to be the main breadwinner and financially support his wife's natal family. However, since the majority of Korean men who chose international marriages are factory workers or rural farmers, being able to support a wife's natal family financially is often quite difficult. Due to the traditional dowry culture whereby a groom buys a house, and a bride fills the house with furniture, a groom is expected to contribute to the marriage more than the bride financially. In the case of an international marriage, a Korean man is expected to pay all the cost of the marriage, including two wedding ceremonies (in wife's country and in South Korea), honeymoon, dowry to wife's parents, cost for his wife's visa process, wife's airfare to South Korea, a house, furniture and household goods. Sending remittances to the wife's natal family is also expected even though not every couple can send remittances regularly, or at all. The case of Young-Hoon, who has a Filipina wife and sends remittance occasionally, demonstrates this issue well:

I am really good to my wife's family in the Philippines. My wife has nine brothers and sisters. I am the first son-in-law. My wife is the first daughter, the first daughter of her family! Think about how much money they need to live. I work hard to make enough money. It's a headache actually, but I feel a great responsibility.

(Young-Hoon, Korean male farmer, age 48)

Young-Hoon sends remittance whenever his wife asks him to help out her natal family to renovate their house, for her siblings' weddings, and so on. Providing financial support for his wife's natal family is a burden for Young-Hoon, but he feels an obligation as he assumes the patriarchal role as head of household and first son-in-law. Younger generations of Koreans in their 20s and 30s tend to be less patriarchal and more sensitive to gender equality. This means not only that young Korean women challenge their traditional gender roles as a wife, daughter-in-law, and mother, but also those young Korean men do not want to take the full responsibility of sole breadwinner. However, Korean patriarchy is still influential in shaping family relations, especially for multicultural families who expect both foreign brides and Korean husbands to perform traditional gender roles, as foreign brides are integrated into Korean society through demonstrating their Korean-ness through the family. This makes for an interesting contrast to the situation that foreign husbands face in Korea.

### **4.3.2 Forbidden Patriarchs: Korean Women and Foreign Men**

#### **4.3.2.1 Struggles of Getting Married**

Marriages of Korean women and foreign men tend to be so-called love marriages

(*yŏnaegyŏrhon*). However, they usually elicit strong protests from the Korean women's family

members, regardless of the husbands' nationality and race. Since the majority of foreign husbands are North Americans, Western Europeans, and Japanese men, a Korean woman's international marriage is considered as a form of global 'marrying up,' and these couples tend to reside in the husbands' countries. On the other hand, couples who remain in Korea tend to be unions of Korean women and foreign husbands who initially came to Korea as foreign migrant workers from China, South and Southeast Asia. South and Southeast Asian men are considered the underclass due to their initial entry into Korea as foreign migrant workers, even if they have college or university degrees from their home countries. Thus, the union of a Korean woman and a South and Southeast Asian man is seen as the Korean woman's 'marrying down.'

In addition, traditionally a bride merged into her husband's family culture upon marriage. Even though this traditional meaning of marriage is gradually eroding, there is still an old expression, "*sijip gada*", literally means 'moving into husband's house,' to describe a woman's marriage. It is, thus, problematic for a Korean woman to marry a foreign husband because she is merging into a foreign culture. While a Korean woman's international marriage, in general, is not acceptable regardless of her husband's nationality and race, a White husband is somewhat more acceptable compared to a South and Southeast Asian husband, because the White husband is expected to bring his Korean wife back to his country. However, a South and Southeast Asian man is more likely to stay in Korea; he may become a burden to his Korean wife financially and socially. They may form an ethnically and racially different family in Korea. The case of Hye and Ali shows this point well. Hye is a registered nurse, and she married Ali who initially came as a foreign migrant worker from Bangladesh. In separate interviews they describe her family's reaction to their marriage plans:

My mom said, “why do you want to marry a foreigner even though there are plenty of Korean guys? He is not even Canadian or American, why do you want a Bangladeshi man, of all men in the world?”

(Hye, Korean woman, age 34)

Her parents really opposed this marriage because I am *tongnama*. We couldn’t have a wedding ceremony because her parents protested. I couldn’t meet her parents for years. My wife said that we didn’t need to see them if they were not able to recognize me as her partner. She argued a lot against her parents, and she was always on my side. After we had a baby, her parents finally accepted me.

(Ali, Bangladesh male immigrant, age 32)

Despite her family’s opposition, after Hye got married to Ali, her mother and sister started giving them money, gifts, furniture and even helped buy them an apartment just after their child arrived. She interpreted this as her family feeling sorry for her marrying down.

When a Korean woman marries a South and Southeast Asian man, she struggles to convince her Korean family to accept her husband-to-be. She often threatens her parents that she will not contact her parents until they acknowledge her partner or her parents threaten their daughter that they will disown her if she follows through with the marriage. Udaya (age 30), a Nepalese immigrant who came to Korea as a foreign migrant worker recalls his experience of marrying a Korean woman. His Korean wife is very close to her mother, and they talk on the phone several times a week. When she planned to marry him, she told her family “I won’t see you any more if you protest this marriage.”

While many Korean women dating *tongnama* men firmly demonstrate their will to marry, at the same time they also try to reduce protests from the family as much as possible. They sometimes do this by presenting their husband-to-be as a white-collar office worker. This is thought to compensate for a *tongnama* man's low position. Since marrying a South or Southeast Asian man is considered as marrying down in Korea, Udaya's wife was already concerned about her family's reaction when they started dating. She thus asked him not to tell her family that he was a factory worker when she introduced him. She assumed that her family would never accept Udaya if they found out that Udaya was a foreign migrant worker, on top of his undesirable Nepalese nationality. Accommodating his wife's wish, after their marriage, Udaya quit his factory job and moved to the government-funded migrant worker counselling center to take a job as a counsellor assistant. Even though the salary is quite a bit less than what he received doing factory work, his wife prefers him to be a poorly paid office worker rather than a better paid factory worker.

As these cases demonstrate, couples made up of Korean women, and Southeast Asian men have to struggle to get married. Having a foreign spouse is treated as a less-than-ideal marriage in general. However, there are huge differences between marrying a foreign bride and marrying a foreign husband. Although there are prejudices and stereotypes against international marriages between Korean men and foreign women, the Korean government actively recruits foreign brides based on the social consent that importing foreign brides is inevitable to maintain the Korean population and to solve the care deficit. Thus, a Korean man's international marriage is considered a sacrifice for the nation. On the contrary, the general sentiment about the international marriage of Korean women is very negative. However, if you must accept an international marriage, then white men from the first world are acceptable, but not *tongnama*

men from the Third World. White men in Korea are seen as professionals or English teachers who may be financially more stable and culturally more advanced, and who, it is assumed, will eventually return their country with their Korean wives. Thus they may not compete as patriarchs with Korean men, nor form racially different families within Korea. However, *tongnama* men in Korea, who are associated with the image of the underclass, as foreign migrant workers who come from low-income countries, will most likely stay in Korea and they may even form ethnically and racially distinct families. They may attempt to become substitute patriarchs. These are what Koreans generally fear to foreign men, especially to *tongnama* men. Thus, while the marriage of a Korean man and a foreign woman is acceptable and even encouraged, the marriage of a Korean woman and a *tongnama* man is deeply frowned upon.

#### **4.3.2.2 Exclusion from the National Community**

On top of the institutional exclusion from settlement services, foreign husbands are excluded from the Korean patriarch community because Korean men do not recognize them as members of their Korean family. So-Yong's case illustrates this point clearly. So-Yong and Said had a small wedding party with their close friends, but none of their family members attended. Eventually after being together for ten years, eventually So-Yong's mother and sister accepted her Bangladeshi husband, but her father and brother still avoid meeting her husband.

My dad and my brother still don't see Said. So we could not visit my parents together. I realized that there is a difference between men and women. My mom and my sister try to

understand me and learn to be on my side. But for my dad and brother, their honour and pride seem to be more important.

(So-Young, Korean woman, age 40)

As this interview demonstrates, while So-Young's female family members recognize Said as a member of the family, her male family members refuse to recognize him. The foreign husband is thus reminded of his place within the Korean family hierarchy.

Nepalese husband, Udaya who works as a counsellor assistant for a local migrant workers counselling center, explained his place within his Korean family. According to him, he was quite satisfied with his life in Korea. However, he seems to feel intimidated by his Korean family-in-law when he has to attend family gatherings.

Lee: You might meet your Korean family and relatives during the Korean holidays.

Have you ever had a moment when you feel different from your Korean family members?

Udaya: Well, sometimes I felt cultural differences. And also when the family and relatives get together, they don't talk to me. Now I have good Korean, so I have a little bit more chances to talk with them, but usually, while Korean relatives talk together, I am quietly sitting nearby them. So I just wait for the time to go back home.

(Udaya, Nepalese male immigrant, age 30)

As Udaya's case shows, husbands, especially Southeast Asian husbands who initially came to Korea as foreign migrant workers, are permanent foreigners, regardless of their current legal and

economic status (Jung, 2007). While female marriage immigrants are considered *myŏnŭri* (daughter-in-law) who are accepted under their Korean husbands' control, foreign husbands (*sawi* or son-in-law) are not accepted as members of society because Korean society cannot permit substitute patriarchs. Regarding the degrees of inclusion then, a gendered racial hierarchy is in the process of being constructed in which Korean men are followed by Korean women, who are followed by foreign brides and finally foreign men.

#### **4.4 The Racialization of Marriage Immigrants: Ideology of Blood, Patriarchy, and Race**

In Korea, marriage immigrants have changed the ethnic composition of the population. A clear hierarchy exists within these international marriages according to a spouse's appearance and skin colour and depending on what ethnicity or race they belong. During field research, my interviewees often mentioned the racial discrimination they experienced because of their partners' skin colour. They also expressed worry about possible discrimination against their bi-racial children. However, the children of foreign women and Korean men are generally considered to be Korean. In this section, I further examine what I call "patriarchal racialization." As discussed, patriarchal racialization is a gendered racialization process whereby, while foreign wives and foreign husbands are both considered non-Korean, foreign wives are considered 'less foreign' than foreign husbands. Therefore, children of a Korean father and a foreign mother are seen as racially closer to Koreans than the children of a foreign father and Korean mother. Two categories of marriage immigrants (foreign brides and foreign husbands) and their children show how Korean ethno-nationalism and continued belief in patriarchal blood lineage (Korean blood passes down through father's line) results in 'patriarchal racialization.'

#### **4.4.1 Racial/Ethnic Preferences of a Foreign Wife**

Koreans are highly perceptive of ethnic and racial differences. Depending on a wife's skin colour and appearance, the family may be able to pass and possibly blend into Korean society, or they may continuously encounter strange gazes and discrimination. Thus, Koreans prefer East Asian-looking brides such as Chinese or Vietnamese women to darker skinned brides from the Philippines or Thailand. The following excerpt from an international marriage online forum shows the racial/cultural preferences in choosing a foreign wife. This Korean man posted his experience of international marriage for the benefit of other Korean bachelors. He narrowed down his wife-to-be's nationality to Vietnam and Uzbekistan. In the end, he chose an Uzbek bride because his parents would not accept a Southeast Asian woman as their daughter-in-law. The following excerpt of his racial/cultural evaluation of foreign brides is taken from the forum. It provides a snapshot of some shared cultural and racial stereotypes.

##### **China**

Pros: Similar appearance to Koreans, thus children easily blend into school life.

Cons: High risk of fake marriage or divorce. There are huge cultural differences regarding caring for in-laws due to socialism.

##### **The Philippines**

Pros: Speak English so that they can teach English to children.

Cons: Thick lips and flat nose. Their darker skin never becomes lighter even after living in Korea. No Confucian culture – huge cultural differences.

## **Vietnam**

Pros: Have Confucian culture so they can easily accept the Korean family culture, they are obedient. They have a bit darker skin, but it turns pale like Koreans after living in Korea.

Cons: None

## **Uzbekistan**

Pros: Not everyone but Islamic culture may share some similarities with Confucian culture (support parents, dominance of men over women). Their western appearance may satisfy Korean men's sexual fantasies.

Cons: Too stubborn because of former socialism and nomadic culture.

Source: “*Naega ujūbek kukche kyōrhonūl haeyahaettōn iyu* (the reasons why I married a Uzbekistani woman) from the internet forum UZSARANG, posted on September 8, 2012<sup>20</sup>

On the list, two prominent evaluation rubrics are foreign women's racial attributes and cultural characteristics. The cultural characteristics indicate whether a foreign woman's country has a patriarchal culture. This may help the woman accept Korean patriarchal family culture and carry out the traditional role of wife, as is the expectation. On the other hand, the racial attributes describe a foreign women's skin colour and facial features. Historically, light and dark colours were associated with class status in traditional agrarian Korean society long before Western racial hierarchies were introduced. Light colours represented ruling class, higher social status,

---

20

<http://cafe.daum.net/uzsarang/6TRZ/2764?q=%BF%EC%C1%EE%BA%A4%B1%B9%C1%A6%B0%E1%C8%A5&svc=top3> accessed on March 27, 2014.

cultural sophistication, intellectualism, while dark colours represented lower social status, cultural vulgarity, and ignorance. This was because the ruling class had a paler skin tone while peasants and labourers were tanned from working outside. Thus, historically Korean colour prejudice was closer to class prejudice rather than ethnic/racial prejudice. However, after racial hierarchies were introduced to Korea after the Korean war in the 1950s, this traditional Korean class-based colour prejudice was fused with skin colour distinctions in the making of racial others (N. Kim 2008). Thus, this classed and racialized colour distinction connotes that lighter skin equals superiority and darker skin is an indication of inferiority. A wife's skin colour is one of the most important considerations when choosing a bride-to-be.

Mrs. Sun (age 82) arranged an international marriage for her bachelor son despite her husband's protest. She hired an international marriage agency. At first, they needed to choose the country of the wife-to-be before her son travelled abroad for the marriage meetings. In order to give them some guidance, the marriage agency provided some photos of Filipina women, Thai women, and Vietnamese women. Given the limited information, her son chose a Vietnamese woman based on her skin colour and appearance. For him, "Filipina women or Thai women's skin is too dark to live together with."

A Korean family will accept an international marriage more easily if the foreign spouse has a relatively lighter skin tone. Anne is a Filipina marriage immigrant who did a so-called a love marriage. She met her husband at a private English school when she was his English teacher in Manila. Her parents and sisters immigrated to the United States about 10 years ago, and her brother is in Australia when I met her. She recalled that her Korean in-laws did not object to their marriage, and she explained that one of the reasons was her skin colour:

Anne: The good thing is that I look like a Korean. So my father-in-law accepted me.

Lee: Because you have lighter skin?

Anne: Yes, I look like you, not like other Filipinas. Other Filipinas are darker than me.

(Anne, Filipina female immigrant, age 29)

Regardless of the type of marriage - an arranged marriage or a love marriage - a wife's skin colour is carefully considered for different reasons. Most families want to avoid unwanted attention and reduce potential discrimination against their family and children. Sometimes, however, a Korean family prefers a very dark-skinned wife with the belief that her unfavourable appearance would reduce her chance of running away and would increase the 'pitiful woman's' loyalty to her Korean family because no other Korean man would like to live with her. Thus, Korean families' attitudes seem to also depend on their own socioeconomic status and whether they are seen as a desirable family for a foreigner to marry into. Therefore, racial/ethnic preferences and expectations that foreign brides from less developed countries will accept patriarchal culture reinforces the gender ideology of the traditional good wife and mother.

#### **4.4.2 Foreign Husband's Skin Color**

A foreign husband's ethnic and racial background is one of the reasons why a Korean family may not accept him as the legitimate partner of their daughter. In general, as the foreign population and the mixed-race second generation increases, racial discrimination has become a growing social issue. However, foreign husbands' ethnic and racial backgrounds are considered more negatively than foreign brides' are. While a Korean man's international marriage is understood as a choice made under conditions of necessity and foreign brides are expected to accept Korean culture, a Korean woman's international marriage is questioned because it is a so-

called love marriage (*yŏnaegyŏrhon*), which indicates that the Korean woman has voluntarily chosen to form an ethnically or racially inferior family. Hye recalls how her mother protested and blamed her for wanting a Bangladesh man as her husband; “You will have a dark-skinned child, then how will you take responsibility when your child will face discrimination?” To understand Korean families’ worries about discrimination, like Hye’s mother, we need to look at how South and Southeast Asian skin colour is understood, and how Korean women with foreign men were perceived historically.

In Korea, brown or even light brown skin is considered to be closer to the black skin than Korean skin colour. Koreans regard their skin to be lighter than the South and Southeast Asian skin tone. As a result, while Koreans consider their skin colour to be closer to that of Caucasians, South and Southeast Asian’s skin is considered closer to black skin. During my field research, I often met interviewees who used the black/white colour frame to describe South and Southeast Asians, and mixed-race second generations. Young-Hoon who had a Vietnamese wife described his friend’s case in terms of the black/white colour frame.

My friend has a Vietnamese wife, but their child is “*kŏmdungi* (‘Negro’).” That kid couldn’t live in Korea. A *kŏmdungi* was born between a Korean father and Vietnamese mother, how could they live with this black skin child? Their child got bullied all the time at school. Kids kept asking him, why is your skin so dark? Finally, they sent their child to Vietnam. The parents are still in Korea, and they send money to the Vietnamese grandparents to take care of their child.

(Young-Hoon, Korean male farmer, age 48)

In this conversation, the skin colour of a child from a Korean and Vietnamese couple is depicted as black (*kōmdungi*). Why is brown skin seen as black in South Korea? To answer this, we need to take into an account U.S military involvement in modern Korean history as discussed in chapter 3. Nadia Kim (2008) also points out, contemporary Korean skin colour distinction is influenced by the American black/white binary racial order, which was introduced to Korea after the Korean War in the 1950s.

So-Young who is a manager at a publishing company got married to a Bangladeshi man named Said, who initially came to Korea as a foreign migrant worker. Their case illustrates this point well.

My dad expected that Said was some sort of Asian, but when he saw the photo of Said, he got a shock. "He is not even Asian. It is such a shock to me. I cannot allow this marriage." (loudly laughs) For him, Said is not Asian; he is almost black and a very different race. My dad was in the Korean army, so he saw lots of American soldiers in camp towns. In his words, American "*kōmdungi* (negros)" harassed Korean girls, to be specific Korean prostitutes. I think his generation has a huge racial trauma about this. Do you remember the American TV drama, "Roots"? There is a scene where the main character scrubbed his body very hard to bleach his dark skin. My dad said that was a very sad scene, and he thought being born with black skin meant having lots of obstacles and difficulties in life. That person will become my daughter's partner, and your child will be *kōmdungi* who will be looked down on and neglected. He wrote in his e-mail that these were the reasons why he could not accept this marriage.

(So-Young, Korean woman, age 40)

In this conversation, So-Young's father opposed her Bangladeshi husband-to-be because his dark skin colour reminded him of the racial trauma that the older generation in their late 50s or older experienced after the Korean War. So-Young's father interpreted this Bangladeshi man's race through the American black/white racial hierarchy that he had learned from the U. S military camp, and from American TV, which was dominant in South Korea until the 1990s.

The issue of *honhyŏl* also shows this deep suffering from racial trauma since the Korean War. Until the mid-1980s, many Korean women worked as sex-workers near US military camps.<sup>21</sup> The child of a Korean woman and an American soldier was called a '*honhyŏl*' - literally meaning 'mixed blood.' While the Korean government has not kept statistics of the *honhyŏl* population, K. Park (2007:13) estimates that roughly 11,000 *honhyŏl* have lived in Korea, but the actual size of the *honhyŏl* population could be 7-10 times larger.<sup>22</sup> Scholars point out that Korean men felt emasculated by the US military after the Korean War and *honhyŏl* were a living symbol of Korean men's impotence under the regime of the US military (K. Choi 2009, K. Park 2007). Korean society, especially in those days, was very patriarchal, so women were blamed for sleeping with US soldiers and giving birth to *honhyŏls*. As they were considered byproducts of prostitution, *honhyŏls* were placed at the bottom of the social stratum and called '*twiggi*,' meaning a hybrid between two different animals. They had very high school dropout rates, faced extreme discrimination in the job market and found it difficult to get married. In the 1980s, many

---

<sup>21</sup> Now this job has been passed on to foreign women, mainly from Russia and the Philippines (J. Han 2014)

<sup>22</sup> From the late 1980s, the number of children born to American soldiers and Korean women has dramatically decreased. (K. Park 2007)

*honhyŏl* children were adopted or immigrated to America to avoid a life of severe discrimination.<sup>23</sup> Remarkably, according to K. Park (ibid), even until the 1990s, *honhyŏl* were categorized as disabled people in the Korean government's adoption records. Amongst *honhyŏl* children, a racial hierarchy existed according to the father's race. *Honhyŏl* children born to a Korean woman and a black American soldier faced far more discrimination than *honhyŏls* with a white father. Koreans learned the racial hierarchy that was visible within the US military and American media.<sup>24</sup> Korean sex workers were also treated differently depending on their customers' race. Korean sex workers who did business with black American soldiers were considered inferior and were not supposed to sleep with white American soldiers (Moon, 2002).

Therefore, a foreign husband's ethnic and racial background is judged more seriously than a foreign bride's. Since the patriarchal idea of marriage is still influential in shaping family culture, a Korean woman's international marriage to a *tongnama* man is understood not only as marrying down but also as the voluntary formation of an ethnically and racially inferior family whereby the Korean woman's racial/cultural attributes may be absorbed into the foreign husband's. At the same time, the American Black/White racial binary is influential in shaping Koreans' understanding of foreign husbands and their location within Korean racial hierarchies. In the making of *tongnama* husbands, therefore, there is a complex intersection of foreign husbands' race and Korean women's gender roles under Korean patriarchy. The intersectionality

---

<sup>23</sup> The US passed a special law (Public Law 97-359) in 1982 which facilitated the adoption and immigration of bi-racial children from Korea, Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia who were left behind by American soldiers. (K. Park 2007:13)

<sup>24</sup> Until the 1990s American soap dramas and movies made up over 50 percent of total Korean broadcast airtime (K. Park 2007).

of race and gender in the racialization process of *tongnama* becomes more prominent when we see how the second generation of multicultural families are understood in Korean society.

