THE RISE OF THE KOREAN WAVE IN THE UNITED STATES: GLOBAL IMAGINATION AND THE PRODUCTION OF LOCALITY AMONG KOREAN AMERICANS IN PHILADELPHIA

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by
HaeLim Suh
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Examining Committee Members:

Thomas Jacobson, Advisory Co-Chair, Department of Media Studies and Production
Fabienne Darling-Wolf, Advisory Co-Chair, Department of Journalism
Patrick Murphy, Department of Media Studies and Production
DongSook Park, External Member, Ewha Womans University

ABSTRACT

This dissertation illustrates the cultural dimension of globalization by examining how the ascendance of South Korean popular culture, i.e., the Korean Wave, reshapes the global imagination and transforms the locality of Korean Americans in Philadelphia. As an ethnographic global media study, I conducted in-depth interviews and participated in Korean cultural events/meetings, as well as visited the sites of living for Korean Americans in the Philadelphia metropolitan area. My research finds that advances in the digitalized media environment made my informants consume copious transnational Korean media every day and individualized their media consumption. Accordingly, their perceptions of Korea/Asia/U.S.'s places in the world are complicated and their ethnic identity has become significant.

Their global imaginations also intersect with negotiating gender roles, perceiving attractiveness, and planning future paths. This shift contributes to construction of the in-between identities of Korean Americans by denaturalizing ideas and cultural elements in both Korea and the U.S. Most distinctively, the rise of the Korean Wave stimulates global imagination among young second generation Korean Americans to aspire to and operate their agency in a transnational context that their parents' generation barely anticipated.

Finally, the upsurge of the Korean Wave drives Korean Americans to participate in transforming localities rooted in thickened connectivities and activities centering on Korean popular culture across intra/inter-ethnic groups locally and globally. This conversely facilitates intense engagement and belonging in the local spaces of community among Korean Americans. My study shows how transnational media flow under conditions of globalization positively influences immigrants to embrace their own

ethnic identities and local spaces. On the other hand, it implies that there should be further examination of different boundaries of global imagination rooted in gender/class differences as well as race/ethnicity.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

This study examines how the upsurge of transnational South Korean media culture, i.e., the Korean Wave, plays a role in negotiating global imagination and producing locality among Korean Americans in the United States. Contrary to theories of U.S./Western centered media imperialism (Boyd-Barrett, 1977; H. I. Schiller, 1969), globalized media consists of multiple regional media nodes in places like Hong Kong, India, Japan, Nigeria, and South Korea (Appadurai, 1996, p. 31; Chua, 2011, p. 224). A growing body of media research has focused on transnational media flows. Yet, the significance of this hybridized media environment within the United States, especially after the rise of the Internet, has not been thoroughly discussed (Darling-Wolf, 2015, pp. 140-141). The Korean Wave is a prominent case of an imminent media environment which has attained popularity both in Asian regions and among migratory Asians since the late 1990s. It eventually expanded its visibility in the United States giving Korean Americans the opportunity to experience and embrace popular culture from Korea in real time via digitalized media. Against this backdrop, the current study explores: 1) the influence of the Korean Wave on the global imagination of Korean Americans and 2) the role of the Korean Wave in the production of locality by Korean Americans.

Recent conditions of globalization have complicated the relationship between one's physical location in the world and its socio-cultural spaces. Migratory populations have spread out and cultural forms become deterritorialized everywhere (García Canclini, 1995, pp. 228-229; Tomlinson, 1999, pp. 106-107). Advances in communication technology have reshaped the relationship between one's "home" and physical place,

making it possible for people to connect in spite of physical and temporal distance. This shift, in turn, has transformed the meaning of space and place based on interconnectivity (Couldry & McCarthy, 2004; Coyne, 2010; Ito, 1999). Places are indirectly experienced, created, and transformed through the use of the media (Berry, Kim, & Spigel, 2010; Martin & Rizvi, 2014). Therefore, Tomlinson (1999) argued that the critical shift of the global era is embedded in people's local lives through their experience of "dis-placement" (p. 9).

This study highlights the role of the media in shaping historically unprecedented experiences in constructing locality. Audiences in the United States now easily access transnational media, engage in mediated spaces via the world-wide web, and participate daily in interactive communications across geographic borders with other foreign audiences (Appadurai, 1996; Hegde, 2011; Orgad, 2012; Thompson, 2005). In this way, global media culture influences how people sense their place of home by "transforming the local order" (Tomlinson, 1999, p. 9) and consequently reshaping localities.