#### 4.4.3 Racial Proximity of the Second Generation

In Korea, there exists a strong sense of ethno-nationalism, often expressed as *hanp'itchul* (one blood) and *tanilminjok* (single ethnic nation). The idea of one blood and a single ethnic nation arose comparatively recently as a way to mobilize the country as it aimed to achieve modernization after independence from Japanese colonialism (K. Choi 2009). Ethnonationalism is so pervasive that non-ethnic Koreans are not recognized as Korean citizens even if they acquire legal citizenship status (H. Lee 2008; Jo 2011). Even though Korea is transforming into a multicultural and multiethnic society, the dominant ideology of 'one nation' and 'pure blood' creates the category of *han'guksaram* (Korean) (N. Kim 2008). The following conversation shows this clearly:

Lee: What is the most important thing for Korean identity?

Mrs. Park: I really think that a father and a mother should be ethnic Korean, then the children can be *han'guksaram* (Korean). Living in Korea, and knowing Korean culture is not enough to be *han'guksaram*. Having a Korean father and a Korean mother, this is the most important thing for Korean identity.

(Mrs. Park, Korean woman, age 37)

In general, foreign husbands are treated as contaminants of Korea's 'pure blood' and nation, regardless of the foreign husbands' ethnicity. As a result of this view that sharing Korean blood is the most important ingredient for Korean identity, multicultural families (*tamunhwa gajok*) are

treated as almost Korean, but not quite. However, relationships between Korean men and foreign women are acceptable because the child of such a partnership is considered to be more Korean. The following excerpts are from two separate conversations with Korean interviewees. These conversations illustrate patriarchal understandings of nationhood and race:

Lee: Well, is a child of a Korean father and a foreign mother, Korean?

Mrs. Kim: (Raises voice) Of course, Korean! That's obvious.

Mrs. Seo: Of course. They have Korean blood.

Mrs. Choi: Because the foreign mother came to Korea.

(Korean women, Mrs. Seo, age 63, Mrs. Choi, age 59, Mrs. Kim, age 54)

Lee: Do you consider foreign wives Korean?

Mr. Han: I consider them foreigners. But, they speak quite good Korean. Those foreign wives are very nice people.

Lee: Then what about the children between Korean men and foreign women? Do you consider them Korean?

Mr. Han: It depends. Some kids look like Koreans - similar to their fathers - but some kids look like foreigners - similar to their mothers.

Lee: Then, there are foreign men get married to Korean women, do you consider them Korean or foreigner?

Mr. Han: Yeah, there are some Korean ladies get married to Filipino Manila hubbies and Bangla hubbies. These guys have a small business, so they have some money, they speak good Korean. But, I still don't feel that they are Korean.

Lee: What do you think of the children between them?

Mr. Han: I don't feel they are Korean, to be honest.

(Mr. Han, Korean male taxi driver, age 58)

The above conversations show that while foreign wives and foreign husbands are both considered non-Korean, foreign wives are considered 'less foreign' than foreign husbands are, because they are supposedly under their Korean husbands' control, and therefore they are able to assimilate. Moreover, the children of foreign women and Korean men are generally considered to be Korean because Koreans still believe that blood is passed down paternally. Lee Jungmin (2008: 176) also points out in her study of Korean schoolteachers that children from Korean men and foreign women are seen as Koreans "because their fathers are Koreans" and "in Korea, such a patriarchal society, the mother's side is absorbed into the father's." The interviewees nevertheless make a distinction between children who resemble Korean fathers and those who take after foreign mothers. However, the children of a Korean woman and a foreign husband are considered less Korean despite their looks and their legal status as Korean citizens, for 'Korean-ness' is not passed on by the mother.

Thus, Korean ethno-nationalism and continued belief in patriarchal blood lineage result in patriarchal racialization, as foreign wives are considered to be more adaptable than foreign husbands. Therefore, the children of a Korean father and a foreign mother are seen as racially closer to Koreans than the children of a foreign father and Korean mother.

#### **4.5 Conclusion: Patriarchal Racialization**

This chapter explores the inextricable relationship between patriarchy and racialization in the contemporary context. The reality of growing numbers of “non-ideal families,” such as multicultural families, female-headed families, and single-parent families challenges the traditional patriarchal family norms. Therefore, Korean society has to deal with these new challenges to solidify the overall structure of patriarchal family norms.

In contemporary Korea, patriarchy becomes one of the domains through which rural farmers, working-class Korean men, and their families recover their dignity and power in the micro-sphere of the household by mobilizing foreign brides from Southeast Asia and China. In order to create the perception of Korean culture as conservative and homogenous, reproducing patriarchy requires several different components; such as structural arrangements (government-sanctioned importation of foreign brides, marriage, immigration law), social activities in the public and community, and everyday practices in the family. In this regard, the reconfiguration of racial hierarchies has a very critical role to play in reproducing patriarchal hierarchy. Thus, there are two processes intertwined in patriarchal racialization, which result in creating patriarchal racial hierarchies between individuals and families.

The first is connecting the ideology of patriarchy to race, which normalizes the patriarchal racial hierarchies in family and society at large. In Collins’s words:

[O]ne important component of the naturalization process concerns how presumptions of ‘blood ties’ frame the perceived links among blood, family, kin and race. [...] Families are mechanisms for perpetuating blood ties via maintaining blood lines through reproduction. Whereas the legal system is deeply implicated in legitimizing marriages for

heterosexual partners, the importance given to the seemingly natural bonds between mothers and children, brothers and sisters, grandmothers and grandchildren signal the importance of blood in crafting biological and therefore naturalized definitions of family as well as those of race. (Collins 2001, p15)

The ideal Korean family is constructed as a marriage of two heterosexual Koreans, who are both ethnically and culturally Korean, so presumably sharing Korean blood and Korean cultural values. The rhetoric of the ideal Korean family and the racial stereotypes of foreign spouses work to normalize the racial hierarchies between Korean families and multicultural families. Especially the ideology of Korean ethno-nationalism idealizes the blood tie as the natural link connecting family, kin, and national community. The Korean national community is still seen as an extended blood tie. Consequently, while the ideal Korean family is at the top of the racial and patriarchal hierarchy, a multicultural family is located at the bottom. Amongst multicultural families, one of the parents should be a natural born Korean, who is biologically and culturally Korean, in order to keep his/her family members within the Korean national community. A multicultural family of non-Koreans is excluded from the national community because of a lack of biological and cultural ties. Here again, a father's lineage is considered more dominant and superior than the mother's blood and lineage. Thus, a multicultural family with a Korean father is located in a better position than a multicultural family with a Korean mother within the racial hierarchy of multicultural families. In multicultural families with Korean fathers, the hierarchical order differs based on the foreign mothers' race and nationality.

The second part is gendered racialization. The excerpt from the online forum about the pros and cons of four different groups of female marriage immigrants shows how Koreans create

the bounded understanding of regional and country-specific developmental stereotypes, racial stereotypes, and the patriarchal rhetoric of the ideal Korean family. It also illuminates how these stereotypes work to normalize racial and gender hierarchy over the course of *tongnama* racial formation. Koreans' racial and cultural stereotypes of Southeast Asian women (innocent, exotic, frugal, obedient) are related to Koreans' understanding of what *tongnama* is (economic underdevelopment, powerless), and who *tongnama* people are (dark-skinned, small, pure, meek). In the process of normalization of these racial and cultural differences, very specific and particular images of women are chosen to delineate Southeast Asian women. For example, in the excerpt of female marriage immigrants discussed above, the physical characteristics of Filipina women are negatively described as dark-skinned, thick lips, and flat nose. Vietnamese women are generalized as light brown skinned. These selective images are overstated based on what Koreans want to see from them and used for constructing a lump category of *tongnama* women. Dialectically, this is also a process to construct the racial characteristics of the ideal Korean woman who has a taller height and paler skin than Southeast Asian women, which contributes to building Korean's racial identity. This reflects Koreans' self-confidence about their ability to achieve economic development compared to Southeast Asian countries, which allows Koreans to translate the logic of economic advancement into their cultural superiority over *tongnama* others. For example, Korean women's skin colour and physical characteristics become highly regarded in relation to Southeast Asian women's, so those marriage immigrant women are expected to whiten their skin to make them similar to Korean women's skin. Thus, these stereotypes and discourses of *tongnama* work to naturalize the racial hierarchy between Korean and Southeast Asian.

As a consequence of patriarchal racialization, a gendered racial hierarchy is constructed in which Korean men are followed by Korean women, who are followed by foreign brides and finally foreign husbands. Thus, the sharp contrast between these two categories of marriage immigrants shows how Korean ethno-nationalism and continued belief in patrilineage result in patriarchal racialization. Such patriarchal racialization is a gendered racialization process whereby children of a Korean father and a foreign mother are seen as racially closer to Koreans than the children of a foreign father and Korean mother. Finally, the process of racial formation in Korea is deeply intertwined with not only patriarchy but also with global classism, as race intersects with hierarchies that rank nations according to their degree of economic development.

## **Chapter 5: Manufacturing Race - Immigrants and Foreign Migrant Workers at Work**

In May in 2014, I visited a government-funded labour counselling center to interview a Nepalese immigrant, Udaya, who was working for the center as a counselor's assistant. His stylish outfit seemed to fit well with the clean, modern style of the center. Since the majority of male immigrants tend to work in manufacturing industries, I was curious about how he started working for the center as a staff member. I learned that he initially came to Korea through the Employment Permit System (a Korean guest worker program) with a short-term work permit, then married a Korean woman a couple of years ago and, soon after, he quit factory work. At first, he was hesitant to take this contract office job because the overall salary for doing factory work was quite a bit higher. However, he eventually quit the factory for his Korean wife. He explained, "Well, I didn't want my wife to feel embarrassed. Her friends have quite decent jobs. She would feel ashamed if she had to tell her friends that her foreign husband is a factory worker. You can lie a few times and say that my husband is an office worker or a businessman. But you can't lie for so long."

After meeting him, I was struck by how the social images of occupations compel people to embrace economic disadvantages, in this case, a smaller income. Why does his Korean wife feel embarrassed about her foreign husband working in a factory, even though his factory work earns a higher income? If he were Korean, would his Korean wife still feel ashamed of his working-class factory job? What does his case tell us about ethnic and racial hierarchies in the occupational structure in Korea? This curiosity brought my attention to a more fundamental

question: how do racial logics intersect with economic logics in the production of a racialized immigrants and foreign migrant workers?

Words such as white-collar and blue-collar may describe the functional differentiation of occupation. However, labour scholars (Koo 2001, J. Kim 2013) point out that these words often imply a hierarchical relationship, with white-collar workers usually assuming a superior status to that of blue-collar factory workers. Indeed, it is quite common in South Korea that people describe white-collar jobs as comparatively more desirable than blue-collar jobs, even though a growing number of white-collar jobs are underpaid, short-term contracts or part-time positions. Although the social status of blue-collar workers has improved, the social stigma of blue-collar jobs has a long history around the world, and it remains an indicator of social position within the vocational hierarchies.

A careful observation of the interactions among workers reveals how Korean workers use diverse strategies to draw symbolic boundaries between themselves and “foreign workers,” as Korean workers call them, which refers to immigrants and foreign migrant workers from South and Southeast Asian countries (*tongnama*) and China. These migrants are in the lower-tier of the Korean working class in the manufacturing, agriculture, fishing, construction, service industries, assuming the position of “underclass.”<sup>25</sup>

---

<sup>25</sup> While the concept of underclass has been debated in the context of unemployment and urban poverty of inner-cities (e.g., Wilson 1987), scholars generally use the term underclass to describe the segment of the population below the main body of the working class (Wright 1994, Wilson 1987, Anderson 1990). The underclass is concentrated in the unskilled and lowest paid jobs, and they experience high levels of precarious employment, or chronic repetitive semi-employment and unemployment (Giddens 1973). Thus, although there are multiple characteristics to define underclass in economics, socio-psychological, behavioural, and spatial dimensions, the economic dimension of the underclass in reference to the labour market is widely agreed amongst scholars. Thus, I use the term underclass in the economic dimension to refer the segment of the population below the working class or the lower tier of working class.

I argue that Korean workers draw hierarchical boundaries from immigrants and foreign migrant workers in the labour market. Racial logic plays an essential role in drawing these boundaries between Korean workers and foreign workers. Thus, the case of foreign workers in South Korea shows how a social and behavioural dimension of boundary making appears in everyday interactions at work. In other words, boundary drawing occurs during the process of creating a split labour market. This is not only because of policies that funnel foreign workers into these low wage and insecure jobs, but also because of further interactional boundary making, which reinforces the way foreign migrant workers are seen in Korean society. As a result, foreign migrant workers are pushed into the further split of the labour market.

By incorporating the concept of boundary making into labour market theory, this chapter contributes to a body of scholarship that updates Bonacich's (1972, 1979) influential split labour market theory, which has been widely criticized for assuming a static labour market (Olzak 1983, Chun 2008). This chapter shows that South Korea's split labour market is actively created and reproduced through boundary making practices by multiple actors (the Korean state, supervisors, and co-workers) at multiple scales from national labour immigration policy to business community demands, to everyday interactions.

To better understand the complexity of the Korean split labour markets, this chapter examines state labour policies and the experiences of foreign migrant workers, immigrant workers, and Korean workers. I begin by reviewing the debates in the literature about boundary making and race issues in the split labour market to scrutinize the complexity of the racialized labour market. Next, I show the central role of the state in deploying racial logics to channel foreign migrant workers and immigrants into downgraded forms of irregular and flexible employment. Then, I discuss how Korean employers prefer foreign migrant workers and

immigrants to native-born Korean workers to fill extremely low-level jobs. These workers are supposedly not only cheaper and more obedient, but also more flexible than Korean workers are. Through ethnographic research in several different factories and interviews with foreign migrant workers, immigrants, Korean workers, and managers, I document the tensions and stereotypes amongst groups and analyze the interpersonal, cultural, and structural racism experienced by immigrants and foreign migrant workers from Southeast Asian countries and China. In this chapter, I use the term “foreign worker” to indicate both immigrants and foreign migrant workers from South and Southeast Asia and China, since Korean workers use the term in this way.

## **5.1 Debates on Race Issues in the Labor Market**

### **5.1.1 Racial Dynamics in Split Labour Markets**

Bonacich’s influential split labor market theory (1972, 1979) provides important explanations for how economic competition results in racial/ethnic antagonism. According to Bonacich (1972: 553), “if the labor market is split ethnically, the class antagonism takes the form of ethnic antagonism. [...] while much rhetoric of ethnic antagonism concentrates on ethnicity and race, it really in large measure (though probably not entirely) expresses this class conflict.” Bonacich (ibid: 549) argues that when a labour market contains at least two groups of workers whose price of labour differs for the same work, the labour market becomes split. In split labour markets, conflict develops between three key actors: employers, higher paid labour (the upper tier), and cheaper labour (the lower tier). First, employers aim at having as cheap and docile a labour force as possible to compete effectively with other businesses. If labour costs are too high because of organized workers and labour unions, employers turn to cheaper sources, such as ethnic minority, immigrant and migrant workforces that are usually unorganized. Second, higher priced

workers are threatened by the introduction of cheaper labor into the market so higher priced workers “not only used the strength of their collective organizations to secure better wages and benefits, but they also used them to secure exclusionary immigration legislation and discriminatory employment laws against lower-priced racial-ethnic and/or migrant labor” (Chun 2008: 436). Finally, employers use lower priced workers - mostly racial-ethnic minorities and migrant labour - not only for cost cutting but also partly to undermine the position of more expensive labour. Through the dynamics of three major actors in split labour markets, we can see that split labour markets include two interrelated dimensions; 1) employment status (the upper tier, the lower tier) and 2) ethno-racial status, which is primarily determined by nationality, ethnicity, and skin colour. The co-constitution of these two-dimensions results in the creation of racialized migrant labour in split labour markets.

In the split labour market, comparatively large numbers of ethnic minority and migrant workers use labour agencies to find jobs, which happen to be precarious and low-paid jobs. The concentration of ethnic minority and migrant workers in precarious and low-paid casual jobs exhibits the new migrant division of labour in split labor markets (Sherman 2007, Janta and Ladkin 2009, Hudson et al. 2017). For example, Sherman (2007) reveal the spatial and racial division of labour in the luxury hotel industry: while white workers are involved in front office activities, non-white migrant workers are assigned for janitorial work. The ‘sticky floor’, which describe a discriminatory employment pattern that keeps a certain group of people at the bottom of the job scale, is a common issue for ethnic minority and migrant workers who are assigned low paid jobs (Browne and Misra 2003, Yap and Konrad 2009). These workers commonly experience more part-time work and horizontal job mobility, but less vertical mobility (Aker 2009). In particular the ethnic minority and migrant workers in the lower tier experience

informality and discrimination in access to jobs and promotions (Hudson et al, 2017). As the labour migration literature shows, ethnic minority and migrant workers experience significant inequalities, and the increasing use of labour agencies intensifies the degree of inequality in the labour market.

The South Korean labour market began to receive a more ethnically and racially different labour force in the early 1990s when precarious/irregular employment was expanded under the process of neoliberal labour market transformations. The South Korean state thus also has an essential role to play in producing and reproducing racialized foreign migrant workers.

Sassen (1988:37) argues that by controlling national boundaries under the system of global labour supply, the state creates migrant labour as a distinct category of labour, which is characterized by the institutional differentiation and a particular form of migrant workers' powerlessness, associated with formal or attributed foreign status. In this sense, "migrant labour is not something to be taken as given but is created and recreated by the state" (Burawoy 1976:1076). In South Africa, for example, the state organized a dual labour market so that one sector was primarily composed of white workers and the other by African migrant workers from the counties (ibid). Therefore, the South African state's function was to maintain the flow of African migrant workers as a source of cheap labour-power by making it difficult for Africans to settle permanently in urban areas (Wolpe 1972). The apartheid regime was thus utilized to secure and develop the capitalist mode of production (ibid). According to Wolpe (ibid), the state's intervention in the internal migration flow and the dual labour market was enacted through law and policy, and through the repressive apparatus (police, army, prisons, courts) to coerce workers on behalf of or in support of employers in order to guarantee the perpetuation of capitalist laws.

Split labor market theory – and dual and segmented labor market theory more broadly – show how a political economy perspective importantly explains the material basis of racism and ethnic antagonism in the labour market. However, split labor market theory has been criticized for assuming static, two-tiered labor markets (Olzak 1983, Chun 2008).

Instead, labour markets are actively produced and reproduced by multiple actors. In this way, the Korean split labour markets are in line with Jamie Peck's (1996: 4-5) concept of the labour market: "labour markets are socially constructed and politically mediated structure of conflict and accommodation among contending forces." Therefore, labour markets are power-laden sites of conflict and contestation among multiple actors in locally specific places (ibid). Therefore, I move to boundary making theories to explore how workers' boundary making also actively affects South Korea's split labour markets.

### **5.1.2 Boundary Making in the Korean Labour Market**

Korean split labor markets were created in the early 1990s through neoliberal labour market transformations. These transformations resulted in the mass lay-off of regularly employed workers and in increasing irregular employment. In South Korea, there are multiple distinctive boundaries among workers in the manufacturing industries, which are often very hierarchical. Korean labour scholars (Song 2002, Y. Kim 2015, Y. Kim and Cha 2016) point out that these hierarchical boundaries among Korean workers became much more prominent after split labour markets were created. Since South Korea imported foreign workers into the Korean labour market, ethnic and racial boundaries were also drawn between Korean workers and foreign workers.

The making of ethnic or racial boundaries among workers is well documented. J. Kim (2013: 79) observes that South Korean managers draw ethnic boundaries between Korean workers, Korean-Chinese workers, and Han-Chinese workers in a hierarchical way. Delineating distinctive group characteristics is often used to justify existing hierarchical relations. In the process, the group characteristics deemed to be superior or desirable establishes its prevailing status over those without such characteristics, thus marking clear hierarchical boundaries among workers (ibid).

In the U. S context, Michèle Lamont (2000) examines in her book, *The Dignity of Working Men*, how the white American working class makes a racial boundary between themselves and the black American working class by mobilizing the concept of morality to gain recognition as better workers and better citizens, which symbolically protects their dignity and pride. Lamont and Molnár (2002: 168) point out that "[s]ocial boundaries are objectified forms of social differences manifested in unequal access to, and an unequal distribution of resources (material and nonmaterial) and social opportunities."

According to Wimmer (2008), boundary making includes constant grouping and regrouping of individuals. Therefore, boundaries change over the course of this process.

A boundary displays both a categorical and a social or behavioural dimension. The former refers to acts of social classification and collective representation; the latter to everyday networks of relationships that result from individual acts of connecting and distancing (Wimmer 2008: 975-6).

In Wimmer's understanding of ethnic boundaries, we see the same process of group making as in Bourdieu's process of classification: both have practices of connecting and distancing, and constant adjustments of boundaries. Bourdieu (1987) points out that groups of individuals are divided into several different classes in such a way that agents in the same class try to be as similar as possible, while they try to be as distinct as possible from people in the different class. Often, these social distances are made by subjective strategies, which may be totally unconscious (ibid).

The fact that different social groups, which are organized by different principles, such as ethnicity, race, nationality, occupational and local divisions share the very same group making process provides us with an opportunity to investigate how boundary making works in the creation of a new racialized class position of migrants in South Korea.

To explore this conjunction, I pay attention to what Bourdieu (1987) calls the theoretical illusion between the analytical construct and the folk category. These two are often confused: a theoretical class is an analytical construct, while a folk category is a class seen as a real and abjectly constituted group. However, a theoretical class cannot be a real class, because there are many other organizing principles in reality, such as ethnicity, race, nationality, gender, occupational and local divisions (ibid). This theoretical illusion may appear as a difficulty of studying the issue of class and race, but where this confusion occurs is possibly where we can analytically approach the complexity of race and class. In other words, the complexity where multiple organizing principles appear is the place where we can analyze the relations between race, class, and nationality at least in the case of Korean factory workers.

In the next section, I will examine how the Korean state intervenes in the expansion of precarious employment categories through the temporary worker policy (*p'agyŏnbŏp*), Korean

guest worker programs - EPS (Employment Permit System) and ITS (Industrial Trainee System) for foreign migrant workers.

## **5.2 Foreign Workers in the Korean Manufacturing Industry**

On my first day at the hard-boiled egg packaging factory, a female Korean foreman in her early sixties approached to me. She directly asked my age, and she talked about the general problems of the older workforce in this factory. According to her, the average age of Korean workers was in the mid-fifties, but instead of hiring young Koreans, the company hired foreign workers. She believed that young Koreans don't want to work in factories. She warmly stroked my back and added, "we need more young Korean workers like you."

Indeed, the phenomena of an older Korean workforce and the use of foreign workers are very common in the manufacturing industry. The Korean government and scholars often explain that the labour shortage and the older workforce are due to the low birth rate combined with an ageing society (J. Lee et al. 2012, S. Lee 2012, Son 2014, An and D. Kim 2014). However, critical labour scholars point out that we need to pay more attention to the dramatically exacerbated labour market situation under increasingly business-friendly labour policies (Hwang 2003, Cho et al. 2004, Chun 2008, 2009, Bae 2009, Jung 2013, Han and Chun 2014). The reliance on cheap labour is one of the cost-cutting strategies of capital (Bonacich 1972, 1979). As one of the latecomers to industrialization, South Korea faces severe competition on the global market. Like other industrialized countries, South Korea has adopted new strategies to survive global capitalist competition through the restructuring of overseas production sites as well as the domestic labour market. Small businesses and subcontractors in the manufacturing, construction, and agriculture industries, which are unable to establish overseas production sites, especially rely

on irregular workers and foreign workers in South Korea to keep their labour costs down (B. Kim 2011).

Since the early 1990s, the South Korean labour market has exacerbated the work conditions and exploitation of irregular workers under the neoliberal economic transformation. Chun (2009:536) points out that “[a]lthough there are certainly exceptions, most people recognize that accepting an irregular versus a regular job translates into lower wages, fewer benefits, and heightened job insecurity.” As a consequence, small and medium size businesses in the manufacturing, agriculture, and fishing industries, which are increasingly filled with irregular employment and foreign workers, have experienced a low-skilled workforce shortage, even though the unemployment rate among young adults is increasing each year.<sup>26</sup> The growth of irregular and precarious jobs results in the labour market polarization between the upper tier and the lower tier. Within the manufacturing industry, the major factory jobs like Hyundai Motors, Kia Motors, and Samsung, which are still considered good jobs, are also becoming increasingly out of reach for Korean men due to the ongoing mass layoffs of regularly-employed workers. The world of regular work in the major factories (the upper tier) is getting smaller. It is mainly restricted to Korean men and is impossible for foreign workers who are at the further split in the small and medium manufacturing firms.

During my field research, Korean interviewees often expressed their concerns about the disappearance of decent jobs, increasing precarious jobs, and the growing body of foreign workers who are willing to take degraded jobs in the manufacturing industry. Mr. Jang and Mr.

---

<sup>26</sup> According to Statistics Korea 2017- the trend of (un)employment (*shirōpchasu/shirōmnyul ch'ui*), the unemployment rate for people aged 15 to 29 was 7.5% in 2012, but it is increasing every year. It reached 10.6% in 2016.

Nam have worked for the same auto company for over 20 years as regular workers (*jönggyujik*), but they were laid off when their company enforced mass layoffs of regularly-employed workers several years ago. Mr. Jang found a job in a small factory again, and Mr. Nam was working as a janitor with an irregular employment (*bijönggyujik*):

Mr. Jang: Factories hire foreigners to save money. Foreigners are cheaper than Koreans because they are all irregular workers. If you hire a Korean with a permanent contract, it is much more expensive. You have to subsidize four social insurances (medical, employment, occupational safety, and national pension), benefits, and the annual bonus. Irregular workers and temporary workers are increasing now, and it will get worse and worse. Irregular workers get paid only half of what a permanent worker receives for the same work. Look, the government allows this to happen. Irregular workers and foreigners will increase more.

Mr. Nam: This is a problem. As brother Jang explained, the government created irregular workers, temporary workers, on-call workers, and now foreigners take over our jobs. We Koreans have to prepare for retirement by age 50 or something.

Mr. Jang: The government is responsible for this. There are tons of illegal foreign workers, but the government closes its eyes. Because the government believes that factories won't be able to run without them. Especially 3D (difficult, dirty, dangerous) factories use lots of foreigners and illegals, so the government probably isn't able to deport them all.

(Mr. Jang, age 59, Mr. Nam, age 51, male Korean factory workers)

As the conversation between Mr. Nam and Mr. Jang shows, how Korean workers understand foreign workers is closely related to the role of the government in the labour market situation — for example, its involvement with the expansion of irregular workers and importation of foreign migrant workers. Therefore, to understand the sentiments of Korean workers when it comes to foreign workers, it helps to look at the migrant labour policies within the context of business-friendly labour policies and the expansion of labour market flexibility.

Officially, the foreign migrant worker program was introduced in the early 1990s as one of the forms of irregular employment, when irregular employment (*bijönggyujik*) began dramatically increasing among Korean workers. Foreign migrant workers came through the Industrial Trainee Programs (ITP) — the earlier version of low-skilled foreign labour importation. Under the ITP, foreign trainees were considered officially students; therefore, they were not subject to the Labor Standards Act. Foreign industrial trainees voluntarily became undocumented workers because of extreme labour exploitation, such as low wages, long working hours, and inhumane treatment under the trainee system (Seol 2000, S. Lee 2005, K. Park 2005). As the majority of foreign trainees escaped from their programs, these industrial trainee programs were abolished in 2007 (HRDKorea 2013).

To replace the industrial trainee program, the Korean government introduced the Employment Permit System (EPS) in 2004 (ibid). Under the EPS, foreign migrant workers can be protected by the Labor Standards Act and can access social benefits such as medical insurance, industrial accident compensation insurance, and national pension.<sup>27</sup> Despite the

---

<sup>27</sup> Introduction of Employment Permit System from the EPS official website accessed July 2 in 2018 <https://www.eps.go.kr/ph/index.html>

gradual improvement of foreign labour policies, one of the characteristics of EPS is the immobility of foreign workers (Gray 2004). These foreign migrant workers have to be hired before they enter South Korea through the government job centers, and they are not allowed to change their employment arrangements during their period of contracts, except in cases of unpaid wages, physical or sexual harassment, factory shutdown, contract termination, or if the employer gives a foreign worker permission to move to another factory (HRDKorea 2013). These exceptions are limited to three times over three years. Even after getting permission, foreign migrant workers must find jobs only through the government job centers that monitor and control the whole process (ibid). If a foreign migrant worker finds a job without going through a government job center, the foreign migrant worker immediately becomes an undocumented foreign worker and is in danger of being deported.

While the EPS restricted the overall mobility of foreign migrant workers, interestingly foreign migrant workers were able to utilize some degree of autonomy when they changed workplaces. Until 2013, the government job centers provided a list of up to 30 to 40 factories for foreign workers, so that a foreign worker could contact factories for job interviews. However, this limited autonomy was eliminated when the government revised regulations in response to small factory owners' complaints about the turnover of foreign workers. To reduce the turnover, government job centers stopped providing lists of factories with job openings to foreign workers. Instead, foreign workers are now required to register their names in the labour pool when the government job centers allow a workplace change, and then wait until a factory contacts them first for a potential job interview (HRDKorea 2013: 91). The main change is that EPS does not allow foreign migrant workers to search for jobs themselves. However, if they are not hired within 3 months, they are deported. According to the executive manager of a government-funded

foreign worker counselling center whom I interviewed, “Since this revision, the number of applicants for workplace transfers has dropped quite a bit and the labour shortage of the small factories looks somewhat alleviated.” The revision to EPS regulations shows how the state and its institutions play essential roles in micromanaging the supply of foreign migrant workers and the overall work conditions of the foreign labour force.

However, the use of foreign workers under the EPS still requires employers to go through the long process of recruiting overseas workers and at least minimally complying with the Labor Standards Act, the Minimum Wage Act, and the Industrial Safety and Health Act. To secure a higher level of labour flexibility and to cut costs, one of the common strategies used by factories is to hire temporary workers through labour agencies (*p'agyönöpch'e*), which is one of the oldest and most common forms of labour exploitation in history (Chun 2009). In the manufacturing industry, temporary workers who are hired through labour agencies are usually considered day workers who are not eligible to receive benefits and job security from their factories. Often, they are not able to apply for unemployment insurance either, because their short-term contracts cannot meet the minimum requirement of six months' employment.

In the industrial complex where I conducted my field research, 68% of foreign workers were temporary workers, mostly Korean-Chinese, marriage immigrants, and so-called “illegal” migrant workers who do not have proper work permits (Ansan Contingent Workers' Center 2013). “Illegal” migrant workers include people who have overstayed their EPS contracts, people who arrive through smugglers, and people who engage in unauthorized work on tourist visas and international student visas. Even though the use of temporary foreign and Korean workers is prevalent across small and medium-sized factories, there are no precise statistics on temporary factory workers. Recent research on actual conditions of using temporary workers in Ansan-

Siheung city shows that the majority of factories in this industrial complex use temporary workers (ibid).

There are indeed exceptions, however; using temporary workers through labour agencies is illegal in the manufacturing industry because it may worsen already vulnerable working conditions and job security in the manufacturing industry, according to the Enforcement Decree of the Act on the Protection of Temporary Agency Workers (Korea Ministry of Government Legislation [1998] 2015), better known as *p'agyŏnbŏp*. Although the South Korean state has officially declared that it wants to protect irregular workers, there has been little legal enforcement exercised against illegally operating temporary labour agencies (Chun 2009, Ansan Contingent Workers' Center 2013).

It is noteworthy that Korean-Chinese migrants form one of the major groups of temporary workers. Unlike other foreign migrant workers who cannot change their workplace easily, the Korean government has allowed some degree of job mobility for Korean-Chinese people within low-skilled jobs across the manufacturing, agriculture, construction, fishing, and service industries since 2007. The government sanction for Korean-Chinese is not only based on their high level of Korean language proficiency, but also on Korean ethno-nationalistic preferences that favour Korean-Chinese people over migrants from other places (HRDKorea 2013:3).

### **5.3 Making the New Underclass: The Political Economy of Racialization**

#### **5.3.1 Employer's Cost-Cutting Strategies and Classification of Workers**

The government's business-friendly practices establish structural conditions for the creation of hierarchal boundary making practices between Korean workers and foreign workers.

Capitalists always seek to hire cheap and docile workers, such as women and ethnic minorities, and exploit divisions across race, gender, skill, nativity, and other lines (Glenn 2002). In South Korea, business owners use several cost-cutting strategies, including diverse forms of irregular employment (*bijönggyujik*). As irregular employment increases, discriminatory treatment and exploitation of the irregular workers has become one of the significant social issues in Korea (J. Sohn 2003, Chun 2009, J. Seo 2015, B. Cheon 2014, S. Baek 2014, Y. Lee 2015).

The discriminatory division of Korean workers (regular vs. irregular) allows the exclusion of irregular workers from workplace regimes, which often translates into irregular workers becoming the second-class workers (Son 2004, Chun 2009). During my field research, I often witnessed irregular Korean workers in the lower tier sarcastically describing their own position in the deteriorating working conditions as “people below” in comparison with Korean workers who are in the upper tier of employment and white-collar jobs. But they described foreign workers as the “3D *ilkkun* (labourer)” who takes the jobs that even the lower tier irregular Korean workers do not want to take. In the contemporary usage, the word *ilkkun* is not strongly offensive, but it still implies a certain degree of derogatory social position as the word *ilkkun* traditionally refers to a day-labourer or a servant. Indeed, the government’s business-friendly practices play a crucial role in placing foreign workers at the bottom of the vocational hierarchies in the labour market.

Linda, a 27-year-old female Cambodian worker who was working for a hard-boiled egg packaging factory for three years, shows this hierarchical placement clearly. While I was working with Linda, she was searching for a new factory where she might work fewer hours than in the egg factory. In the egg factory, only foreign workers were assigned to cover the morning overtime (7:00–8:30), the evening overtime (18:00–22:00), and the night shift (22:00–7:00),

upon the management's request. Linda complained that the factory was running almost 24 hours a day for several months, and frequent overtime and night shifts were harsh on her body. Despite the physical hardship, foreign workers often prefer overtime and night shifts because the hourly rate is 1.5 times higher for overtime and two times higher for the night shift, by law. Thus, Linda might earn a good salary at the end of the month, even if it was a very intense work schedule. However, she explained that the factory only paid her the regular rate, even when she worked overtime, night shifts, and weekend shifts. Soon, I learned that approximately half of the foreign workers in this factory had agricultural work visas, for which the government had sanctioned some exceptions to the Labor Standards Act for the agriculture industry's convenience, including paying a regular rate for overtime, night shifts, and weekend shifts. To take advantage of these exceptions, the company forced foreign workers with agricultural work visas to switch from its poultry farm to this food factory without reporting to the job center. Although the company was responsible for the violation of immigration regulations, if immigration found out, the foreign workers with agriculture visas would be deported because working in a factory with agriculture visas is illegal. Therefore, foreign workers in this food factory worked on the border between legal and illegal employment with the government's collusion, which resulted in labour exploitation.

In the manufacturing industry business owners use several cost-cutting strategies, including diverse forms of legal and illegal flexible employment like subcontracting and using temporary workers through intermediary agencies, as well as using documented and undocumented foreign workers. It is common that employers use a mixture of Korean workers, Korean-Chinese migrants, immigrants, and foreign workers to maximize the efficiency and flexibility of their labour force at a lower cost. On top of this, there is a complex classification of

workers according to visa status, gender, ethnicity, and race in the hiring practices of immigrants and foreign workers in manufacturing industries. This classification predetermines a temporary foreign worker's employment placement and even the chance of getting jobs. The following explanation by an ex-labour agency manager during an interview clearly illustrates this:

Mr. Choi: We can classify people the moment a job seeker enters our office. We sort people based on whether they are Korean or not, whether they have a visa or not, whether they have lighter skin or darker skin, whether they are a woman or a man, whether they are old or young. It's very simple. If we have to pay the same wage, less dark-skinned workers are preferred in the factories. Well, to be honest, no factory owner prefers to hire brown or black people.

Lee: Is skin colour the most important determinant in getting a job?

Mr. Choi: Well, first language is important for communications. So, if possible, *chosŏnjok* (Korean-Chinese) are preferred. If not, less dark-skinned workers are preferred. And roughly 80% of factories look at visa status and the remaining 20% don't care about visa status. So, we send the illegal foreigners to those factories. Among illegal workers, workers have divided again by skin colour. Again, *chosŏnjok* or Uzbekistani-Koreans are preferred because they have lighter skin colour and speak good Korean. But Black people and dark-skinned Asians, like Cambodians, are not preferred. So, we send these illegals to more dangerous factories like plating, leather, press machine, and chemical factories. It's toxic and smelly, so no one wants to go there.

(Mr. Choi, ex-labour agency manager, Korean)

His explanation reveals that there are hierarchies in the minimum wage job market along the lines of skin colour, gender, nationality, age, and migration status. The hierarchies in this minimum-wage job market determine what you can and cannot do based on who you are and where you are from. The ethno-racial stereotypes are prevalent in low-wage sectors. Preibisch and Binford (2007) documents that in the Canadian agricultural sector that significantly relies on seasonal agricultural migrant workers from Mexico and the Caribbean, employers' use of racial stereotypes associated different groups of workers with particular crops: such as Jamaicans are more efficient at picking peaches than Mexicans.

Indeed, using Korean and foreign temporary workers through labour agencies has become a dominant practice in small factories to cut the cost of labour without dealing with the employees' needs. Factories' legal and illegal use of labour agencies creates conditions of structural and institutional discrimination of irregular workers, in terms of wages, job security, and quality of work. As one of the typical flexible and indirect forms of employment, dispatch employment intrinsically creates the conditions of labour exploitation by externalizing labour costs and legal employment responsibilities to a separate entity. The workers have employment contracts with a labour agency, rather than the factory owner, but the factory management supervises the temporary workers. Thus, the workers in this irregular and flexible employment, who are predominantly immigrants, racialized people, women, and the elderly, are facing "a pervasive state of legal liminality – that is a state of institutional exception in which workers are neither fully protected by nor fully denied the rights of formal employment" (Chun 2009:537). Importantly, since the Korean government imports foreign migrant workers mainly from China and so-called 'less-developed' Southeast Asian countries, perceived developmental differences

justify discrimination of migrants. Racial and ethnic conflicts are often rooted in the competition for resources and jobs (Bonacich 1972, 1979).

Conventional theories of race argue that racial/ethnic minorities experience disadvantages in the labour market because of their race (Jenkins 1988; Boyd 2000; Reitz & Verma 2004). However, the case of South Korea shows that Southeast Asian workers are structurally racialized to justify their low wages, long working hours, and intensive, precarious working conditions. At the same time, different ethnic groups are explicitly slotted into Korean ethno-racial hierarchies in the labour market. Thus, social and economic inequalities between native Koreans and new migrant populations result from the dynamics of neoliberal economic restructuring and the creation of guest worker programs. Therefore, while the Korean state plays a key role in setting the institutional conditions of limiting the rights of foreign workers in the labour market according to their legal categories, the government's business-friendly practices and labour exploitation create the hierarchies between workers by classifying foreign workers as the new underclass in South Korea.

### **5.3.2 The Politics of Labor Control: Making Hyper-Flexible and Docile Foreign Workers**

Using technology for managerial control is becoming popular in South Korea. Several of the factories I worked at used fingerprint identification machines to document the ins and outs of workers and to automatically calculate individual workers' working hours. Often, to increase productivity, factory management banned workers from having or checking cell phones or talking to each other. With or without new technology, floor managers, foremen, or CCTVs are always watching workers. Controlling labor is one of the key elements of successful management. Munoz (2004) documents that in the tortillas industry in Los Angeles, racialized

despotic factory regime is maintained through a system of intense monitoring and surveillance on the Mexican legal and illegal migrant workers, as well as the employer's use of immigration status to create fear and increase productivity.

In this context, the question of who controls the workers and who are controlled becomes important. Questions, such as which ethnic groups are likely to be managers whose duty it is to control and discipline workers, which ethnic groups are most likely to stay as floor workers, and which groups of people are most likely to enter the labor market as temporary irregular workers reveal how the functional divisions of workers come to form boundaries among workers.

In general, Korean factories have certain authoritarian and paternalist components in their management style and everyday work culture. The authoritarian characteristics of Korean factories originate from military culture in the 1970s, which many developing countries tend to have. Labour scholars point out that, in the early industrialization period of Korea in the 70s, the authoritarian factory regime utilized paternalist ideology and military culture to efficiently control workers (Janelli 1993, Koo 2001, Chun 2003, J. Kim 2013). In contemporary Korean society, the authoritarian work culture has slowly faded away, but there are still some components of authoritarian ideology and male-oriented work culture that justify the Korean male's dominance in the labour market in general.

While Korean female workers or Korean-Chinese workers sometimes take low-level foreman positions depending on the gender and ethnic composition of a factory, the majority of managers and floor foremen are still Korean men. Since management practices in South Korea heavily rely on a seniority-based system for setting wages and granting promotions, non-Korean male workers — such as immigrants and foreign workers — as well as Korean female and elderly workers, all of whom figure disproportionately in temporary or temporary employment — face

disadvantages in wages, job tenure, and promotion. For example, in 2016, 41% of female Korean employees were temporary compared to only 26.4% of male Korean employees (Statistics Korea 2017)<sup>28</sup>. In the same year, 68.2% of employees aged 65 and over were temporary (R. Jones and K. Fukawa 2016).

It is quite common in the labor market that managers look for certain characteristics of workers. However, the motivation of business owners and management to hire foreign workers contributes to ascribing certain characteristics to foreign workers, such as the perceived flexibility and docility of these workers. These characteristics are not intrinsic to individual foreign workers; rather, they are attributed to the workers to justify managerial controls. As J. Kim (2013:79) points out, delineating distinctive group characteristics is one of the common methods to make hierarchical boundaries between workers. Korean managers believe in Korean workers' dominance over *chosŏnjok* and *tongnama* foreign workers because these foreign workers are viewed as more docile than Korean workers.

In the egg factory where I worked, there were around 40 foreign workers mainly from Vietnam and Cambodia, while a few were Mongolian or Chinese. An assistant plant manager, Mr. Chang, who had joined this factory around 5 years ago as a manager, explained the reasons why he prefers to work with foreign workers over Korean workers:

Mr. Chang: Personally, I like to work with foreign workers.

Lee: What do you like about them?

---

<sup>28</sup> Employment trends in 2016 (*shirŏpcha su/shirŏmnyul ch'ui*)

Mr. Chang: Depending on the person though, they listen to your instructions better than Korean workers do. Once you get to know them for a long time, they care for you. When I hesitate to ask people to do overtime or night shifts, usually foreign workers say “yes” to help me. You know, Korean floor workers tend to challenge their managers and sometimes they think they know more than managers do. But foreign workers never act like that. They don’t cross the line.