This approach is especially suggestive in the case of transnational migrants and ethnic minorities. Migratory populations strengthen and spread both the trend of consuming transnational cultural products and the global mode of transnational communication. When transnational migrants and ethnic minorities access transnational media produced in their countries of origin to stay connected to their homelands, they engage more actively in their imagined communities and connect to their ethnic homeland via mediated spaces (Ang, 1996, p. 147; W. Y. Lin, Song, & Ball-Rokeach, 2010; Sun, 2002). Hence, their media practices offer a site on which we can observe the

trans-locality constituted by their engagement across local/national/regional/transnational space, and also their experiences of belonging within these mediated social identities.

As a critical piece of globalized media culture, the current study looks at the impact of the Korean Wave in reconfiguring experiences of the local, focusing on the role of this transnational media flow in Korean Americans' daily experience. This study noted a recent shift in the United States' cultural terrain as a consequence of the spread of the Korean Wave. The expansive influence of Korean popular culture in the U.S. and the Korean American community provides a significant site on which to observe the multilayered dynamics of this global cultural flow. Before the advance of the Korean Wave, Korean Americans mostly enjoyed media products from their homeland within the confines of the Korean American community (e.g., Lee, M., & Cho, C. H., 1990; Park, D. 1990; Lee, C, 2004). However, the Korean Wave has expanded the visibility of and access to Korean culture in the U.S., including Korean media, Korean foods, K-beauty products, as well as Korean celebrities in the U.S. media. Currently, Korean Americans have more opportunity to talk about Korean culture with American neighbors or colleagues, and attend Korean cultural events hosted by Korean American communities, Korean government/entertainment companies or cultural institutions in the U.S.

Given this circumstance, this study explored whether — and, if so, how — new localities are engendered by Korean Americans' sense of engagement and belonging in both physical and mediated contexts across local, national, and transnational boundaries, as well as the resultant global imagination. García Canclini (2013) stresses the significance of examining the imaginations and subjectivities of minorities in order to understand the nature of cultural globalization. He believes that we can observe the array

of fractures in globalization through the imaginary space of these groups (p. xxxviii). One such fracture is evident in the tension between the imaginary spaces embodied by Korean Americans' engagement with the Korean Wave and their physically inhabited place in the cultural landscape of the United States.

Considering that this cultural flow from Korea to the U.S. was hardly expected several decades ago, it is imperative to examine the influence of the Korean Wave among Korean Americans in order to understand contemporary global media culture. The significance of this research mainly lies in two areas. First, it focuses on the dynamics brought about by a shifting cultural terrain in the United States due to the growing influx of transnational media products especially via the Internet. Indigenous cultural products tend to maintain a dominant position in major streams of media distribution and circulation (e.g., printing, television, and film industry) in the U.S. Most audiences in the United States were relatively new to transnational cultural products until the advance of the Internet. These circumstances were linked in complex ways to the long-maintained privileged status of media products produced in the United States in the global market. However, there are certain signs of the intrusion of transnational media in the U.S. cultural sphere. For instance, Japanese animation occupies a separate section in public libraries and has maintained a volume of youth consumers for more than a decade. Most importantly, owing to the Internet, American audiences can freely access non-native content. Audio-visual content such as international movies, television series, news, etc. appear on YouTube, Netflix, and various other streaming services.

Second, this study enlarges the scope of audience studies by examining the consumption of non-Western/U.S. media flows within the United States. Prior audience

studies in international contexts mainly analyzed the influence of U.S. media consumption in foreign markets (e.g., Ang, 1985; Kim, Y. 2006; Liebes & Katz, 1990; Wasko, J., Phillips, M., & Meehan, E. R. (Eds.), 2001). Although global media studies scholarship has embraced the emergence of East Asian pop culture as a new global cultural flow, little attention has been paid to the audiences' reception of it (Iwabuchi, 2010, p. 409). There has been growing volume of studies on the Korean Wave but they mostly focus on the causal elements of its rise, the derivatives of the Korean Wave, and its theoretical significance in regard to media globalization (for instance, Chua & Iwabuchi, 2008; Y. Kim, 2013; Kuwahara, 2014). Several reception studies on the Korean Wave have been done, but there are mainly focused on Asian regions (Chan & Xueli, 2011; Irene Yang, 2008; A. Lin & Tong, 2007, 2008). On the other hand, studies of media consumption by ethnic minorities in the West/United States have two main focal points: the interpretation of dominant media by ethnic minorities (Bobo, 1995), and the impact of consuming ethnic or transnational media from their homelands (Durham, 2004; D. C. Oh, 2015; Shi, 2008). In a similar vein, attempting to understand media culture from the audiences' end, this study pays attention to the site and its reception in which non-Western, transnational media flows, the Korean Wave, in America create vibes within and beyond the Korean American ethnic community. By doing this, this project broadens the scope of global audience scholarship concerning the U.S.