(Mr. Chang, Korean man, assistant plant manager, age 41)

In this conversation, the manager expressed his preference for foreign workers based on what he perceives to be the docility of foreign workers. According to him, Korean workers are not docile enough. Sometimes Korean workers even disrespect his authority, but foreign workers show their respect and loyalty to the manager. Immigrant host countries often expect passivity from immigrants and migrant workers. For example, Mary Waters (1999) documents that white managers in the American food industry prefer to hire new immigrants over African Americans for entry-level jobs. White managers expect new immigrants’ loyalty to a job, which means accepting the managers’ requests or doing anything that someone in a higher position asks them to do (ibid: 110–111). Often, foreign workers and immigrants take advantage of entering entry-level jobs easily because they meet the industry’s expectations, but this is the same reason why they also face disadvantages in wages, labour protection, promotion, job security, and daily unjust treatments. An ex-auto factory worker, Mr. Park’s comments back up this point:

Koreans usually don’t want to work on less automatized lines, and Koreans express their complaints right away. Then, the management assigns Indonesian workers on these lines.

They just do whatever the management orders because they can't leave until their contracts end. But, they always have grievances.

(Mr. Park, Korean male ex-auto factory worker, age 39)

As Mr. Park notes, the docility of immigrants/migrant workers is not intrinsic; rather, the labour market conditions and South Korea's foreign labour policies make them accept whatever is available for them, which often limits the opportunities of workplace changes. Thus, to get work in such an environment, foreign workers are forced to perform certain characteristics - such as docility and flexibility. Foreign workers from China and Southeast Asia are increasingly understood as cheap and docile labour, which connotes being the new underclass in Korean society.

## **5.4 Cultural Dimensions of Racialization at Work**

### **5.4.1 Emerging Ethnic and Racial Boundaries of Workers**

The case of foreign workers in South Korea shows how a social and behavioural dimension of boundary making appears in everyday interactions at work in addition to the employer's cost-cutting strategies. Therefore, it is important to understand how working-class Korean people perceive and secure their social positions by differentiating their Korean identity from *tongnama* and Chinese workers.

While I was working for several different factories, I noticed that workers usually forming several small groups during the lunch and afternoon breaks. In the egg factory, for example, there were several instant groups formed in the cafeteria: Korean male managers formed one group, Korean women office workers another, Korean women factory workers yet

another, and then Vietnamese as one group, and Cambodian as another. It may look quite normal for people to hang out with the co-workers they feel most comfortable with. Maybe they sit with the co-workers they work alongside with. Vietnamese and Cambodian workers in the cafeteria probably sit together because of language. However, these small groups are generally formed along gender, nationality, ethnicity, and job status. Workers rarely sit together across these invisible lines. The small groups that form in the cafeteria say a lot about distinction and boundary making between workers (Bourdieu 1987, Wimmer 2008).

During the process of boundary making between the workers, certain characteristics of groups are carefully selected to establish prevailing status over those without such characteristics. The tasks of the low-level workers are often described as simple and repetitive. During my field research, Korean workers and managers commonly evaluate foreign workers and immigrants as good manual workers who are more suitable for repetitive manual work. Korean managers often place immigrants and foreign workers in the low-level tasks, which makes job promotion difficult. Mr. Chang, a food factory manager, shows this point well in his comments:

Mr. Chang: We really need workers who understand the entire production process. Now we don't have enough core workers who could possibly substitute me in an emergency.

Lee: Why don't you train some foreign workers?

Mr. Chang: I've never given them managerial tasks so far. Well... unintentionally, maybe I consider them not capable of performing managerial tasks. Actually, they show no

difference from Korean workers on the shop floor, but they are a little bit slower when they have to perform high-level tasks, which require more intelligence.

Lee: Is it because of the language barrier?

Mr. Chang: It is not about language. They are good at manual work, but somehow they don't understand other tasks. So, I did not try to train them for anything except for manual work.

(Mr. Chang, Korean man, assistant plant manager, age 41)

The conversation with the Korean manager, Mr. Chang, reveals that he contrasts the characteristics of Koreans and foreign workers. This contrast shows how the management uses racial/ethnic characteristics to distinguish foreign workers from Korean workers and justify the superior status of Koreans. The previous conversation with Korean manager - Mr. Chang shows two sets of racial and ethnic characteristics: Korean intelligence versus foreign workers' slowness, and Korean defiance versus foreign workers' obedience. J. Kim (2013) also points out in his book, *Chinese Labor in a Korean Factory* that Korean management uses national and ethnic characteristics of workers to justify the superior status of Koreans, which helps to control Chinese workers. Therefore, the struggles over drawing boundaries are collective political struggles because these are not only about how to represent self and others but also about how to rearrange power relations in the real and symbolic world (Bourdieu 1987:13-4).

While Koreans subscribe to these racial/ethnic characteristics of foreign workers, Koreans understand *chosŏnjok* somewhat differently from Southeast Asian workers; Korean-Chinese workers are understood as smarter than Southeast Asian workers, but still slightly behind South Korean workers:

Mr. Kang: For me, working with Koreans is easier. Koreans, even newly graduated high-schoolers, learn very quickly. But foreign workers need time to learn.

Lee: Why is that?

Mr. Kang: I think ... they are a little bit lazy, and not that bright. Maybe it is because of language, but somehow they can't learn certain things. So, it looks like they are slow in my eyes. But *chosŏnjok* workers learn quickly. They are smarter than Han Chinese and other *tongnama* foreigners like Vietnamese and Indonesians.

(Mr. Kang, Korean male factory worker, age 45)

The comments of Mr. Kang, who is a regular floor worker in a textile factory, reveal the ethnic and racial stereotypes Korean workers generally have about Korean-Chinese and Southeast Asian workers. Probably, the perception of the relative intelligence of young Korean high-schoolers comes from the fact that they grew up in the same social and cultural system as Mr. Kang. However, Mr. Kang identifies Koreans' intelligence and foreign workers' slowness as racial and ethnic characteristics; the somewhat better performance of Korean-Chinese in comparison to South and Southeast Asian workers is understood as a quality of Korean ethnicity. Mr. Kang's view on Korean-Chinese migrant workers resonates with what J. Kim (2013) and S. Yoon (2014) observed in South Korean factories in China. South Korean managers believe that Korean-Chinese workers perform better than Han-Chinese workers because of the inherited quality as ethnic Koreans and cultural affinities even though Korean-Chinese workers were born and went school in China. But Korean managers believe that in comparison to South Korean workers, Korean-Chinese workers are somewhat less qualified workers. As a result of the

connection between these views of a hierarchy and a belief in racial essentialism, Mr. Kang creates a clear hierarchy among workers in the following order: Koreans, followed by *chosŏnjok*, and finally South and Southeast Asian workers.

Based on these ethnic and racial stereotypes, there is an elaborated differentiation between the work of Koreans and the work of foreigners even in low-skilled jobs. The job placements of workers show a distinction between Korean workers and foreign workers on the micro-space of the shop floor, and Korean factory workers also accept this hierarchy. While Korean workers understand the position of immigrants and foreign workers on their teams as assistants (or *seobu*, a Koreanized English word using the prefix “sub”), they believe that their roles are more important and require more responsibility. Therefore, Korean workers consider their roles and positions as comparatively closer to the managerial level. This understanding translates into the Korean workers’ authority over immigrants and foreign workers. A Bangladeshi immigrant, who worked in several factories for over ten years in Korea, recalls his experience:

When I work with Koreans, I can’t give them instructions. I can’t do it. Or if I do, Korean workers get offended. They would say, “what do you know, huh?” Koreans think they know everything, and we know nothing (laughs).

(Masum, Bangladeshi male immigrant, age 35)

This often appears as a conflict between Korean and foreign workers, and Korean workers feel offended about what they perceive to be foreign workers’ disrespect. In another example, Mr. Park, an ex-auto factory worker, recalls an incident he observed in his factory:

On one occasion, there were Indonesian workers who had worked there for over 2 years, and a Korean trainee who had just started 2 months ago. The problem was the new Korean trainee assumed that the Indonesian workers should listen to him. Of course, the Indonesian workers felt offended when this Korean trainee gave them instructions. So, there were some arguments between them. Well, some people (Koreans) supported the Indonesian workers because they had more experience than the Korean trainee did, but some people supported Korean trainee by saying things like, “Indonesians are foreigners, so they have to accept it. They cannot expect the same treatment as Koreans.” Of course, some Korean workers said that it was unfair, but they were just a few.

(Mr. Park, Korean man, ex-auto factory worker, age 39)

While Korean workers perceive the complaints from foreign workers as a sign of disrespect for Korean workers’ authority, foreign workers see the same incident as Korean workers’ abusive and discriminatory treatments. Thus, they express complaints about the intrusive manner of their Korean co-workers in several different ways. One of the common ways is pretending not to hear their Korean co-workers. A Cambodian worker, Arun (age 29) who worked for five years in Korean factories, often pretend not to hear when he felt that his Korean co-workers were too intrusive. Korean workers also complain about foreign workers pretending not to understand the Korean language. However, these Korean workers seem to understand the reason why foreign workers pretend not hear them. Mrs. Kim (age 54), a Korean female worker said that “Well, sometimes foreign workers become nasty to Korean workers, and intentionally not help Koreans to show that they are not happy with Korean workers.” Sometimes, foreign workers also directly

make arguments against Korean workers or managers when they feel that Korean workers treat them unfairly. Arun's comments show this point clearly.

Lee: In what situation did you feel that you get discriminated?

Arun: For example, Korean managers usually give foreign workers more difficult and physically hard tasks that Korean workers don't want to take. But if something is not going well, the Korean managers blame the foreign workers as if we are the bad workers, because usually we are quiet, and we don't speak out. But I felt unfair, so I started arguing against my floor manager. I argued a lot.

Lee: How?

Arun: I did overtime work almost every day. Once I told my floor manager that I was too tired, so I didn't want to do overtime that night. Then the floor manager yelled at me that I am lazy. That made me really pissed off. So I also raised my voice and asked him. "Am I lazy? I take overtime every night. I take the dirtiest and the most difficult task because you don't want to take. But you really think that I am lazy. Then why did you give me all the difficult work to me, huh?" He couldn't answer, of course. He just said, "shut up!"

Lee: What? Did he really say, shut up? (loudly laugh)

Arun: Yes, "shut up!"

(Arun, Cambodian male worker, age 29)

As the comments throughout this section show, Korean management and Korean workers share certain ideas about the characteristics of foreign workers, which distinguish them from Koreans.

In general, Koreans are described as responsible and reliable workers, who are suitable for more important tasks and positions. On the other hand, foreign workers are described as bottom-level workers who do not need much responsibility. Once again, Koreans somehow differentiate *chosŏnjok* workers from *tongnama* foreign workers. In the process of boundary making, Koreans believe in their dominance over *chosŏnjok* and *tongnama* foreign workers. The Korean workers' feeling of superiority comes not from Korean workers' seniority or work experience, but from a sense of who is a native Korean and who is an outsider. The fact that one is born into a Korean family and grew up in Korea is enough to believe their authority over *chosŏnjok* and Southeast Asian workers. Korean workers' subjective but collective strategies of boundary making often mobilize moral judgements about work ethic to distinguish themselves from foreign workers in the symbolic world.

#### **5.4.2 Who's the Better Worker? Symbolic Boundaries of Workers**

In general, Korean workers believe that a deficient work ethic is one of the problems of foreign workers and Korean-Chinese workers. In contrast, these Korean workers believe themselves to be more trustworthy, responsible, and caring and understand themselves as having a stronger work ethic. In the factory workers' world, moral judgments are a common means of making boundaries between workers. Lamont (2000:8) points out that white American workers use moral judgments to draw boundaries between workers, which help to define who shares the same values and with whom they are ready to share resources. Indeed, the moral ideals of a good worker are evident in boundary-making between Korean workers and foreign workers. A group interview with female Korean factory workers, who were working with foreign workers for a long time, shows this point well:

Lee: Was there any moment you felt that they were different from Koreans?

Mrs. Kim: Well, unlike Koreans, foreign workers usually don't offer to help us. They only do their own work. We Koreans often try to help other workers, because we can't leave people alone who need help. But foreign workers don't care about their colleagues.

Mrs. Choi: Yeah, they never help even when they are just killing time. And, we clean the shop floor at the end of the day, but it is hard to say they help clean.

Mrs. Seo: They have already gone even before we start cleaning.

Mrs. Choi: You know, we Koreans usually organize the workstations neat and tidy after the shift for the workers of the following shift. It helps in continuing the work smoothly. But these foreign workers never care about their colleagues.

Mrs. Seo: Never.

Mrs. Kim: Foreign workers are always like that. It doesn't matter which companies and factories they are working for.

(Korean women, Mrs. Seo, age 63, Mrs. Choi, age 59, Mrs. Kim, age 54)

These negative evaluations of foreign workers from China, South and Southeast Asia are based on moral judgements about having or not having a sense of community and the loyalty to the company. Boundary work involves specific sets of comparisons, which includes aspects of the self and other (Lan 2000). Therefore, Korean workers define who they are by constructing moral characteristics of themselves as thoughtful, caring colleagues, and as having a strong sense of

community in contrast to foreign workers, who are constructed as self-centered or even selfish and only have a sense of community among their co-ethnics.

However, foreign workers believe that Korean workers are the ones who do not have a good work ethic. Cambodian worker, Arun (age 29) shows this point well.

I often feel frustrated when I work with Koreans. We, foreign workers, are good workers. Always work hard. But Korean workers work slow when the managers are not there, but they suddenly pretend work hard and pretend to teach us if the managers appear. This is ridiculous.

(Arun, Cambodian male worker, age 29)

Several foreign workers described their Korean co-workers as unreliable workers who often relegate their work to foreign workers, frequently take breaks for smoking or drinking coffee when managers are not on the shop floor but pretend to work hard only in front of the managers. On top of that, foreign workers often complain that Korean workers usually help other Koreans but not foreign workers. The general relationship between Korean workers and foreign workers seems often antagonistic.

#### **5.4.3 Racial/ethnic Hierarchies of Workers: Derogatory use of language**

The daily usage of the Korean language among workers shows how the factory work culture shapes the location of foreign workers within the hierarchies of workers. One evening around 8 or 9 pm in the dormitory of the egg factory, I overheard a young Cambodian female worker asking a Korean male manager to move her into a less crowded dorm room because she had to

share a tiny room with two other Cambodian girls. She said, “Sir, could I move into a bigger room, please?” The manager said, no to her. But the Cambodian worker kept asking him. After saying no several times, suddenly the Korean male manager raised his voice and yelled at her, “You, bitch! I already told you. My answer is no.” The Cambodian woman became silent.

A manager’s yelling at their workers does not happen very often, but it is also not a rare incident on the shop floor. The interaction between a Korean male manager and a Cambodian woman worker shows a clear hierarchy. The Korean male manager used *panmal* (informal speech) to the Cambodian woman worker, which is a form of Korean language used among peers or to people who are younger. On the other hand, the Cambodian woman used *chondaemal* (polite speech) to the manager, which shows the speaker’s respect and politeness. As this anecdote illustrates, foreign workers often complain that Korean colleagues and managers usually use informal speech to them at work. On the contrary, I observed in the factories that Korean managers use formal speech to other Korean workers including me, unless they feel personally very close to that worker, or if the worker is much younger than the manager.

I found that not only Korean managers, but also Korean workers, often use informal speech and sometimes swear words when speaking to foreign workers, especially to workers from South and Southeast Asian countries, regardless of their age. Some foreign workers stopped helping Korean workers after having personal conflicts with Korean workers who yell or use swear words. Udaya, an immigrant from Nepal who worked at several factories for 5 years, recalls his experience:

Udaya: There was a Korean *ajōssi* (middle-aged man) who referred to me in a bad way. I guess he did that to me because I am a foreigner, especially because I am a

foreigner from *tongnama* countries. He often referred to me like, "hey you, *saekki* [similar to 'asshole' in English], come here."

Lee: Did he call other Koreans in that way?

Udaya: No. He never said that to other Koreans. He only said it to foreign workers. For a while, I didn't know what he actually meant because my Korean was not that great. Later, when I found out the meaning of *saekki*, I felt terrible. After that, I didn't want to help him anymore. One day, I said no to him when he asked for my help. Then he got angry that I did not listen to him. He almost grabbed my neck, so I had to push him back. That night, I was so upset and I couldn't sleep.

(Udaya, Nepalese male immigrant, age 30)

As the conversation with Udaya shows, Korean workers often use informal speech with swear words when speaking to foreign workers. This may be due to the fact that Korean workers are usually older or in a higher position than foreign workers. However, Korean workers often use polite speech with other Korean workers to prevent unnecessary friction.

In the 70s, the early industrialization period of Korea, the authoritarian factory regime utilized paternalist ideology and military culture to efficiently control workers (Janelli 1993, Koo 2001, Chun 2003, J. Kim 2013). Since the paternalist ideology sees a company as an extended version of family or kinship, young workers from traditional rural areas showed less resistance when the authoritarian factory regime was introduced to Korea (Koo 2001). Therefore, while the managerial practices often adapted military arrangements for its labour control, the daily interpersonal interactions go back and forth between pseudo-brother/sister relationships and co-worker relationships. Of course, contemporary Korean factories' work cultures is more liberal

than in the previous industrialization era under the authoritarian government. After the democratic labour movement in the 1980s, a more liberal regime was introduced in general. However, the top-down military-like culture and the patriarchal ideology are still prevalent in the Korean work culture, especially in the 3D industries.

Then, are foreign workers the only ones who are spoken to with informal speech by their Korean co-workers? Probably not. Since the hierarchical work culture is still influential in factories, there are several different layers of hierarchies, such as gender, age, seniority, and job rank. While gender and seniority are more influential to institutional hierarchies at work, especially job promotion, age and job rank more influential to daily interpersonal interactions. Therefore, usually older workers, even one year older or more, use informal speech to younger workers, and people in the higher job positions or managers use informal speech to their worker. When the manager is younger than their workers, they selectively use informal speech or polite speech depending on the situation. However, Korean management and Korean workers tend to use informal speech or swear words more often with foreign workers than with Korean workers, especially to workers from South and Southeast Asian countries, regardless of their age. For example, although I was just a floor worker in the egg factory, the plant manager and the floor manager, who were much older than me, always used a Korean honorific to refer to me: “Seonok-ssi” (same as ‘Mrs.’ in English). They did so because I am Korean. However, both managers called foreign workers by name or often call them “ya” (similar to ‘hey you’).

In regard to *chosŏnjok* (Korean-Chinese), Korean workers use the mixture of polite speech and informal speech in a careful way, because partly they speak fluent Korean, so they can defend themselves, and partly they are from the same ethnic culture, so they can read the cultural references better than other Asian workers.

Interestingly, while foreign workers see Korean workers' use of informal speech and swear words as disparaging or a type of abuse, Koreans understand this as a necessary work culture. Mr. Kang, a factory worker's comments show this clearly.

Lee: How can you describe the relationships between foreign workers and Korean workers in your factory?

Mr. Kang: Usually people from the same country get along well, but they don't hang out with Koreans and Korean managers. I guess, Korean managers and other Koreans always command them to work harder. Well, these foreign workers probably never worked so hard in their country before. Perhaps they lived in nature and ran freely here and there. And they may consider everyone is a friend in their culture, but Korean culture has the age hierarchy, so we call *hyōng* (older brother) to people who are older than you.

Lee: You mean, the foreign workers have a hard time to understand Korean work culture?

Mr. Kang: Yes, let's say, if a manager says, "hey you, you do this." Sometimes, managers use *panmal* for workers. Then the foreign workers complain like "why do you use *panmal* to us?" Whenever we have new foreign workers, they always complain about this. Eventually, Korean managers use some *chondaemal* to them because these foreign workers seem not able to understand Korean work culture at all. I heard that they learned Korean with the polite speech in their country so they may wonder why Korean managers and Korean foremen use *panmal* to them. They

even think Koreans abuse them. But if they want to work in Korea, they have to learn Korean work culture.

(Mr. Kang, Korean male, factory worker, age 45)

Indeed, Korean workers understand that the use of informal speech or light swear words among male workers, such as *saekki*, to *tongnama* workers is not only a part of factory work culture but also Korean culture. Especially, in a male dominant factory, using rough language displays male workers' masculinity and indicates interpersonal hierarchies of workers. Foreign workers and immigrants are expected to adopt this masculine factory culture and age hierarchies as a general Korean work culture. Since foreign workers are usually younger than Korean co-workers, or in the lower level positions than Korean co-workers, accepting Korean work culture means becoming the lowest ranked in the workers' hierarchies on the shop floor. When a foreign worker adopts this hierarchical work culture well, which is determined by age and job position, Korean workers show some degree of intimacy to *tongnama* workers as a reward. A Vietnamese immigrant, Hong (age 29) who worked as a Vietnamese interpreter assistant for banks and district offices recalls her working experience as a good memory.

I have lots of good experiences working with Korean *ōnni* (older sister). Because I am a foreigner, I always feel shy around Koreans. But these Korean women were so nice to me. They came and talked to me. Even when I made mistakes, they gave a break and taught me again. In the break, they offered me a coffee, and saying "let's get along well like *ōnni-tongsaeng* (older sister and younger sibling)."

(Hong, Vietnamese immigrant, female, age 29)

As Hong's comments show, the analogy of family structure helps to determine the hierarchies of workers. According to age, workers often call each other brothers and sisters (i.e., *hyōng*, *ōnni*, *tongsaeng*) as if the company is an extended version of a family or a kin circle. Using family ideology for managerial practices is not rare to observe in East Asian countries. In Japan, for example, management often utilizes the idea of the company as a community or an extended version of kinship, which is often explained as intrinsic Japanese culture (K. Han 1991). Contrary to this cultural explanation, K. Han (ibid) observed that the management constantly emphasizes the family ideology to mitigate the labour unrest and to maximize the management's control over their workers at a medium size business in Japan.

Korean management and Korean workers expect a foreign worker or immigrant to adapt to the hierarchical work culture. According to this expectation, Korean management and Korean workers justify their use of *panmal* or swear words as a necessary managerial practice. When a foreign worker well accepts the hierarchical work culture, Koreans recognize the foreign worker as a younger brother or younger sister, who need care and guidance of the older Korean workers.

I have illustrated how the Korean state's business-friendly practices result in producing disadvantages for foreign workers in wages, labour protection, promotion, job security, and daily unjust treatments, thus reinforcing the discriminatory social position of foreign workers. Also, Koreans workers draw symbolic boundaries by stressing the ideals of a good worker and making their own moral judgements on the work ethic of foreign workers. Thus, these symbolic boundaries help Korean workers relocate themselves in the hierarchy of workers. Inferior class position and racial logic contribute not only to constructing foreign workers as flexible and docile workers, but also to drawing boundaries between Korean workers and foreign workers. These symbolic class-racial markers are central in the creation of racialized class boundaries.

### 5.5 Racialized Class Position: “*Tongnama Nodongcha*” (South and Southeast Asian Workers)

Throughout the recent history of immigration, scholars have examined racialized class formation. For example, in the U.S., low-skilled, non-white immigrants tend to become a new urban underclass, which experiences relatively lower earnings and poverty (Clark 1998). Especially when the low-skilled immigrant workers are people of color, racial logics play a central role in drawing class boundaries by categorizing certain ethnic groups into lower-class position jobs (Bonnett 1998). Similarly, in South Korea foreign workers are seen to be taking the jobs that no one else wants, but also contributing to a higher unemployment rate for Koreans. In South Korea, the process of racialized class formation of foreign workers, more precisely South and Southeast Asian migrants, takes place.

The term *tongnama nodongcha* (Southeast Asian worker) illustrates well how racialization and classification struggles take place simultaneously, beyond workplaces. Koreans often call foreign workers *tongnama nodongcha* with negative class and racial connotations, which implies their lower social status. The social position of foreign workers is described by their racial position as *tongnama* (South and Southeast Asian) and class position as *nodongcha* (worker, or labourer).

To better understand the term *tongnama nodongcha*, we need to look at how *nodongcha* and factory workers are understood in Korea in general. Koo (2001) points out that although factory workers contributed significantly to South Korea’s rapid industrialization during the 1960s and the 1970s, these occupations were still regarded as low, menial, and unrespectable. The 1980s’ militant democratic unionism achieved comparatively higher wages and better job

security in the manufacturing industry, which led to the improvement of the societal image of factory workers in general (D. Kim 1995, Koo 2001). However, the negative evaluation of physical labour is still influential in the contemporary Korean occupational structure, partly because of the legacy of the traditional conception of physical work, and partly because of the comparatively poor working conditions and job security. In the contemporary Korean labour market, the overall level of inequalities between regular and irregular workers is increasing (Chun 2009, Y. Kim 2015).

In South Korea, job positions within the organizational structure not only determine the wages and working conditions but are also crucial to achieving social recognition and respect in the broader society (Y. Kim 2015). Therefore, while some of the stigmas were reframed by workers' struggles to assert pride and confidence in one's identity as a factory worker, the stigma persists around this category and has been revitalized with the prevalence of foreign workers in 3D manufacturing jobs. Even within factory work, the world of regular work in the major factories like Hyundai Motors, Kia Motors, and Samsung is an impossibility for foreign workers who are mostly employed in small and medium-sized factories which are mostly subcontractors of the major factories, or the second subcontractors of the first subcontractors.

In this context, *tongnama nodongcha*, who are considered as occupying the bottom of the vocational structure, experience a lack of social respect and racial discrimination in Korean society. Udaya explains how he felt differently about himself after he quit factory work:

Well, the difference between working for factory and now is, when I worked for factories, Koreans looked down on me because they only saw me as a factory labourer and migrant worker who come here to sell his labour. But now I have a residency visa

after marrying a Korean. So, I can work as an office worker if I satisfy the qualifications. This is an absolutely wonderful thing. When I was a factory worker, I was like a dust ball on the dirty floor. But now I feel like I am flying in the sky.

(Udaya, Nepalese male immigrant, age 30)

Korean factory workers often express a feeling of pity for *tongnama nodongcha* because of the discriminatory conditions those workers endure. However, Korean workers, who work with foreign workers at small factories, are also very likely to experience some degree of disadvantage in terms of wages and treatment compared to regular workers (*jönggyujik*) in major factories like Hyundai Motors, Kia Motors, or Samsung. Therefore, pitying *tongnama nodongcha* helps Korean workers escape from their own degraded social positions as factory workers, as they reposition themselves above the foreign workers from China, South and Southeast Asia within the hierarchy of workers.

As the Korean government imports foreign workers and immigrants from China, South and Southeast Asia to fill the unattractive minimum-wage jobs, these workers take over the lowest stratum of the labour market. This means that they have gradually replaced the position of the lower-tier working class, as their status now implies not only inferiority in class positions but also in racial positions.

## **5.6 Against the Racialized Class Position**

The immigration and labour migration policy, and deteriorating labour market conditions play a crucial role in helping the Korean split labour markets manipulate ethnic and racial antagonism between Korean workers and foreign workers. Under such circumstances, foreign workers have

resisted the racialized class position of *tongnama nodongcha*. I found that there are several different strategies from micro-level individual strategies to more organized collective actions. This shows how migrant workers or immigrant workers navigate the complexity of racialization in the workplace.

Several migrant interviewees, mostly who were once foreign migrant workers but later acquired residency after marrying Korean citizens, eventually left the manufacturing job world, or plan to leave. In addition to Udaya, who took office work in order to not embarrass his wife, a Bangladesh immigrant, Ali was planning to open a South Asian food supply store near the industrial complex. A Filipina immigrant, Carole who got married to a Korean man, did not mind working at factories, but her Korean husband did not want her to work as a factory worker. He explained the reason saying that “you know, I know, and everyone knows that only jobs that a woman from *tongnama* countries can take are factory jobs or cleaning works. But I don’t want my wife to get looked down on and neglected.” He was planning to open a small nail shop for his Filipina wife when he saves up enough money. Their strategy is opting out of the manufacturing job world. These immigrants could leave or plan to leave the manufacturing world mainly because they have immigrant status as spouses of Korean citizens.

However, not everyone can opt out of the system of exploitation in the manufacturing job world. Most foreign migrant workers who came to South Korea with three to five-year contracts accept a certain degree of discrimination and exploitation because they know that they will go back to their home countries with some savings when their contracts end. These foreign workers see that their low position in Korean society as just a temporary phase of their life. I found that these foreign migrant workers also look down on and pity Korean factory workers who are most likely less educated, and who may not be able to leave the factory world for the rest of their life.

In the egg factory, Vietnamese workers told me that “we will be okay when we go back to Vietnam. We work for the factory only for three years, and we can bring some good money back home, but maybe *õnni* (older sister, referring to me) has to work in a factory forever to make ends meet. I feel really sorry for you.” Several Vietnamese workers in the room nodded their heads to agree with her. These foreign workers accept the racialized class position because they know that it is a temporary position for them.

While most foreign workers develop strategies at the individual level, such as opting out of the factory work and accepting the low position temporarily, some foreign workers are more actively involved in organized political actions through foreign migrant workers’ advocacy groups. There are several foreign workers’ organizations which are closely working with human rights advocacy groups in Ansan-Siheung area. For example, with the help of a foreign migrant workers’ advocacy group - the Earthians’ Station, Cambodian foreign migrant workers created a group called “Sa-ma-com” to help other foreign migrant workers and to promote Cambodian culture in South Korea. Sa-ma-com helped the Korean advocacy group to hold several media conferences to disclose inhumane working conditions that foreign farm-workers from Southeast Asian countries face. These foreign workers stay in South Korea only for three to five years. Since members’ turnover is quite frequent, there are clear limitations on their activities. However, they supported the anti-racism protests and attended the convention of World Migrants Day in South Korea.

## **5.7 Conclusion**

This chapter sheds a different light on Udaya’s story about being a foreign worker, with which I began this chapter. As a foreign worker in Korean people’s eyes, Udaya contends with a social

world that subjects him to racialized stigma in a hierarchical social status order. In this racialized social status order, Koreans assumed that Udaya is poor, unskilled and has lower levels of skills and aptitudes when compared to Korean workers and Korean-Chinese. Even though Udaya holds a university degree and he had experiences working with the UNDP (United Nations Development Programme) in Nepal, he is looked down upon. This racial stigma also subjects him to outsider status. As an outsider in the Korean workers' community, he is not the beneficiary of workers' solidarity and reciprocity by his Korean co-workers. Moreover, his self-worth is constantly mediated by powerful forms of racial stigma, and eventually, it led him to choose a lower-paid job for a higher social position in Korean society.

This chapter has examined the creation of a new underclass - racialized foreign migrant workers in South Korea. These migrants have gradually formed at the bottom of the traditional working class, assuming the position of the new underclass. I argue that diverse strategies of boundary making are used in the creation of this new underclass in the South Korea's spilt labour markets. In this chapter, I have also explored how South Korea's split labor market is created along two inter-related dimensions: 1) employment status under the expansion of precarious employment categories and Korean guest worker programs (EPS and the industrial trainee system) for migrants and 2) ethno-racial status, which is primarily determined by shared language, ethnicity, and skin color.

First, the dimension of employment status shows how downgraded forms of employment are crucial for understanding the construction of foreign workers as the new "underclass," and their economic marginality and social exclusion in South Korea. Korean workers draw symbolic boundaries between Korean workers and foreign workers, and among Korean workers as well by using the vocational hierarchies.

Second, the dimension of ethno-racial status demonstrates how Korean workers use skin colour, language, and ethnicity to draw symbolic boundaries between Korean workers and foreign workers. Not all Korean workers are managers or white-collar workers in the manufacturing industry. However, Korean workers often assume their authority over foreign workers, and they also assume that this is the main reason why Korean workers should get paid more than foreign workers even when they carry out very similar tasks. Therefore, the politics of managerial practices reveal how business owners utilize racial logics to justify the long working hours and low wages of immigrants and foreign migrant workers in split labour markets. At the same time, daily interactions between Korean workers and foreign workers show how cultural distinctions contribute to constructing the superiority of Korean workers as white-collar or supposedly closer to managerial positions, and the inferiority of immigrants and foreign migrant workers as substitutes for the traditional working class.

Reproducing and maintaining South Korea's split labour market through hierarchical boundary making indicates the inequality in the labour market. At the same time, the ideology of race/ethnicity and nationality is embedded in constructing foreign workers, especially in this racialized class position of *tongnama nodongcha* symbolically as the new underclass.

The Korean State plays an important role in making underclass foreign workers through the Korean guest worker program (Employment Permit System, or EPS), and business-friendly labour practices. Until the 1980s, small and medium-size Korean factories could survive severe global competition through the cost-cutting strategy of using a cheap Korean workforce. Now immigrants and foreign migrant workers have replaced this segment of the Korean workforce.

This chapter contributes theoretically to an extended discussion of the political economy of racialization, which produces inequality in the labour market as well as in the broader society.

By incorporating boundary making into labour market theory, this chapter contributes to a body of scholarship that updates Bonacich's (1972) influential split labour market theory. This chapter shows that South Korea's split labour markets are actively created and reproduced through boundary making practices by multiple actors (the Korean state, supervisors, and co-workers) on multiple scales from national labour immigration policy to business community demands, to everyday interactions. The division among workers in the Korean labour market shows how the ideology of race/ethnicity and nationality is embedded in constructing foreign workers, especially *tongnama* workers as a racialized "underclass" in Korean society. These findings ask for further analysis of the global and local inequalities that underpin the racial formation of *tongnama* migrants in the broader society in South Korea.

## **Chapter 6: Conclusion – A Global Racial Hierarchy**

On June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2018, several hundred South Korean citizens held an anti-Yemeni refugee protest in the heart of Seoul, South Korea. Only 70 meters away, an anti-racism vigil was held as a counter-protest. These events were in response to the sudden arrival of 500 Yemeni men two months earlier on Jeju Island - a visa-free tourist island just south of the Korean mainland. The anti-Yemeni protesters denounced the ‘fake’ refugee applicants and called for South Korea’s secession from the 1951 Refugee Convention. Denying they were racists, the protestors argued that South Korean citizens and children needed protection from Yemeni men, who were likely to steal jobs and disturb the social order. This anti-refugee group also posted an online petition to appeal to the Blue House (the Korean presidential house). Within only two months, over 700,000 South Korean citizens supported this petition: the second most supported petition since the Blue House started the online petition program in 2017.

At the same time, counter-protestors at the anti-racism vigil down the street held pickets with messages that read “Welcome Refugees”, “Refugee Lives Matter”, or “Implement the Refugee Convention.” These participants believed that the anti-refugee protest revealed racism and xenophobia toward migrants in general. They argued that discriminatory treatments toward migrants and refugees are a result of racist views.

The fact that South Korean citizens organized an anti-refugee protest is somewhat unusual because it is typically foreign migrant workers, migrant women, and refugees that organize protests and vigils, with the help of the South Korean advocacy groups. Indeed, from the mid-1990s there have been frequent foreign migrant workers’ sit-in struggles and protests against labour exploitation, the annual migrant workers world convention, migrant women’s

vigils against sexual and domestic violence, and annual anti-racism protests. These protests indicate that migrants are experiencing inhumane treatments and discriminations.

As the above cases reveal, South Koreans are aware that their country is in transition from an ethnically homogenous society to a multi-ethnic and multi-cultural society, and that there exists discrimination toward migrants. However, the majority of Koreans still do not see this as racial discrimination. Instead, they believe that this is a problem of prejudice or stereotyping. In general, South Koreans still believe that they cannot be racists. From this perspective, racism is a problem of white people and a problem of the U.S, Europe, or South Africa.

However, as my research has detailed, a new racial category is being produced in South Korea, and this racialization process is taking place through interactions between South Korean people, foreign migrant workers, and marriage immigrants. This dissertation has examined the racialization of *tongnama* migrants in South Korea by looking at the institutional conditions, the family, the labour market, and society.

I found that exploitative capitalist practices in the Korean labour market and state-facilitated gendered recruitment of foreign brides shape and reshape South Koreans' understanding of this new racial category. These two interrelated factors - capitalist labour exploitation and patriarchy - work as a system for organizing migration flows and gender relations in South Korea. Therefore, the racial formation of *tongnama* migrants reinforces the marginalized social position of Southeast Asian migrants as cheap labour in the production market and as obedient wives in reproduction. As one of the strategies to survive severe global economic competition, migrants are racialized in order to create cheap and obedient workers. At

the same time, marriage immigrants are racialized in order to replace the traditional Korean wife: an essential component to maintaining patriarchal family relations.

My findings show that several elements contribute to the process of racialization of *tongnama* migrants in South Korea: the Korean State, the South Korean cultural system, gender and patriarchy, and the Korean split labour market. These elements are interrelated and organically work towards the racialization of *tongnama* migrants in South Korea.

Concerning the role of the state: citizenship and Korean ethno-nationalism play an essential role in constructing migrants from South and Southeast Asia as *tongnama*. The Korean State and migration policies create the conditions for the racialization of migrants in South Korea. While the state and migration policies limit migrants' rights so that migrants are differentiated from Koreans in the judicial system, Korean ethno-nationalism provides the cultural ideology for drawing boundaries between Koreans and *tongnama* migrants by emphasizing Korean 'blood' lineage as the most important element of becoming a member of the national community.

The racialization of *tongnama* migrants occurred as South Korea's economy became more deeply intertwined with the global economy. Thus, I consider the racialization of *tongnama* migrants as a post-industrial phenomenon. However, South Koreans' understandings of new racial hierarchies, which includes *tongnama* migrants as a new racial category, did not suddenly appear in response to economic development. There are certainly Confucian ethos and residues of the authoritarian regime that provide cultural foundations for racialization in South Korea. This hierarchical culture is imbedded in everyday interactions among people, which in turn creates an acceptance for the hierarchical relations between Koreans and *tongnama* migrants.

Thus, racial logics are deployed within South Korea's cultural system of hierarchies. This culture forms the basis for judging ethnic/racial others.

Gender and patriarchy also contribute to the racialization process. More precisely, the inextricable relationship between patriarchy and racialization in the context of international marriages reveals that racial logics are mobilized to re-entrench patriarchal family relations as essential and ahistorical. In contemporary Korea, patriarchy becomes one of the domains through which rural farmers, working-class Korean men, and their families, recover their dignity and exercise power in the micro-sphere of the household. They do this by mobilizing foreign brides from Southeast Asia and China. In order to create the perception of Korean culture as conservative and homogenous, reproducing patriarchy depends on structural arrangements, social activities in the community, and everyday interactions in the family and extended kinships. Working-class and rural Korean men attempt to reproduce patriarchal family structures through marriage immigration with women from lower-income countries. At the same time, reproducing Korean patriarchy requires deliberately excluding foreign husbands, especially those husbands who came to South Korea as foreign migrant workers from lower income countries. Reproducing Korean patriarchy as essential and ahistorical requires minimizing the "foreignness" of foreign brides. Thus, Korean parents and husbands emphasize the cultural and racial similarities between specific groups of foreign brides and Korean women by emphasizing their traditional gender roles. On the other hand, the racial differences of foreign husbands are foregrounded in order to amplify their "foreignness" so that they are prevented from entering the Korean patriarchy. As a result, children of a Korean father and a foreign mother are seen as racially closer to Koreans than the children of a foreign father and Korean mother. Patriarchal racialization reinforces the continued ethno-racial belief in patriarchal blood lineage – the belief

that lineage passes down through the Korean father's line. In this regard, the reconfiguration of racial hierarchies has a very critical role to play in reproducing patriarchy. The sharp contrast between these two categories of marriage immigrants shows how Korean ethno-nationalism and the continued belief in patrilineage results in patriarchal racialization.

The labour market is another site where racialization takes place. The ideology of race/ethnicity and nationality is embedded in the process of constructing foreign workers as the new "underclass", especially in the racialized class position of *tongnama*. The creation of this new "underclass" reveals that racial boundary making also works to reproduce and maintain South Korea's split labour market. At the same time, South Korea's split labour market is actively created and reproduced through boundary making practices by multiple actors at multiple scales from national labour immigration policy to business community demands, to everyday interactions. South Korea's split labour market is created along two inter-related dimensions: 1) employment status under the expansion of precarious employment categories and Korean guest worker programs (EPS and the industrial trainee system) for migrants and 2) ethno-racial status, which is primarily determined by shared language, ethnicity, and skin colour.

In sum, I found that there are four components mobilized in the racial formation of *tongnama* in South Korea.

- (1) physical characteristics (e.g., skin complexion, appearance, height)
- (2) a group's class position (e.g., foreign migrant workers)
- (3) status in the gender and patriarchal social order
- (4) developmental status of the country of origin within the global economic hierarchy

Clearly, in South Korea, this new racial category is constructed through the emphasis of physical characteristics, a group's class position, status in the gendered and patriarchal social order, and through the economic developmental status of the countries of those racialized.

However, the racial formation of *tongnama* migrants is not only about the creation of a category. More importantly, the racialization process tells us about how racial hierarchies are produced and reproduced, and how racial hierarchies reinforce systems of inequalities in South Korea and beyond. In other word, the racialization of *tongnama* migrants is about the role of power in shaping the meaning and the boundary of racial categories, and the uneven distribution of power and resources. In this sense, the racialization of *tongnama* migrants changes the way South Koreans see themselves and others in hierarchal ways through racial logics. South Koreans see themselves as not only ethnically and racially distinct from *tongnama* migrants, but also as somewhat superior to them. These hierarchical thoughts are produced through social spaces and social relations: through the labor market, patriarchal family relations, education, and media. Therefore, the racialization of migrants matters to every individual in society. It not only reveals current ethnic and racial inequalities in the family, labour market, education, media, and society at large, but also how this racialization process will continuously shape and reshape social relations amongst all members of society.

From an empirical perspective, my findings show how racialization - in a broader sense, racial formation - takes place in East Asia; where race has long been under-researched. These findings demonstrate that racial formation in South Korea shares similar racial logics with racial formation in European and white settler countries, such as an emphasis on the physical characteristics of groups, race as a group position, and the gendered racialization process. Yet, my findings also suggest that racial formation taking place in South Korea exhibits a different

trajectory from Euro-American racial formation. Different from the Euro-American experience, in South Korea, migrants' countries of origin and the economic developmental status of these nations within the global economic order appears to be a critical factor in racial formation. Thus, the political economy of race is central for understanding the racialization of migrants in the East Asian context.

Theoretically, therefore, the case of South Korea contributes to the theory of race by shedding light on the political economy of race and the importance of economic migration for theories of racial formation. After achieving comparatively successful industrialization and condensed capitalist development since the 1970s, the discourse of economic development became dominant in Korea. Therefore, it is not surprising that the discourse of economic development has been central to Koreans' understanding of hierarchies of nations and countries, and in turn that this is often understood as the essential component for judging the superiority of self and inferiority of migrants in South Korea (N. Kim 2008, G. Han 2015). G. Han (2015) introduces the term 'nouveau-riche racism' to refer to emerging racial discrimination against migrants in South Korea. According to G. Han (ibid: 4), Koreans "not only use their capitalist production system to exploit foreigners, they feel they have the right to discriminate against others economically and beyond [...] The poorer the nation a foreign worker comes from, the more (this worker) suffers from Korean xenophobia." Thus, the racial formation of migrants in South Korea, and Koreans' understanding of racial hierarchy, are a phenomenon of the post-developmental society of advanced capitalism.