Outline of the Research

The dissertation comprises seven chapters. Chapter 1 introduces the media phenomenon of the Korean Wave as a prominent mediascape in its regional and global contexts. While there has been productive discussion over this re-centered globalization,

including East Asian media industries and other regional media hubs, examination of this hybridized media environment in the U.S. is relatively scarce. Moreover, in spite of the unexpected rise of multiple mediascapes from different regions, academic efforts to grasp their reception and grassroots level approaches with different audience groups have not been actively pursued. Noting this scholarly gap, I conducted an ethnographic global media study in the U.S. to understand the dynamics of transnational media flows, particularly the Korean Wave, within the Korean American community as a case study of global media studies at the current stage of media globalization.

Chapter 2 is a literature review exploring three bodies of literature. First, it shows how the foci of global media studies have shifted in response to the global media environment. It then addresses Appadurai's approach to cultural globalization, including the notion of global imagination and his emphasis on the process of locality. Finally, this chapter explores the hybridized local culture in Korea during its modernization and the rise of the Korean Wave at the global stage. To conclude, the consumption of Korean media within the Korean American community is briefly introduced along with the study's research questions. The research questions covered three main categories: 1) Korean Americans' global imagination and the places of Korea, Asia, and the U.S. in it, 2) Korean Americans' global imagination and the construction of their identities in terms of gender roles, attractiveness, and life plans, and 3) the Korean Wave and Korean Americans' belonging/engagement in Korean/non-Korean communities and in local/national/Korean/ transnational contexts.

Chapter 3 describes the research methods used for this qualitative research project in global media studies. It also describes the context of the field for the current study

including: an overview of Korean American immigration into Philadelphia, the features of the Korean American neighborhood in Philadelphia, and the sampling process. In addition, I discuss the reflexivity of the ethnographic research project within the digitalized connected environment and my own identity as an ethnographic researcher.

Chapter 4 examines how my informants' emerging global imagination is reflected in their ethnic identities, associated with the nexus of Korean, Asian, and American identities. The advance of the digitalized media environment made a new era of media consumption possible among my Korean American informants. I categorized the informants into three groups for analysis: 1) young, second generation Korean Americans; 2) international students/professional immigrants; and 3) senior immigrant informants. The most notable findings lie in the transformed imaginations about Korea among young second generation Korean Americans. Youth groups of the second generation who are fascinated by the Korean pop culture imagine their homeland as a very cool place. This is a big shift among young Korean Americans. Only about 30 years ago, young Korean Americans were forced to assimilate into upper middle class white culture regardless of their own social class. The economic development of Korea and their positive feelings toward their homeland generated by their Korean media consumption made these young people identify as Korean-American, rather than American. In general, the ethnic identity of Korean Americans has been empowered throughout the last several decades due to the rising position of Korea in global society. Compared to the youth group, international students/professional immigrants and senior immigrants were rather critical about the influences of the Korean Wave in the U.S.

Chapter 5 traces how the popularity of this transnational media flow is actualized in Korean Americans' space of living in terms of gender roles, attractiveness, and life plan. The influence of Western media has been widely discussed by communication and media scholars. My informants were all aware of the differences between the U.S. and Korean styles and negotiated their individual styles between them. For young female Korean Americans, the rise of K-fashion or K-beauty is an alternative option they can employ to empower themselves and escape from the white-centered racial taxonomy by supporting the differences between the white and Asian beauty standards. Yet, it is questionable to view Korean Americans' shifts as resistance against the hegemony of Western ideals considering that their excitement and pleasure are mainly articulated through their consuming activities. The major elements of K-beauty, i.e., white, flawless facial skin, big rounded eyes with double eyelids, skinny body type, and small framed face, are not exclusive of the Western beauty standard. Based on the data, most male informants said they are more accustomed to U.S. culture which values the practical and comfortable. They also viewed other races as physically superior to Asians.