Therefore, the political economy of race demonstrates a whole new dynamic of racialization and opens up a new way of understanding racial hierarchies on a global scale, at least from the South Korean perspective. South Koreans' new understanding of racial hierarchies

is based on locally specific experiences within the East Asian context. However, this new understanding of racial hierarchies helps South Koreans to reposition themselves on a global scale. This new way of seeing racial hierarchies is inextricable from Koreans' aspirations toward the broader world. In this sense, South Koreans develop a sense of global racial hierarchies, which inevitably sees the world as one system.

The idea of a global racial hierarchy is thus a symptom of the racial inequality which contemporary global economic migration reveals. A global racial hierarchy is an ideological system based on conceived racial hierarchies and economic developmental status amongst states and regions that reflects an understanding of the world order through racial logic. My study has attempted to explain the new dynamics of race in a non 'western' context. Especially when we acknowledge the growing participation of Asia in the world economy and in geopolitics, we need a more global explanation to understand the new dynamics of racial formation and racial inequality that are now taking place everywhere.

## Bibliography

- Abelmann, Nancy, and Hyunhee Kim. 2005. "A failed attempt at transnational marriage: Maternal citizenship in a globalizing South Korea." in *Cross-border marriages: Gender and mobility in transnational Asia*, ed. N. Constable, 101-123. University of Pennsylvania Press.
- An, Sunyoung and Dong-Heon Kim. 2014. "Does the aging labor force reduce labor productivity?: An empirical analysis of Korea case," *Journal of Korean Economics Studies* 32(4):157~181. (Korean)
- Aker, Joan. 2009. "From glass ceiling to inequality regimes." *Sociologie du travail* 51(2): 199-217.
- Alba, Richard, and Victor Nee. 2009. *Remaking the American mainstream: Assimilation and contemporary immigration*. Harvard University Press.
- Anderson, Benedict. 2006. *Imagined communities: Reflections on the origin and spread of nationalism*. Verso Books.
- Anderson, Elijah. 1990. *Streetwise: Race, Class, and Change in an Urban Community*. Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press.
- Ansan Contingent Workers' Center. 2013. *Ansan-Siheung Jiyŏk P'agyŏnnodong Shilt'aejosa Pogosoŏ*. (The working conditions of dispatched workers in Ansan-Siheung)
- Bae, Eun-Kyung. 2009. "'Economic crisis' and korean women: women's vision-of-life and intersection of class and gender," *Issues in Feminism* 9(2):39-82. (Korean)
- \_\_\_\_\_. 2010. "Are women responsible for the low fertility?: For the feminist appropriation of the discourses on low fertility." *Gender and Culture* 3 (2):37~75. (Korean)
- Bang, Hee Jung, Kyung-Ran Row, and Soo-Jin Jung. 2010. "The development of implicit and explicit race attitudes in Korean in the multi-cultural age," *The Korean Journal of Developmental Psychology* 23(2):125~140. (Korean)
- Bhabha, Homi K. 1991. "'Race', Time and the revision of modernity." *Oxford Literary Review* 13(1): 193-219.
- Bonacich, Edna. 1972. "A theory of ethnic antagonism: The split labor market." *American sociological review* 37(5): 547-559.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 1979. "The past, present, and future of split labor market theory." *Research in race and ethnic relations* 1(1): 17-64.

- Bonnett, Alastair. 1998. "How the British working class became white: The symbolic (re) formation of racialized capitalism." *Journal of Historical Sociology* 11(3): 316-340.
- Bourdieu, Pierre. 1987. "What makes a social class? On the theoretical and practical existence of groups." *Berkeley journal of sociology* 32: 1-17.
- Browne, Irene, and Joya Misra. 2003. "The intersection of gender and race in the labor market." *Annual review of sociology* 29(1): 487-513.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 1976. "The functions and reproduction of migrant labor: comparative material from Southern Africa and the United States." *American journal of Sociology* 81(5): 1050-1087.
- Burawoy, Michael. 2009. *The extended case method: Four countries, four decades, four great transformations, and one theoretical tradition*. University of California Press.
- Castells, Manuel. 1989. *The informational city: Information technology, economic restructuring and the urban-regional process*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.
- Cederman, Lars-Erik, Andreas Wimmer, and Brian Min. 2010. "Why do ethnic groups rebel? New data and analysis." *World Politics* 62(1): 87-119.
- Chakrabarty, Dipesh. 2007. *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial thought and historical difference*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Chan, Sucheng. 1991. *Asian Americans: An interpretive history* (Twayne's immigrant heritage of America series). Boston: Twayne.
- Cheng, Catherine Man Chuen, and Hae-Yeon Choo. 2015. "Women's migration for domestic work and cross-border marriage in East and Southeast Asia: Reproducing domesticity, contesting citizenship." *Sociology Compass* 9 (8): 654-667.
- Cho, Hae-Joang. 1998. "Constructing and Deconstructing 'Koreanness'." in *Making Majorities: Constituting the Nation in Japan, Korea, China, Malaysia, Fiji, Turkey, and the United States*, ed. Gladney, Dru C. 73-91. Stanford University.
- Cho, Hi Yeon. 2010. *Tongwöndoen kũndaehwar (the mobilized modernity: Pakchönghũi kaebaltongwöñch'ejeũ chöngch'isahoejöng ijungsöng*. Seoul: Humanitas books. (Korean)
- Cho, Seong-Jae, Byunghoon Le, Jangpyo Hong, Sanghun Im, and Yong-Hyeon Kim. 2004. *Chadongch'asanöbũi togŭpkujowa koyongggwan'gyeũ kyech'ũngsöng* (The outsourcing structure and hierarchical relations of the Korean auto-industry). KLI research paper. Korean Labor Institute. (Korean)

- Cho, Uhn. 2010. "Gender Paradox: Neo-liberal governmentality at Korean motherhood." *Journal of Korean Women's Studies* 26(1): 69-95. (Korean)
- Choi, Kang-Min. 2009. "The nature of relationship Koreans and foreigners appearing in Korean novels in the 1950s and 1960s -From the multi-cultural perspective." *Han'gungmunye bip'yöngyön'gu (The Journal of Korean Modern Literary Criticis)* 29:31-60. (Korean)
- Choi, Young-Shin, and Seok-jin, Kang. 2012. *A Study on the Foreign Crimes in Ethnic Places in South Korea*, Research Paper Series. Korean Institute of Criminology. (Korean)
- Chun, Bok-Hee. 1995. "The Racism of Progressive Korean Intelligentsia in the Late 19th Century," *Korean Political Science Review* 29 (1): 125-145. (Korean)
- Chun, Jennifer Jihye. 2003. "Redefining workers: Unionizing homecare workers in the United States and golf game assistants in South Korea." *Economy and Society*, Published by the Korean Industrial Sociologists Association 57: 65-98.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 2008. "The limits of labor exclusion: redefining the politics of split labor markets under globalization." *Critical Sociology* 34(3): 433-452.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 2009. "Legal Liminality: the gender and labour politics of organising South Korea's irregular workforce." *Third World Quarterly* 30(3): 535-550.
- Chung, Kseon, SeongIl Park, Mihwa Park, and Ri Jeong Hyun. 2016. *Attitude Changes toward Foreigners and Immigration among Koreans*. IOM MRTC Research Report Series. No. 2016-02. IOM Migration Research and Training Centre. Goyang-si, Republic of Korea. (Korean)
- Chung Yong-Hwa. 2004. "Korean's Formation of Modern Self and Orientalism," *The Korean Review of Political Thought* 10: 33-54. (Korean)
- Clark, William AV. 1998. "Mass migration and local outcomes: Is international migration to the United States creating a new urban underclass?" *Urban Studies* 35(3): 371-382.
- Collins, Patricia Hill. 1986. "Learning from the outsider within: The sociological significance of Black feminist thought." *Social problems* 33 (6): s14-s32.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 2001. Like one of the family: race, ethnicity, and the paradox of US national identity. *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 24 (1): 3-28.
- Constable, Nicole. 1997. *Maid to order in Hong Kong: Stories of Filipina workers*. Cornell University Press.

- \_\_\_\_\_, ed. 2005. *Cross-border marriages: Gender and mobility in transnational Asia*. University of Pennsylvania Press.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 2009. "The commodification of intimacy: Marriage, sex, and reproductive labor." *Annual Review of Anthropology* 38: 49-64.
- Cornell, Stephen, and Douglas Hartmann. 2004. "Conceptual confusions and divides: race, ethnicity, and the study of immigration." in *Not Just Black and White: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives on Immigration, Race, and Ethnicity in the United States*, ed. Foner, Nancy, and George M. Fredrickson, 23-41. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.
- Doucette, Jamie, and Robert Prey. 2010. "Between migrant and Minjung: The changing face of migrant cultural activism in Korea." *The Asia-Pacific Journal* 12(2).
- DeCuir, Jessica T., and Adrienne D. Dixon. 2004. "'So when it comes out, they aren't that surprised that it is there': Using critical race theory as a tool of analysis of race and racism in education." *Educational Researcher* 33(5): 26-31.
- Dikötter, Frank. 1992. *The discourse of race in modern China*. London: Hurst.
- Espiritu, Yen Le. 2003. *Home bound: Filipino American lives across cultures, communities, and countries*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Feagin, Joe, and Sean Elias. 2013. "Rethinking racial formation theory: a systemic racism critique." *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 36 (6): 931-960.
- Freeman, Caren. 2005. Marrying up and marrying down: The paradoxes of marital mobility for Chosonjok brides in South Korea. In *Cross-border marriages: gender and mobility in transnational Asia*, edited by Nicole Constable. University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Frey, William H. "Central city white flight: Racial and nonracial causes." *American Sociological Review* 44(3):425-448.
- Glenn, Evelyn Nakano. 1992. From servitude to service work: Historical continuities in the racial division of paid reproductive labor. *Signs* 18(1):1-43.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 2002. *Unequal freedom: How race and gender shaped American citizenship and labour*. Harvard University Press.
- Giddens, Anthony. 1973. *The class structure of the advanced societies*. London: Hutchinson.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 1992. *The transformation of intimacy: Sexuality, love and eroticism in modern societies*. John Wiley & Sons.

- Gilliam Jr, Franklin D. et al. 1996. "Crime in black and white: The violent, scary world of local news." *Harvard International Journal of press/politics* 1(3): 6-23.
- Gray, Kevin. 2004. "The 'Underclass' of migrant workers in Korea," *The Journal of Asiatic Studies* 47(2): 97-128. (Korean)
- Griffin, Patrick, Kerry Woods, and Mark Dulhunty. 2006. "Australian students' attitudes to learning about Asia." *Journal of research in international education* 5(1): 83-103.
- Ha, Sang-Bok. 2012. "Yellow Skin, White Masks: A Historical Consideration of Internalized Racism and Multiculturalism in South Korea," *Studies in Humanities* 33:525-556. (Korean)
- Hage, Ghassan. 2005. "White self-racialization as identity fetishism: Capitalism and the experience of colonial whiteness." in *Racialization: Studies in theory and practice*, eds. Murji, Karim, and John Solomos, 185-205. Oxford University Press.
- Hall, Stuart. 2000. "Racist ideologies and the media." in *Media studies: A reader 2*, eds. Marris, Paul, Sue Thornham, and Caroline Bassett, 271-82. NYU Press.
- Hancock, Ange-Marie. 2004. *The politics of disgust: The public identity of the welfare queen*. New York: New York University Press.
- Han, Geon-Soo. 2003. "Making Other- Representation of Foreign Migrant Workers in Korea." *Pigymunhwayŏn'gu*. 9(2):157-193. (Korean)
- Han, Gil-Soo. 2015. "K-Pop nationalism: Celebrities and acting blackface in the Korean media." *Continuum* 29(1): 2-16.
- Han, Ju Hui Judy. 2015. Our past, your future: Evangelical missionaries and the script of prosperity. In *Territories of Poverty: Rethinking North and South*, edited by Ananya Roy and Emma Shaw Crane. University of Georgia Press.
- \_\_\_\_\_, and Jennifer Jihye Chun. 2014. "Introduction: Gender and Politics in Contemporary Korea." *Journal of Korean Studies* 19 (2): 245-255.
- Han, Kyungkoo. 1991. Company as Community: A processual anthropological approach to the study of a medium-sized Japanese business organization, Tokyo Inshokan Co., 1947-1990. Ph.D. dissertation, Harvard University.
- Han, Min. 2011. "Korean's dual attitude toward different races." *The Journal of Asiatic Studies* 54(2):323-351. (Korean)
- Herberg, Edward Norman. 1989. *Ethnic groups in Canada: Adaptations and transitions*. Nelson Canada.

- Hesse, Barnor 2007. "Racialized modernity: An analytics of white mythologies." *Ethnic & Racial Studies* 30 (4): 643-663.
- Hochschild, Arlie, and Anne Machung. 1989. *The second shift: Working families and the revolution at home*. Penguin.
- Hong, Jia and Hoonsoon Kim. 2010. "The Representation of Multicultural Discourse in Korean Society : Analysis of TV documentary Human Theater." *Korean Journal of Broadcasting and Telecommunication Studies* 24(5): 544-583. (Korean)
- hooks, Bell. 1984. *From margin to center*. Boston, MA: South End Press.
- HRDKorea (Human Resources Development Service of Korea). 2013. *Oegugillyŏng kwallyŏnbŏm chedo sangdam killajabi* (Guide book for hiring foreign workers and relevant regulations)
- Hudson, Maria, Gina Netto, Mike Noon, Filip Sosenko, Philomena de Lima, and Nicolina Kamenou-Aigbekaen. 2017. "Ethnicity and low wage traps: favouritism, homosocial reproduction and economic marginalization." *Work, employment and society* 31(6): 992-1009.
- Hwang Jeongmi, Ei-Sun Kim, Myong-Jin Lee, Hyun Choi, and Dong-ju Lee. 2007. *Han'gung sahoe ūi taminjok, tamunhwa chihyangsŏnge taehan chosa yŏn'gu* (Research on Koreans' attitude toward multi-ethnic and multi-cultural society). Research paper series No. 07-19-02. Korean Women's Development Institute. (Korean)
- Hwang, Soo-Kyeong. 2003, "An exploratory study for the structural analysis of insider labor market and outsider labor market," *Quarterly Journal of Labor Policy* 3(3):49~86. (Korean)
- In, Taejeong, 2009. "The study on conscious research of University student's in Busan city and Kyungsangnamdo toward ethno-racial distances and cultural diversity," *Journal of international area studies* 13(2): 339-370. (Korean)
- IOM (International Organization for Migration). 2008. *Situation report on international migration in East and South-East Asia*. Regional thematic working group on international migration including human trafficking. Bangkok: International Organization of Migration.
- James, David R. 1989. "City limits on racial equality: The effects of city-suburb boundaries on public-school desegregation, 1968-1976." *American Sociological Review* 54(6): 963-985.

- Janelli, Roger L., and Dawnhee Yim. 1993. *Making capitalism: The social and cultural construction of a South Korean conglomerate*. Stanford University Press.
- Janta, Hania, and Adele Ladkin. 2009. "Polish migrant labor in the hospitality workforce: Implications for recruitment and retention." *Tourism Culture & Communication* 9 (1-2): 5-15.
- Jenkins, Richard. 1994. "Rethinking ethnicity: identity, categorization and power." *Ethnic and racial studies* 17(2): 197-223.
- Jeon, Gyu-Chan. 2001. "Injongjuũiũi chŏnjigujŏng hyŏngsŏnggwa midiŏ yŏn'gwansŏnge kwanhan yŏn'gu (Media and global racism)." *Ŏllon'gwa Sahoe (Media and Society)*. 9(3):73-105. (Korean)
- Jo, Jung-In. 2011. "Determinants of Korean Political Attitudes toward International Marriage Immigrants and Low-skilled Migrants." *Korean Political Science Review* 45(2): 281-305. (Korean)
- Jo, Subon. 2008. A Study on Method of Constructing Multi-culturalism Reality by Media: with Focus on Narrative Structure Analysis of Television Documentaries. Master's thesis, Seoul: Ehwa Womans University. (Korean)
- Jones, Randall S., and Kohei Fukawa. (2016), "Labour market reforms in Korea to promote inclusive growth", *OECD Economics Department Working Papers*, No. 1325, OECD Publishing, Paris. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/5jlr3cvdf35k-en> (retrieved, February 11, 2018)
- Jung, Ee-Hwan. 2013. "Issues in the Sociological Study of Labor Market in Korea," *Economy and Society*, Published by the Korean Industrial Sociologists Association. 100: 94-113. (Korean)
- Jung, Hyeosil, 2007. Pakistan ijunodongjawa kyŏrhonhan yŏsŏngdŭrũi iyagi (Stories of Korean women who married Pakistani foreign migrant workers). In *Han'guksahoe damunhwajuũi: Hyeonsilgwa jaengjeom*, ed. Kyoungsuk Oh, 167-196. Seoul, Hanul press. (Korean)
- Kandaswamy, Priya. 2012. Gendering racial formation. in *Racial formation in the twenty-first century*, edited by HoSang, Daniel Martinez, Oneka LaBennett, and Laura Pulido. University of California Press.
- Kemper, Theodore D. 1978. "Toward a sociology of emotions: Some problems and some solutions." *The American Sociologist* 13(1): 30-41.
- Keith, Dinnie, 2009. "Repositioning the Korea Brand to a Global Audience: Challenges, Pitfalls, and Current Strategy." Korea Economic Institute Academic Paper Series, 4(9): 1-7.

- Kim, Byung-Jo. 2011. "Stages of the capital accumulation and the labor migration in Korea," *Marxism* 8(1): 64-98 (Korean)
- Kim, Da-Won, and Geon-Soo Han. 2012. "Viewing Africa based on 'Factual Contents' and 'Representation': Centered on Africa Contents in Elementary and Middle School Social Studies Textbooks." *Journal of the Korean Geographical Society* 47 (3):440-458. (Korean)
- Kim, Dong-Choon. 1995. *Han'gung sahoe nodongja yŏn'gur 1987 nyŏn ihu rŭl chungshim ŭro* (Korean workers after 1987). Ōksa pip'yŏngsa. (Korean)
- \_\_\_\_\_. 2000. *Kŭndaeŭi kŭnŭl-han'gugŭi kŭndaesŏnggwa minjokchuŭi* (The shadow of modernity- modernity and nationalism in Korea). Tangdae.
- Kim, Dong-Su, Dow-Han Kim, and Tae-Yun Jung. 2011. "Cognition of Korean College Students for Six Foreigner Groups." *The Korean Journal of Social and Personality Psychology* 25(1):1-23. (Korean)
- Kim, Hui-Jung. 2007. " Han'gugŭi kwanjudohyŏng tamunhwajuŭi (Korean government's top-down multiculturalism): tamunhwajuŭi iron'gwa han'gukchŏk chŏkyong." In *Han'guksahoe damunhwajuŭi: Hyeonsilgwa jaengjeom*, ed. Kyoungsuk Oh, 57-80. Seoul, Hanul press. (Korean)
- Kim, Hee-Jeong. 2017. " Exploring Stereotypes according to the Nationality of Immigrants living in Korea." *Media, Gender and Culture* 32 (2): 125-173. (Korean)
- Kim, Hyun-Mee, 2014. *Urinŭn modu chibŭl ttŏnanda: Han'gugesŏ ijujaro saragagi* (We all leave: living as migrants in South Korea). Tolbegae. (Korean)
- Kim, Jaesok. 2013. *Chinese Labor in a Korean Factory: Class, Ethnicity, and Productivity on the Shop Floor in Globalizing China*. Stanford University Press.
- Kim, Kyung-Hee. 2009. "The Representation of Immigrants in Narratives of TV News." *Korean Journal of Broadcasting and Telecommunication Studies* 23(3): 7-46. (Korean)
- Kim, Minjeong. 2014. "South Korean rural husbands, compensatory masculinity, and international marriage." *Journal of Korean Studies* 19(2): 291-325.
- Kim, Nadia Y. 2008. *Imperial citizens: Koreans and race from Seoul to LA*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Kim, Seong-Kwon, Yoo-Kyung Kim, Ae-Jeo Cho, Hye-Ryun Kim, Hye-Kyung Lee, Dong-Hoon Seol, Ki-Sun Jung, and In-Sun Sim. 2010. *2009 nyon Jeongook damumhwagajok siltaejosa youngu* (nation-wide survey on multicultural family). Ministry for Health,

Welfare and Family Affairs, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of gender equality, and Korea Institute for Health and Social Affairs. Policy Report no.2010-6. (Korean)

- Kim, So-Soon and Chul-Ki, Cho. 2010. "The analysis of ideology and bias embedded in social studies textbooks in the middle school- A case of the Southwest Asia and Africa." *Chungdŭnggyoyukyŏn'gu* 58(3): 87-112. (Korean)
- Kim, Soojeong and Eunee Kim. 2008. "Media Discourse on Asian Women's International Marriage." *Korean Journal of Communication & Information* 43:385-426.
- Kim, Yeran, Dan-bi Yoo and Ji-yoon Kim. 2009. "Disarticulated dynamics of ethnicity, gender and class Analysis of transnational love narrative and capitalism discourse in TV 'multicultural dramas'." *Media & Society*. 17(1): 2-41. (Korean)
- Kim, Young-Mi. 2015. "Complexity of Gender Inequality in the Segmented Labor Market: Differences in Gender Disadvantage between Regular and Non-regular Sectors." *Economy and Society*, published by the Korean Industrial Sociologists Association 106:205~237. (Korean)
- Kim, Young-Mi, and Hyung-Min Cha. 2016. " Pulliwa ch'abyŏrŭi changgi chisok: punjŏllodongshijang nae sŏngbyŏlchikchongbulliwa namnyŏimgŭmgŭyŏkch'a ch'ui punsŏk." *Han'guksahoehak, /Hugi sahoehaktaehoe nonmunjip*: 490-502. (Korean)
- Koo, Hagen. *Korean workers: The culture and politics of class formation*. Cornell University Press, 2001.
- Kwak, Yoonkyung. (2018). Pushing away from their own nation? South Korean women married to migrant husbands from developing countries. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*: 1-18.
- Kymlicka, Will. 2007. *Multicultural odysseys: Navigating the new international politics of diversity*. Oxford University Press.
- Lamont, Michèle. 2000. *The dignity of working men: Morality and the boundaries of race, class, and immigration*. Harvard University Press.
- Lamont, Michèle, and Virág Molnár. 2002. "The study of boundaries in the social sciences." *Annual review of sociology* 28(1): 167-195.
- Lan, Pei-Chia. 2003. "Negotiating social boundaries and private zones: The micropolitics of employing migrant domestic workers." *Social Problems* 50(4): 525-549.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 2008. Migrant women's bodies as boundary markers: Reproductive crisis and sexual control in the ethnic frontiers of Taiwan. *Signs* 33(4):833-861.