Chapter 6 explains how Korean Americans expanded their engagement and belonging through digitalized media across the local, national, and global nexus. The rise of the Korean Wave and their engagement with their homeland connected them with each other simultaneously reinforcing that connection across generations, ethnicities, and local/national/global communities. Convenient access to mediated communication and media content facilitates Korean Americans' exposure to more messages and content from Korea. This has stimulated daily talk over issues in Korea within both mediated and physical communities. These conversations, in turn, have helped to center the daily lives

of Korean Americans on their local Korean American communities or their mediated Korean American communities. On the other hand, their awareness of globality, knowing that other people are watching what is happening in Korea, reinforces their emotions and opinions on issues in their homeland in terms of aspiration, pride, shame, concern, etc. These complicated feelings and extended connectivities drove them to actively participate in building associations, hosting cultural events, and creating political voices, as well as visiting Korea more often and considering those visits to be precious and memorable experiences.

Chapter 7 is the conclusion, which will briefly summarize the findings of the research while discussing the similarities and differences of cultural globalization in the U.S. to Appadurai's theories of cultural globalization. In addition, it will describe what this research can contribute to global media studies and give suggestions in order to supplement the deficiency in global media audience studies. Limitations of the research will be clarified to interpret the findings and to guide the future research in this area.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

The Process of Cultural Globalization

The global village or "one world" has become a cliché of globalization over the last three decades. However, it is still hard to give a succinct definition of globalization. Some scholars view the conditions and processes of globalization in terms of multiple connectivities among different regions. This would be one part of modernization and/or a phase of constructing the world as a capitalist society. For example, the description of globalization by Marx and Engels in their work, *The Communist Manifesto,* in the nineteenth century resonates with the notion of McDonaldization and World System Analysis (Ritzer, 1993; Wallerstein, 1974). In a similar way, the focus of international communication study has been inequality in terms of the linear flows of media and cultural products from center to periphery nations. Subsequently, there were concerns that our global village would be one-Westernized/Americanized world based on the Western/American centered ideologies and socio-economic systems.

Yet contrary to this, globalization scholars have stressed that globalization brought a crucial change to the nature of our social lives that is distinctive of the characteristics of the modernization era. Far from moving toward one idealized modern society, varied versions of modernity have developed around the world. Noting increasing awareness of global interconnectedness as a major feature of globalization (Castells, 1996; Pieterse, 2009; Tomlinson, 1999), scholars have raised questions about global homogenization. Instead, they suggested that globalization is not merely a process of that determining narrative, the Westernization/Americanization of the world. Globality implies that different communities are densely connected to each other through

economies, ideologies, or cultures. This has become a phenomenal condition of the contemporary era. Instead of the standardized U.S./Western centered power and hegemony, the development of communication technology made it possible for scattered people to be connected according to their own interests and to easily make their voices heard (Castells, 1997).

The notion of media imperialism was challenged. Contrary to the concerns of cultural homogeneity resulting from media imperialism, local media industries in Asia are more prevalent than thirty years ago. Local film industries have expanded and prospered being centered in multiple cities such as Bollywood, Hong Kong, and East Asian film markets. They have met regional needs and expanded their market shares across nations. U.S. media conglomerates had enjoyed a persistently Western cultural hegemony in Asian media markets, including Korea for more than 50 years after World War II. Today, however, the U.S. media system is just one of the major nodes along with other regional centers of media culture (e.g., Appadurai, 1996, p. 31; Haynes, 2016; Kuwahara [Eds.], 2014; Mader, Dudrah, & Fuchs, [Eds.], 2015; Okome & Krings, 2013; Okome, 2017; Thussu, 2006; Tunstall, 2008).

In the meantime, globalization has simultaneously but unevenly proceeded through several dimensions of society while reflecting local circumstances. For instance, the Korean Wave was initiated as a part of cultural globalization in Asia. East Asia is one of the key areas where dramatic increases in the production of media culture and transnational circulation have developed since the 1990s. This shift is closely linked with cultural policy in this region which has held strong government-centered media industries. Deregulation and an open market policy, the major elements of the globalized

economy system, promoted the flow of transnational cultural products in Asia. Digitalized media technology, the advances in satellite television and the quality of the Internet connection in Asia fostered the fastest connection worldwide (A. O. Thomas, 2005). Two Asian countries, China and India, now have the biggest online markets. Korea and Japan are expected to drive future growth of mobile broadband (UN Broadband commission for sustainable development, 2016).