- Lee, Doek-Hwa. 2015. *Chŏnjaengi munhaktamnon'gwa chiptan'giŏgŭi chaegusŏng* (Korean war literature and reframing collective memories). Yŏngnak. (Korean)
- Lee, Heeun, Kyung-Han Yoo and Ji-Hyun Ahn. 2007. "Strategic multiculturalism and racialism in television advertising." *Korean Journal of Communication & Information* 39: 473-561. (Korean)
- Lee, Hye-Kyung. 2008. International marriage and the state in South Korea: Focusing on governmental policy. *Citizenship studies* 12(1):107-123.
- Lee, Jong Koo. ed. 2004. *1960-1970nyŏndae han'gugŭi sanŏp'wa* (Korean industrialization) *wa nodongja chŏngch'esŏng* (workers' identity). Seoul: Hanul Press. (Korean)
- Lee, Jungmin, 2008. "Che 2 pun'gwa tamunhwajuŭi kyoyungnaeyonggwa panghyangr injonggwa minjogŭi tayangsŏnge taeŭnghaŭn han'gung konggyoyugŭi tamunhwa kyoyukkwajŏng." *Han'gukch'odŭnggyoyuk'ak'oe haksulbalp'yononmunjim*:169-190. (Korean)
- Lee, Jin-myoun, Sung-Hwan Min, Yoon-Sun Jung, Bawoo-Kim, Jae-Jin Kim, Yong-Ho Lee, and Jung-Min Han. 2012. *Mid- & long-term projection of korean industry considering an aging population*. Korea Institute for Industrial Economics and Trade. Research paper no. 2012-639. (Korean)
- Lee, Ki-Gyu. 2012. "Chŏngch'esŏng kangyohanŭn tamunhwa kyoyugŭi oryu." *Urigyoyuk*, winter: 164-175. (Korean)
- Lee, Sang-lim. 2012. "Labor force shortage projection and policy implications: Impact of demographic transition in Korea." *Korea Journal of Population Studies* 35(2):1-28.
- Lee, Seonok. 2005. A study on the start and progress of migrant workers' movement in Korea - Focusing on the case of the Sit-in Struggle Team at Myungdong Church around the time of the introduction of Employment Permit System(EPS). Master's thesis, Seoul: Sungkonghoe University. (Korean)
- \_\_\_\_\_. 2007. "Han'gugesŏi ijunodongundonggwa tamunhwajuŭi (foreign migrant workers' social movement and multiculturalism in South Korea)." In *Han'guksahoe damunhwajuŭi: Hyeonsilgwa jaengjeom*, ed. Kyoungsuk Oh, 82-107. Seoul, Hanul press. (Korean)
- Lee, Stacy J. 1996. *Unraveling the "model minority" stereotype: Listening to Asian American youth*. Teachers College Press.
- Lew, Seung Mu and Taejeong Lee. 2006. "Measures of Social Recognition in Korea and the Korean's Double-faced Attitudes to Foreigners." *Tamnon* 201, 9(2): 275-311. (Korean)

- Lee, Yoonkyung. 2015. "Labor after neoliberalism: The birth of the insecure class in South Korea." *Globalizations* 12(2): 184-202.
- Lewis, Oscar. 1975. *Five families: Mexican case studies in the culture of poverty*. Basic Books.
- Lie, John. 2001. *Multiethnic Japan*. Harvard University Press.
- \_\_\_\_\_. ed. 2014. *Multiethnic Korea?: Multiculturalism, migration, and peoplehood diversity in contemporary South Korea*. Institute of East Asian Studies, University of California, Berkeley.
- Lim, Do-Kyung and Kim, Chang-Sook. 2011. "A Study on Korean College Students' Perception of Multi-Cultural Society and its Antecedent Factors: Focusing on Social Distance, Image of Foreign Residents, and Qualifications for being a Korean." *Korean Journal of Communication Studies* 19(1): 5-34. (Korean)
- Maher, Francis A and Tetreault, Mary Kay. 1994. *The feminist classroom*. New York: Basic Books.
- Marx, Anthony. W. 1998. *Making race and nation: A comparison of South Africa, the United States, and Brazil*. Cambridge University Press.
- McClintock, Anne. 1995. *Imperial leather: Race, gender, and sexuality in the colonial contest*. Routledge.
- McDonnell, Judith, and Cileine De Lourenco. 2009. "You're Brazilian, right? What kind of Brazilian are you? The racialization of Brazilian immigrant women." *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 32.2: 239-256.
- McDonald, Peter. 2008. Explanations of low fertility in East Asia: A comparative perspective. In *Ultra-Low Fertility in Pacific Asia*, ed. Straughan, Paulin, Angelique Chan, and Gavin Jones, 41-57. Routledge.
- Miles, Robert and Malcolm Brown, [1989] 2003. *Racism*, Psychology Press.
- Ministry of Justice (Immigration Service). 1998. 1997nyŏndo ch'uripkukkwallit'onggyeyŏnbo, [https://www.hikorea.go.kr/ptimg/moj\\_sts/1997/index.html](https://www.hikorea.go.kr/ptimg/moj_sts/1997/index.html)
- Moon, Katharine HS. 1997. *Sex among allies: Military prostitution in US-Korea relations*. Columbia University Press.
- Munoz, Carolina Bank. 2004. "Mobile capital, immobile labor: Inequality and opportunity in the tortilla industry." *Social Justice* 31(3): 21-39.

- Ogbu, John U. 1974. *The next generation: An ethnography of education in an urban neighborhood*. New York and London: Academic Press.
- Olzak, Susan. 1983. "Contemporary ethnic mobilization." *Annual Review of Sociology* 9(1): 355-374.
- Olzak, Susan, Suzanne Shanahan, and Elizabeth West. 1994. "School desegregation, interracial exposure, and antibusing activity in contemporary urban America." *American Journal of Sociology* 100(1): 196-241.
- Omi, Michael and Howard Winant. [1986] 2014. *Racial formation in the United States*. New York: Routledge.
- Osunde, Egerton O., Josiah Tlou, and Neil L. Brown. 1996. "Persisting and common stereotypes in US students' knowledge of Africa: A study of preservice social studies teachers." *The Social Studies* 87(3):119-124.
- Park, Choong-Seok and Keun-Ho Yoon. 1980. *Chosŏnjoŭi chŏngch'isasang*, Seoul: P'yŏnghwach'ulp'ansa.
- Park, Kyungtae. 2005. "Characteristics of migrant workers' social movement in Korea." *Economy and Society*, published by the Korean Industrial Sociologists Association 67:88-112. (Korean)
- \_\_\_\_\_. 2007. *Study of Korean Amerasians in the United States*, Overseas Koreans Foundation, research paper. (Korean)
- Park, Noja. 2002. "Uri sahoee injongjuŭinŭn ōttŏk'e chŏngch'aktŏeŏnnŭn'ga." *Inmulgwasasang* January: 159-172. (Korean)
- Park, Su-Mi. 2005. "Low fertility and gender equity in the family." Health and Welfare Policy Forum 102(April): 36-44. (Korean)
- Park, Sung Jin, 1996, "Ilcheha injongjuŭiŭi t'ŭksŏnggwa chŏkyonghyŏngt'ae (Characteristics of racism under Japanese colonialism)." *Journal of Korean Modern and Contemporary History* 5:89-113. (Korean)
- Parreñas, Rhacel S. 2000. "Migrant Filipina workers and the international division of reproductive labour." *Gender & Society* 14(4): 560-580.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 2008. *The force of domesticity: Filipina migrants and globalization*. NYU Press.
- Peck, Jamie. 1996. *Work-place: The social regulation of labor markets*. Guilford Press.

- Piper, Nicola, and Mina Roces, eds. 2004. *Wife or worker?: Asian women and migration*. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.
- Portes, Alejandro, and Min Zhou. 1993. "The new second generation: Segmented assimilation and its variants." *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 530 (1):74-98.
- Pratt, Mary Louise. [1992] 2007. *Imperial eyes: Travel writing and transculturation*. Routledge.
- Preibisch, Kerry, and Leigh Binford. 2007. "Interrogating racialized global labour supply: an exploration of the racial/national replaceme of foreign agricultural workers in Canada." *Canadian Review of Sociology/Revue canadienne de sociologie* 44(1): 5-36.
- Prey, Robert. 2011. "Different Takes: Migrant World Television and Multiculturalism in South Korea." *Global Media Journal: Canadian Edition* 4(1):109-125.
- Renzulli, Linda A., and Lorraine Evans. 2005. "School choice, charter schools, and white flight." *Social problems* 52(3): 398-418.
- Rodriguez, Robyn Magalit. 2010. *Migrants for export*. University of Minnesota Press.
- Roediger, David. 2002. "Whiteness and ethnicity in the history of 'white ethnics' in the United States." In *Race critical theories: Text and context*, eds. Essed, Philomena, and David Theo Goldberg, 181-98. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers.
- Roth, Wendy D. 2012. *Race migrations: Latinos and cultural transformation of race*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Said, Edward. [1978, 1979] 1994. *Orientalism*. New York: Vintage.
- Sassen, Saskia. 1988. *The mobility of labor and capital: A study in international investment and labor flow*. Cambridge University Press.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 1998. *Globalization and its discontents*. New York: The New Press.
- Schmid, A. 2002. *Korea between empires, 1895-1919*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Seol, Dong-Hoon. 2000. "Past and present of foreign workers in Korea 1987-2000." *Asia Solidarity Quarterly* 2(2): 6-31.
- Seth, Michael J. 2002. *Education fever: Society, politics, and the pursuit of schooling in South Korea*. University of Hawaii Press.
- Sharma, Nandita. 2006. *Home economics: Nationalism and the making of 'migrant workers' in Canada*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

- Sherman, Rachel. 2007. *Class acts: Service and inequality in luxury hotels*. Univ of California Press.
- Son, Jong Chil. 2014. "Effect of demographic change on economic growth: Role of capital movements." Bank of Korea. Working paper no. 2014-27.  
SSRN: <https://ssrn.com/abstract=2580645> or <http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.2580645> (retrieved, May 20 2018)
- Song, Ho-Keun. 2002. "Labor-market structure of the working poor and policy implications." *Korean Journal of Sociology* 36 (1): 23-50. (Korean)
- Song, Jee Eun Regina. 2014. "The soybean paste girl: the cultural and gender politics of coffee consumption in contemporary South Korea." *Journal of Korean Studies* 19(2): 429-448.
- Statistics Korea. 2018. Employment trends (*Ilban'goyongdonghyang*).  
[http://www.index.go.kr/potal/main/EachDtlPageDetail.do?idx\\_cd=1494](http://www.index.go.kr/potal/main/EachDtlPageDetail.do?idx_cd=1494) (retrieved, June 13, 2018)
- Statistics Korea. 2018. International marriage trends (*Kukchegyörhon hyönhwang*)  
[http://www.index.go.kr/potal/main/EachDtlPageDetail.do?idx\\_cd=2430](http://www.index.go.kr/potal/main/EachDtlPageDetail.do?idx_cd=2430) (retrieved, June 13, 2018)
- Statistics Korea. 2018. Foreign population (*Ch'eryuoeguginhyönhwang*)  
[http://www.index.go.kr/potal/main/EachDtlPageDetail.do?idx\\_cd=2756](http://www.index.go.kr/potal/main/EachDtlPageDetail.do?idx_cd=2756) (retrieved, June 13, 2018)
- Statistics Korea. 2017. Foreign population by visa types (*Ch'eryujagyökpöyl Ch'eryuoeguginhyönhwang*)  
[http://kosis.kr/statisticsList/statisticsListIndex.do?menuId=M\\_01\\_01&vwcd=MT\\_ZTITLE&paramTabId=M\\_01\\_01&statId=1976077&themeId=A#SelectStatsBoxDiv](http://kosis.kr/statisticsList/statisticsListIndex.do?menuId=M_01_01&vwcd=MT_ZTITLE&paramTabId=M_01_01&statId=1976077&themeId=A#SelectStatsBoxDiv) (retrieved, June 13, 2018)
- Statistics Korea. 2017. Marriage immigration trends (*Kyörhoniminja hyönhwang*).  
[http://www.index.go.kr/potal/main/EachDtlPageDetail.do?idx\\_cd=2819](http://www.index.go.kr/potal/main/EachDtlPageDetail.do?idx_cd=2819) (retrieved, June 13, 2018)
- Statistics Korea. 2017. Social indicators in 2016 (*Han'gugüi sahoejip'yo*).  
[http://www.kostat.go.kr/portal/korea/kor\\_nw/2/1/index.board?bmode=read&aSeq=359629](http://www.kostat.go.kr/portal/korea/kor_nw/2/1/index.board?bmode=read&aSeq=359629) (retrieved, June 13, 2018)
- Statistics Korea. 2017. Employment Trends in 2016 (*shiröpcha su/shirömnnyul ch'ui*)  
[http://www.index.go.kr/potal/main/EachDtlPageDetail.do?idx\\_cd=1063#quick\\_02](http://www.index.go.kr/potal/main/EachDtlPageDetail.do?idx_cd=1063#quick_02); (retrieved, March 11, 2018)

- Statistics Korea. 2015. Statistics and women's life (*T'onggyero ponŭn yŏsŏngŭi sam*).  
[http://www.kostat.go.kr/portal/korea/kor\\_nw/2/1/index.board?bmode=read&aSeq=346959](http://www.kostat.go.kr/portal/korea/kor_nw/2/1/index.board?bmode=read&aSeq=346959)  
 (retrieved, June 13, 2018)
- Statistics Korea. 2011. Social indicators in 2010 (*Han'gugŭi sahoejip'yo*)  
[http://www.kostat.go.kr/portal/korea/kor\\_nw/2/1/index.board?bmode=read&aSeq=245833](http://www.kostat.go.kr/portal/korea/kor_nw/2/1/index.board?bmode=read&aSeq=245833)  
 (retrieved, June 13, 2018)
- St. Louis, Kathleen and Calabrese Barton, Angela. 2002. "Tales from the Science Education Crypt: A Critical Reflection of Positionality, Subjectivity, and Reflexivity in Research." *Forum: Qualitative Social Research*, 3(3), Art. 19,  
<http://nbnresolving.de/urn:nbn:de:0114-fqs0203196>. (retrieved June 10, 2018).
- Stoler, Ann Laura. 2002. *Carnal knowledge and imperial power: Race and the intimate in colonial rule*. University of California Press.
- Suzuki, Nobue. 2005. "Tripartite desires: Filipina-Japanese marriages and fantasies of transnational traversal." in *Cross-border marriages: Gender and mobility in transnational Asia*, ed. N. Constable, 124-144. University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Takezawa, Yasuko. 2005. "Transcending the Western paradigm of the idea of race." *The Japanese Journal of American Studies* 16: 5-30.
- Tambiah, Stanley J. 1996. "The nation-state in crisis and the rise of ethnonationalism." in *The politics of difference: Ethnic premises in a world of power*, eds. Wilmsen, Edwin N., Patrick A. McAllister, and Patrick McAllister, 124-143. University of Chicago Press.
- Teitelbaum, Michael S. 2002. "The role of the state in international migration." *The Brown Journal of World Affairs* 8(2): 157-167.
- Thai, Hung Cam. 2008. *For better or for worse: Vietnamese international marriages in the new global economy*. Rutgers University Press.
- Trouillot, Michel-Rolph. 2012. "An unthinkable history." *Haitian History: New Perspectives* 33.
- Tuan, Mia. 1998. *Forever foreigners or honorary whites?: the Asian ethnic experience today*. Rutgers University Press.
- Turner, Jonathan H., and Jan E. Stets. 2005. *The sociology of emotions*. Cambridge University Press.
- Van Dijk, Teun A. 1993. *Elite discourse and racism*. Sage publications.

- Wacquant, Loic. 1997. "For an analytic of racial domination." *Political Power and Social Theory* 11: 221-234.
- Walters, William. 2002. "Deportation, expulsion, and the international police of aliens." *Citizenship studies* 6 (3): 265-292.
- Waters, Mary C. 1999. *Black identities: West Indian immigrant dreams and American realities*. Harvard University Press.
- Wallerstein, Immanuel. 1974. "The rise and future demise of the world capitalist system: concepts for comparative analysis." *Comparative studies in society and history* 16(4): 387-415.
- Wilson, William Julius. 1987. *The Truly Disadvantaged: The Inner City, the Underclass, and Public Policy*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- Winant, Howard. 2001. *The world is a ghetto: Race and democracy since World War II*. Basic Books.
- Wimmer, Anderas. 2008. "The making and unmaking of ethnic boundaries: A multiple level theory." *American Journal of Sociology* 113(4): 970-1022.
- Wright, Erik Olin. 1994. *Interrogating Inequality: Essays on Class Analysis, Socialism and Marxism*. New York, NY: Verso.
- Wolpe, Harold. 1972. "Capitalism and cheap labour-power in South Africa: from segregation to apartheid." *Economy and Society* 1(4): 425-456.
- Yap, Margaret, and Alison M. Konrad. 2009. "Gender and racial differentials in promotions: Is there a sticky floor, a mid-level bottleneck, or a glass ceiling?" *Relations Industrielles/Industrial Relations* 64 (4): 593-619.
- Yoon, In-Jin and Gui-Ok Kim. 2005. "Minjongmunjeüi chaesöngch'al: Minjokchuüwa kungminjöngch'esöng." *Han'guksahehak'oe Kwangbok 60Chunyön Kinyö'm T'ükpyöl Shimp'ojium*: 119-144. (Korean)
- Yoon, Sharon J. 2013. "Mobilizing ethnic resources in the transnational enclave: Ethnic solidarity as a mechanism for mobility in the Korean church in Beijing." *International Journal of Sociology* 43(3): 29-54.
- Yu, Eun-Ju. 2010. "Did I Come Here to Marry or to Work?": Study on Marriage Immigrant Women's Identity Formation as Workers." *Issues in Feminism* 10(1): 199-245. (Korean)

### ***Korean Language Newspapers and Magazines***

02/28/2012. Paeginün kwan'gwanggaek, ashiainün nodongjat't 'injong p'yön'gyön' ch'odŭng kyogwasö, *Busan Ilbo*.  
<http://news20.busan.com/controller/newsController.jsp?newsId=20120228000143>  
(retrieved, July 16, 2018)

04/16/2015. “Cover story.” Maekyong Economy Weekly.  
<http://news.mk.co.kr/v2/economy/view.php?sc=50000001&cm=1803-COVER&year=2015&no=366331&selFlag=&relatedcode=> (retrieved, May 10, 2018)

11/01/2017. [Tandok] T'etamunhwa ai mana shiröyot'et'tchanyöhakkyo omkinün pumodülgu, *Segye Ilbo* <http://www.segye.com/newsView/20171101005397> (retrieved, March 10, 2018)

### ***Korean Language Internet Sites***

EPS: Employment Permit System <https://www.eps.go.kr/eo/EmployPerSystem.eo?tabGb=01>  
(retrieved, May 15, 2018)

Introduction of Employment Permit System <https://www.eps.go.kr/ph/index.html> (retrieved, May 15, 2018)

Guide on EPS 4 Major Insurances <https://www.eps.go.kr/ph/index.html> (retrieved, May 15, 2018)

Multicultural Family Support Policy Master Plan 2010-2012, Prime Minister's Office and Relevant departments. The 2nd Multicultural Family Policy Committee Meeting in 2010 May 7.  
<http://www.mogef.go.kr/kor/skin/doc.html?fn=d90b3e9840d948ffaf538005acb1308c.pdf&rs=/rsfiles/201807/> (retrieved, June 10, 2018)

Korea Ministry of Government Legislation [1998] 2015), Enforcement Decree the Act on the Protection, etc. of Temporary Agency Workers  
<http://www.law.go.kr/LSW/lsInfoP.do?lsiSeq=159711#0000> (retrieved, February 4 2018)

UZSARANG <http://cafe.daum.net/uzsarang> (retrieved, March 27, 2014)

*English Language Internet Sites*

Mass Vote, History of voting rights

[https://docs.wixstatic.com/ugd/08d999\\_39964e9534ec49caa94fca24ede1aedef.pdf](https://docs.wixstatic.com/ugd/08d999_39964e9534ec49caa94fca24ede1aedef.pdf)  
(retrieved, April 10, 2018)

## Appendices

### Appendix A : List of respondents

	Ethnicity	Birth	Sex	Notes
Ali	Bangladesh	1984	M	undocumented → marriage immigrant
Khan	Bangladesh	1972	M	undocumented, foreign migrant worker
Masum	Bangladesh	1981	M	undocumented, foreign migrant worker
Udaya	Nepal	1984	M	labour counselor assistant, ex-factory worker
Bhan	Vietnam	1979	F	foreign migrant worker → marriage immigrant
Chi	Vietnam	?	F	marriage immigrant
Hong	Vietnam	1988	F	marriage immigrant
Ngoc	Vietnam	1984	F	marriage immigrant
Anne	Philippines	1986	F	marriage immigrant
Camilla	Philippines	1974	F	marriage immigrant
Denny Ann	Philippines	1990	F	marriage immigrant
Jennifer	Philippines	1973	F	marriage immigrant
Rosie	Philippines	1988	F	marriage immigrant
Belle	Philippines	1959	F	marriage immigrant
Medellin	Philippines	1980	F	marriage immigrant
Susanne	Philippines	1982	F	marriage immigrant
Arun	Cambodia	1988	M	foreign migrant worker
Sita	Cambodia	1982	F	marriage immigrant
Sunhee	Korean Chinese	1979	F	foreign migrant worker → marriage immigrant
Yunhee	Korean Chinese	1978	F	foreign migrant worker → marriage immigrant
Sook	Korean-Chinese	1977	F	marriage immigrant
Mr. Kim	Korea	1956	M	shuttle bus driver, ex-factory worker
Mr. Park	Korea	1976	M	community educator, ex-factory worker
Mr. Han	Korea	1957	M	taxi driver, ex-factory worker
Mr. Sang	Korea	1970	M	pig farmer, ex-factory worker
Mr. Nam	Korea	1963	M	factory worker
Mr. Jang	Korea	1955	M	factory worker
Mr. Kang	Korea	1969	M	spouse of marriage immigrant
Mr. Jo	Korea	1966	M	spouse of marriage immigrant
Mr. Chang	Korea	1973	M	executive production manager
Mr. Choi	Korean	1981	M	Ex-labour agency manager
Young-Hoon	Korea	1965	M	spouse of marriage immigrant
Mrs. Jeong	Korea	1960	F	ex-factory worker
Mrs. Kyung	Korea	1960	F	ex-factory worker
Mrs. Ko	Korea	1977	F	cooking class instructor
Mrs. Seo	Korea	1951	F	factory worker
Mrs. Choi	Korea	1955	F	ex-factory worker

Mrs. Kim Subin	Korea	1960	F	housewife, ex-factory worker
Mrs. Hyun	Korea	1992	F	university student, part-time work in factories
Mrs. Kong	Korea	1960	F	housewife, ex-factory worker
Mrs. Park	Korea	1967	F	housewife, ex-factory worker
Mrs. Sung	Korea	1980	F	housewife, ex-factory worker
Mrs. Joo	Korea	1979	F	housewife
Mrs. Chun	Korea	1978	F	housewife
Mrs. Hwang	Korea	1979	F	kindergarten caregiver, ex-nurse aid
Mrs. Sim	Korea	1976	F	housewife, ex-factory worker
Ms. Yang	Korea	1977	F	housewife, ex-factory worker
So-Young	Korea	1979	F	housewife, sister-in-law of immigrant
Mrs. Sun	Korea	1974	F	spouse of marriage immigrant
Mrs. An	Korea	1932	F	mother in law of marriage immigrant
Hye	Korea	1939	F	mother in law of marriage immigrant
Mrs. Moon	Korea	1982	F	spouse of marriage immigrant
		1940	F	mother in law of marriage immigrant

< Officers, settlement center staff members, NGOs workers>

Chan	Korean	M	Earthians' Station
Gilsoo	Korean	M	Koryoin Night School
Meehee	Korean	F	Social enterprise - World Mom Ansan
Jaehee	Korean	M	Ansan Foreign Workers' Center
Heejin	Korean	F	Ansan Foreign Residents' Center
Officer Kim	Korean	F	Ansan Police Station, W district branch
Ryu	Korean	M	Kimpo city Foreign Residents' Center
Youngbok	Korean-Chinese	M	Korean Chinese Network in Ansan

## Appendix B : Interview guide

### Semi-structured interview script for immigrants (foreign wives and husbands)

#### Topic of workplace

##### Experience of migration

1. What did you know about Korea before you came?  
How did you know about Korea?  
What was your impression of Korea?  
What did you expect your life in Korea to be like?
2. Can you tell me a little bit about living in Korea in general? What are the difficult things about living in Korea? What are the positive things to living in Korea?
3. Can you tell me a little bit about your life before you came to Korea?  
Where did you live?  
What did you do?  
What are the main reasons you decided to come to Korea?
4. Can you tell me a little bit about how you came to Korea?  
When did you get married? When did you come to Korea? How did you meet your husband or wife?

##### Experience working with Koreans and other ethnic group members

5. Can you tell me a little bit about how you started working for this company?  
When did you start to work for this company?  
Your job position is (     ), can you tell me a little bit about what your task is?
6. What is the race/ethnicity of your friends in the factory? Who do you get along with best?
7. Can you tell me a little bit about your experience of working with Koreans in this company?  
What are the good things about working with Koreans? Could you give an example?  
What are the challenges for you working with them? Could you give me an example?
8. What are some of the differences between the Korean workers and the non-Korean workers in this company?  
A) What are the differences between Korean workers and non-Korean workers? What are the main reasons you think that? Could you give me an example?  
B) You said that there is no difference between Korean workers and non-Korean workers, what are the main reasons you think that? Could you give me an example?

9. How would you describe employee relations between workers in this company?  
Between Korean workers?  
Between Korean workers and foreign workers in general?  
Between non-Korean workers?
10. If you have any experiences working with Koreans in a previous company(ies), could you tell me a bit about that?  
A) What company did you work for? How was your experience working with Koreans? What were the good memories of working with them? What were the challenges (or bad memories) of working with them? What are the reasons for why you feel like that?  
B) Were there any other non-Koreans in that company? What were their nationalities? How was your experience with them? Was there any moment you felt that they were different (the same as you)? Can you give me an example?
11. What are your dreams/goals about your near future?

### **Questions on race**

12. In your opinion, how many different races are in Korea today including foreign races?  
Could you identify them?
13. You said that there are (       ) races in Korea. What do you think about each race?  
How do they differ?  
What has been your experience with them?  
How would you feel if your son or daughter (sister or brother) got married to a person from the races you mentioned? (e.g., White, Black, Asian, “*tongnama*” etc.)
14. Have you ever heard of the term “*tongnama*” or “*tongnama*” people? If so, what do you think about this term?  
Who belongs to “*tongnama*”?  
How are they different?  
Do you feel that you are “*tongnama*”? Do you have identified yourself this way? Why or why not?
15. What images come to your mind when you hear the term “*tongnama*”?  
What was your experience with them?
16. How do you define race? (What is race, in your opinion? What do you think of this based on? eg., appearance, culture, ancestry, gene, skin color, place where you were born?)  
Is (e.g: Filipino, Vietnamese etc) a race?  
Is Asian a race?  
Is “*tongnama*” a race?
17. “Do you agree with the statement ‘There are biological races in the species *homo sapiens*’?”

18. In your opinion, who should be eligible to get Korean citizenship? (English teachers, international students, foreign migrant workers, and foreign spouses)  
Could you tell me the reason?

**Topic of family**

19. Could you tell me a little about your family in Korea?  
How many family members live together? Who are they? (e.g: wife, husband, brother-in-law, sister-in-law, mother-in-law, children etc.) What do they do?
20. Can you tell me a little bit about living with Koreans as your family members? What are the positive things about living with Koreans? What are the difficult things about living with Koreans? (eg., what do you do with or for their family members? Do you cook all the meals for their in-laws? Are you expected to serve them?)
21. What experiences have made you feel different from your Korean family members?  
Can you give me an example? What happened?  
What are the main reasons you think that?
22. Do you have any experiences of feeling that you were treated badly or unfairly by your Korean family members such as your spouse, parents-in-law, brother or sister-in-laws?  
How do you think they view [whatever the respondent's group is]? Do you think they have mostly positive attitudes toward them or mostly negative attitudes? Can you give me an example of when you felt this? How does this make you feel?
23. Do you have any experiences of feeling like you were treated badly or unfairly by other Korean neighbors?  
How do you think they view [whatever the respondent's group is]? Do you think they have mostly positive attitudes toward them or mostly negative attitudes? Can you give me an example of when you felt this? How does this make you feel?
24. If you have Korean citizenship or permanent residency, do you feel like you are Korean? If so, could you tell me the reasons? If not, could you tell me the reasons?
25. If you have a child (or children), do you think that your child is Korean? Or do they share the same ethnic identity as you? Could you tell me the reasons?
26. In the last national assembly election, Jasmin Lee, an immigrant from the Philippines was elected to the National Assembly for the first time in Korean history. What do you think about this? What does it mean to you? Can we say that this demonstrates acceptance of immigrants (foreign wives and foreign husbands) as members of Korean society?
27. What are your dreams about your near future?

## **Semi-structured interview script for family: Korean spouse**

### **Part 1: Questions about family life**

1. Could you tell me a little about your family?  
How many family members do you live together with? Who are they? (e.g: wife, husband, brothers and sisters, brothers and sisters in law, parents, children etc) What do they do?
2. What did you know about (country's name of wife or husband) before you met your wife or husband?  
What was your impression of this country?  
How did you know about this country? Through what?  
What did you expect of your life after marriage?
3. Can you tell me a little bit about how you met your wife or husband?  
When did you meet your spouse? Where did you meet? How was your experience from the first meeting to marriage? When did you get married? Were there any difficulties?  
(Difficulties of getting permission from parents and relatives, money etc)
4. Can you tell a little about what your main concerns were, if any, when you decided to get married to your wife or husband?
5. Can you tell me a little bit about living with a foreign wife (or husband)? What are the good things about living with a foreign wife (or husband)? What are the difficult things to living with a foreign wife (or husband)?
6. Do you have any experiences of feeling that your wife (or husband) is different from your Korean family members?  
Can you give me an example? What happened?  
What are the main reasons for thinking this?
7. Do you have any experiences of feeling that your wife or husband gets treated a bit differently from other Korean family members such as your parents, brothers and sisters?  
How do you think they view [whatever the respondent's group is]? Do you think they have mostly positive attitudes toward them or mostly negative attitudes? Can you give me an example of when you felt this? How does this make you feel?
8. Do you have any experiences of feeling that your wife or husband is treated badly or unfairly against by Korean neighbors? (including experiences in shops, stores and community centers etc) How do you think they view [whatever the respondent's group is]? Do you think they have mostly positive attitudes toward them or mostly negative attitudes? Can you give me an example of when you felt this? How does this make you feel?

9. If your wife or husband has Korean citizenship or permanent residency, do you feel that she (or he) is Korean? If so, could you tell me the reasons? If not, could you tell me the reasons?
10. If you have a child (or children), do you think that your child is Korean? Or do they share the same ethnic identity of your wife or husband? Could you tell me the reasons?
11. Can you speak your spouse's native language? How often do you use that language at home? What is your motivation to learning that language? If not, can you tell me the reason why you don't learn that language? Do you have a plan to teach your spouse's language to your children? If so, the reasons? If not, the reasons?
12. Can you tell me a little about the social activities you do with your wife or husband? (eg. visiting relatives, dinner with neighbors, gathering with other couples, going out with other Korean friends, going out for drinks with Korean co-workers etc.) What occasions do you attend with your wife or husband How does your husband/wife fit in on these occasions? Have there been any difficulties? What occasions do you attend without your wife or husband? Could you give me an example? What are the reasons?
13. Can you tell me a little bit about the good memories of living with your spouse?
14. What are your plans or hopes about your near future?

## **Part 2: Questions on race**

15. In your opinion, how many different races are in Korea today including foreign races? Could you identify them?
16. You said that there are (        ) races in Korea. What do you think about each race?  
How do they differ?  
What has been your experience with them?  
How would you feel if your son or daughter (sister or brother) got married to a person from the races you mentioned? (e.g., White, Black, Asian, "*tongnama*" etc.)
17. Nowadays some people use the term "*tongnama*". Have you heard of this term before? If so what was the situation? What do you think about this term? Have you ever heard '*tongnama*' from your family members or relatives to refer to your wife or husband? If so, can you tell me about the situation?
18. Who belongs to "*tongnama*"? How do they differ? Does your wife (or husband) belong to "*tongnama*"?
19. What images come to your mind when you hear the term "*tongnama*"?  
What was your experience with them?  
How would you feel if your son or daughter (sister or brother) got married to them?

20. In your opinion, what makes a Korean Korean? What are the differences between Koreans and the groups that you mentioned previously?  
 Are foreign wives Korean? Could you tell me the reason?  
 Are foreign husbands Korean? Could you tell me the reason?  
 Are the children from a Korean husband and a foreign wife Korean? Could you tell me the reason?  
 Are the children from a Korean wife and foreign husband Korean? Could you tell me the reason?
21. How do you define race? (What is race, in your opinion? What do you think of this based on? (eg., appearance, culture, ancestry, gene, skin color, place where you were born?)  
 Is (e.g: Filipino, Vietnamese etc) a race?  
 Is Asian a race?  
 Is “*tongnama*” a race?
21. “Do you agree with the statement ‘There are biological races in the species *homo sapiens*’?”
22. In your opinion, who should be eligible to get Korean citizenship? (English teachers, international students, foreign migrant workers, and foreign spouses) Could you tell me the reason?
23. In the last national assembly election, Jasmin Lee, an immigrant from the Philippines was elected to the National Assembly for the first time in Korean history. What do you think about this? What does it mean to you? Can we say that this demonstrates acceptance of immigrants (foreign wives and foreign husbands) as members of Korean society?

**Semi-structured interview script for family: Korean family members of immigrants (in-laws and relatives)**

**Part 1: Questions on family life**

1. Could you tell me a little about yourself?
2. What did you know about (country’s name of wife or husband) before you met (OOO)?  
 What was your impression of this country?  
 How did you know about this country? Through what?
3. Can you tell me a little about what your main thoughts were when you heard about this marriage? Could you give me an example? Why did you think that?
4. What concerns, if any, do you still have about this marriage? Or about (OOO)? What are the main reasons?

What concerns did you have before that you don't have any more about (OOO)? What are the main reasons?

5. Do you have any experiences of feeling like OOO is different from other Korean family members and relatives? Can you give me an example? What happened?  
What are the main reasons you think that?
6. If OOOO has Korean citizenship or permanent residency, do you feel that she (or he) is Korean? If so, could you tell me the reasons? If not, could you tell me the reasons?

## **Part 2: Questions on race**

7. In your opinion, how many different races are in Korea today including foreign races?  
Could you identify them?
8. You said that there are (        ) races in Korea. What do you think about each race?  
How do they differ?  
Do you have any chance to see them? (talk or work with them?)  
What was your experience with them?  
How would you feel if your son or daughter (sister or brother) got married to a person from the races you mentioned? (e.g., White, Black, Asian, "*tongnama*" etc)
9. Nowadays some people use the term "*tongnama*". Who belongs to "*tongnama*"? How do they differ? Do you consider OOO to be *tongnama*?
10. What images come to your mind when you hear the term "*tongnama*"?  
What was your experience with them?
11. In your opinion, what makes a Korean Korean? What are the differences between Koreans and the groups that you mentioned previously?  
Are foreign wives Korean? Why or why not?  
Are foreign husbands Korean? Why or why not?  
Are the children from a Korean husband and a foreign wife Korean? Could you tell me the reason?  
Are the children between a Korean wife and foreign husband Korean? Could you tell me the reason?
12. How do you define race? (What is race, in your opinion? What do you think of this based on? (eg., appearance, culture, ancestry, gene, skin color, place where you were born?)  
Is (e.g: Filipino, Vietnamese etc) a race?  
Is Asian a race?  
Is "*tongnama*" a race?

13. “Do you agree with the statement ‘There are biological races in the species *homo sapiens*’?”
14. There are many foreigners in Korea nowadays, such as English teachers, international students, foreign migrant workers, and foreign spouses. In your opinion, who should be eligible to get Korean citizenship? Could you tell me the reason?
15. In the last national assembly election, Jasmin Lee, an immigrant from the Philippines was elected to the National Assembly for the first time in Korean history. What do you think about this?

### **Semi-structured interview script for workplace: Foreign migrant workers**

#### **Part 1: Experience working with Koreans and other migrants**

1. What did you know about Korea before you came?  
How did you learn these things about Korea?  
What was your impression of Korea?  
What did you expect your life in Korea to be like?
2. Can you tell me a little bit about how you started working for this company?  
When did you start to work for this company?  
Can you tell me a little bit about what your task is?
3. What is the race/ethnicity of your friends in the factory? Who do you get along with best?
4. Can you tell me a little bit about your experience of working with Koreans in this company?  
What are the good things about working with Koreans? Could you give an example?  
What are the challenges for you working with them? Could you give me an example?
5. What are some of the differences between the Korean workers and the non-Korean workers in this company?  
A) What are the differences between them? What are the main reasons you think that?  
Could you give me an example?  
B) You said that there is no difference between them, what are the main reasons you think that? Could you give me an example?
6. How would you describe employee relations between workers in this company?  
Between Korean workers?  
Between Korean workers and foreign workers in general?  
Between non-Korean workers?

7. If you have any experiences working with Koreans in a previous company(ies), could you tell me a bit about that?
  - C) What company did you work for? How was your experience working with Koreans? What were the good memories of working with them? What were the challenges (or bad memories) of working with them? What are the reasons for why you feel like that?
  - D) Were there any other non-Koreans in that company? What were their nationalities? How was your experience with them? Was there any moment you felt that they were different (the same as you)? Can you give me an example?
8. Can you tell me a little bit about living in Korea in general? What are the difficult things about living in Korea? What are the positive things?
9. What are your dreams/goals for your near future?

## **Part 2: Questions on race**

10. In your opinion, how many different races are there in Korea today including foreign races?  
Could you identify them?
11. You said that there are (       ) races in Korea. What do you think about each race?  
How do they differ?  
What has been your experience with them?  
How would you feel if your son or daughter (sister or brother) got married to a person from the races you mentioned? (e.g., White, Black, Asian, *tongnama* etc)
12. Have you ever heard of the term “*tongnama*” or “*tongnama*” people? If so, what do you think about this term?  
Who belongs to “*tongnama*”?  
How are they different?  
Do you feel that you are “*tongnama*”? Do you have identified yourself this way? Why or why not?
13. What images come to your mind when you hear the term “*tongnama*”?  
What was your experience with them?
14. How do you define race? (What is race, in your opinion? What do you think of this based on? eg., appearance, culture, ancestry, gene, skin color, place where you were born?)  
Is (e.g: Filipino, Vietnamese etc) a race?  
Is Asian a race?  
Is “*tongnama*” a race?

15. Do you agree with the statement ‘There are biological races in the species *homo sapiens*’?
16. In your opinion, who should be eligible to get Korean citizenship? (English teachers, international students, foreign migrant workers, and foreign spouses)  
Could you tell me the reason?

### **Semi-structured interview script for workplace: Korean co-workers**

#### **Part 1: Experience working with immigrants and foreign migrant workers**

1. Can you tell me a little bit about how you start work for this company?  
When did you start to work for this company?  
Your job position is (            ), can you tell me little bit about what your tasks are?
2. Can you tell me a little bit about your experience of working with immigrants and foreign migrant workers in this company?  
What are the good things about working with them? Could you give an example?  
What are the challenges of working with them? Could you give me an example?
3. Could you tell me if there are any moments when you feel that they are different from working with Koreans in this company? Could you give me an example?  
In your opinion, what are the main reasons for these differences?
4. How would you describe employee relations between workers in this company?  
Between Korean workers?  
Between Korean workers and foreign workers (immigrants and foreign migrant workers) in general?  
Between different ethnic groups within immigrant and foreign migrant workers?
5. Based on your experience, are there differences between people of different nationalities in the company when you work with them? or is there no difference between them?  
Prove:  
A) What are the differences between different nationalities? What are the main reasons for this? Could you give me an example?  
B) You said that there is no difference between different nationalities, what are the main reasons for why you say this? Could you give me an example?
6. If you have any experiences working with foreigners in previous company(ies), could you tell me a bit about that?  
What company did you work? What kinds of foreigners did you work with (immigrants, foreign migrant workers, or undocumented workers)? What were their nationalities? How

was your experience with them? Was there any moment you felt that they were different (the same as Korean)? Can you give me an example?

## **Part 2: Questions on race**

7. In your opinion, how many different races are in Korea today including foreign races?  
Could you identify them?
8. You said that there are (        ) races in Korea. What do you think about each race?  
How do they differ?  
Do you have any chance to see them? (talk or work with them?)  
What has been your experience with them?  
How would you feel if your son or daughter (sister or brother) got married to a person from the races you mentioned? (e.g., White, Black, Asian, 'tongnama' etc.)
9. Have you ever heard of the term "tongnama" or "tongnama" people? If so, what do you think about this term?  
Who belongs to "tongnama"?  
How are they different?
10. What images come to your mind when you hear the term "tongnama"?  
What was your experience with them?  
How would you feel if your son or daughter (sister or brother) got married to one of them?
11. In your opinion, what makes a Korean Korean? What are the differences between Koreans and the groups that you mentioned previously?  
Do you consider foreign wives Korean? Could you tell me the reason?  
Do you consider foreign husbands Korean? Could you tell me the reason?  
Do you consider the children from a Korean husband and a foreign wife Korean? Could you tell me the reason?  
Do you consider the children from a Korean wife and foreign husband Korean? Could you tell me the reason?
12. How do you define race? (What is race, in your opinion? What do you think of this based on? eg., appearance, culture, ancestry, gene, skin color, place where you were born?)  
Is (e.g: Filipino, Vietnamese etc) a race?  
Is Asian a race?  
Is "tongnama" a race?
13. "Do you agree with the statement 'There are biological races in the species *homo sapiens*'?"

14. There are many foreigners in Korea nowadays, such as English teachers, international students, foreign migrant workers, and foreign spouses. If you can select people from these groups as Korean citizens, which groups do you want to give Korean citizenship? Could you tell me the reason?
15. In the last national assembly election, Jasmin Lee, an immigrant from the Philippines was elected to the National Assembly for the first time in Korean history. What do you think about this? What does it mean to you? Can we say that this demonstrates acceptance of immigrants (foreign wives and foreign husbands) as members of Korean society?