Noting the conditions and processes of globalization, this study views contemporary media culture as a critical threshold from which we are able to observe significant shifts, particularly the digitalized media usage in our daily lives and the meanings people create. One of the most important tasks required to complete the cartography of cultural globalization is empirical research into local cultures to theorize cultural globalization. Thus, in order to examine the cultural dimension of globalization, it seems appropriate to move the major foci to the different dimensions and multiple levels of global connectivity by examining grassroots level changes in the daily lives of people. With this in mind, this research adopts insights from Arjun Appadurai, one of the key thinkers on globalization.

Appadurai's Theories of Globalization

This research employed Arjun Appadurai's insights on cultural globalization centering on his conceptualization of global imagination and the production of the locality as a theoretical foundation (Appadurai, 1990, 1995, 1996, 1999, 2000, 2013). In his earlier work *Modernity at Large* (1996), Appadurai stressed that the progress of globalization is not just a complement to cultural homogenization. On the contrary, he called globalization a "deeply historical and uneven process" (p. 17). He explained two

major forces underpinning the current stage of globalization. On one hand, the transformation of the market/the global economy/industrial capitalism function has driven the process of globalization. On the other hand, other forms of capital have gradually loosened their connection to the financial forms of capital. The latter, he thought, brought on even the large processes of globalization such as migration, deterritorialized culture, and sometimes violence against minority groups by the pressured citizens (Kenway & Fahey, 2009, p. 42). In other words, capitalism and its development were vital driving forces behind globalization, yet Appadurai paid attention to the autonomy of multiple, distinct spheres composed by varied forms such as capital, media, technologies, etc. with multidirectional movements at different paces. For example, he addressed five major circulations of forms: ethnoscapes; technoscapes; financescapes; mediascapes; and ideoscapes, which construct irregular and fluid cultural mixtures in different regions (Appadurai, 1996, p. 33).

Appadurai optimistically posits culture as a counterpart to the economic factors directing the processes of globalization. While the logic of capitalism has been scrutinized as an initiative force of modernization over the globe, questions about modernity (e.g., whether modernization has any clear direction or what would be the vital confluence of modernity in many different locations in common) are still under murky deliberation (Appadurai, 2014, p. 484). Appadurai envisions the global future from the reception of people in response to this structural shift and its cultural contribution. Global imagination is at the center of this idea, as it suggests a “plurality of imagined worlds” in contrast to the dominant economic structure and its consequential operations (Appadurai, 1996, p. 5). Similarly, García Canclini (2013) notes that the multiple imaginations of

globalization could be a source of new possibilities for culture as a counterpart to economically led globalization.

How, then, can we grasp the multiplicity of globalization culture? Appadurai argued that the local is the site where we are able to observe the very dynamics of globalization. So, how do we experience globalization? What are the significant facets of globalization at the local level? My research attends to his explanation of global imagination and the role of the transnational media flow, particularly the rising popularity of transnational Korean media products in the U.S. and their impacts within the Korean American community. This study employed Arjun Appadurai's comprehension of cultural globalization as a theoretical framework. As a socio-cultural anthropologist, Appadurai has reflected on modernity, imagination, and transnational flows (Appadurai, 2014, pp. 484-485). His approach to the cultural dimension of globalization provided a useful lens with which to examine current research, especially his discussion of the role of the media and focus on the activation of people's daily lives, so called "grassroots globalization". This chapter discusses the development of globalization theory while explicating Appadurai's perspective. Drawing on his notion of global cultural flows, two key concepts, global imagination in relation to the role of the media, and the production of locality, are illuminated in order to focus the parameters of discussion. Finally, the primary research subject, the Korean Wave and Korean Americans in the U.S., is discussed to contextualize the subject of this study and place the current study within the scholarship of Korean Wave studies.

Global Imagination and the Role of the Media

With respect to our daily lives, imagination is often referred to as a creative power with which we present an image or idea which is never experienced or realized. Generating imagination, therefore, can be connoted with either positive or negative shades. Imagination liberates our mind from the here and now and leads us to unexplored space. With this process, imagination immediately arouses us full of possibilities and hopes. We are able to shed a light toward a fresh direction or escape from arduous reality. On the other hand, imagination can be criticized as a contrary to the real or the senses. This leads to a tendency to evoke ridiculous delusion and fantasy (Kenway & Fahey, 2009, p. 2).

Could this sort of imagination be a vital component constituting culture? Some cultural studies scholars are more recently interested in exploring "an *assemblage* of imaginings and meanings" shared by members of a community as one definition of culture (Lewis, 2002, p. 22). Lewis argues that the role of imagining should be expounded as comprising culture considering that culture is actually initiated with an imaging of the world about us and these imaginaries are represented through the symbolic system, the bedrock of the culture (Lewis, 2002, p. 22). Furthermore, while observing the cultural dimension of globalization, imagination, imagining, and imaginaries are deeply explicated since many scholars stress the intensified function of the imagination as the most distinctive characteristic of globalized culture.

Appadurai notes that the role of imagination became more substantial in relation to his theory of global cultural flows, as he employed the term "global imagination." Global imagination implies "a collective way of seeing, understanding, and feeling, at a

global level," and a sense of our current place in order to direct our way of life (Gaonkar, 2002, p. 10; Orgad, 2012, p. 3). The cultural conditions in the process of globalization, such as multidirectional flows of human beings, capitals, ideas, media products, etc., and ordinary exposure to the transnational influx naturally encourages people to create certain emotions and think about different cultures in their imagined space. Congruently, Appadurai argues that global imagination, or this awareness of global connectivity, became more significant in globalized culture since the globalized culture has dismantled the basis of our daily reflection.

In essence, Appadurai stresses global imagination since it stimulates the operation of individual agency. People constantly reconstituted and developed globalization while negotiating between real and possible images and narratives (Orgad, 2012, p. 3). In other words, they posit the global as their own imaginary space where their own global imagination is continuously created and negotiated "between sites of agency and globally defined fields of possibility" (Appadurai, 1996, p. 8). Appadurai particularly pays attention to the variability of emotions, such as pleasure, anxiety, anger, honor, etc. within the imaginary space. Global imagination provides a space in which the different hues of emotions and feelings might be contextualized and refined by the particular situation of each individual. Hence, Appadurai conjectured that global imagination could neither be "purely emancipatory" nor "entirely disciplined" (Appadurai, 1996, p. 4). In a positive manner, Castoriadis (1978) views the fundamental characteristic of imagination as its defiance of any established determinacy (p. 214). Similarly, Appadurai suggests that global imaginations have the potential to complicate the present-day, Western centered, globalized cultural hegemony with the process of globalization.

Exploring imagination is momentous in the age of globalization. Appadurai leaves the spectrum of the role of global imagination wide open. He stresses the possibility of generating imaginative spaces as either disciplinary or emancipatory in relation to the hegemonic power structure. For example, local Muslim communities are related by analogy to global terrorist groups in some spaces within the global imagination. People are exposed to media messages conveying concerns, fear, and violence against minority groups from the local and global perspectives (Appadurai, 2006). In this way, global imagination may result in escalating fear against minority groups. Appadurai (2006) also noted the possibility of the global imagination as a positive and constructive counterpart to hegemonic power. Transnational flows and connectivities could motivate people who rarely had a chance for education or exposure to different ways of living to find new directions to operate their agency and challenge local power structures. Transnational grass-roots activism on a global scale could be an alternative force against territory bounded hatred, fear, and violence against others. In this case, global imagination could be a catalyst for activities toward emancipation.

Then what would be the role of global media in relation to global imagination? Appadurai highlights the role of the media since they continuously feed the global imagination. When people commonly see deterritorialized culture, primarily in the forms of mediated images and migrants visible every day in local places, they start to imagine together as a social practice and speculate about themselves in connection to an imaginary local/national/global context. It is almost impossible to discuss the influence of media in separation from the audiences' interaction with the physical world where they belong. The concept of imagination as related to the audiences of mass media and their

sense of space has been discussed throughout media studies. Benedict Anderson (1991) suggested that the advance of printing technology in the 15th and 16th centuries in Europe and the progress of print-as-commodity (such as books, newspapers, etc.) were key factors in conceiving of nations as imagined communities. This subjective sense of belonging based on shared socio-cultural geography has been radically extended and negotiated with the advance of electronic media in the 19th and 20th centuries. For instance, experiencing interconnectivity via electronic media on a global scale, such as watching the Olympic Games live through television created an imaginary "global village" (McLuhan & Powers, 1992). While people still interact face-to-face, these advances have enabled them to posit themselves along with these audio-visual images as living in an imagined global space. In turn, this mediated reality becomes a more significant part of our daily lives because it keeps people reflecting on themselves, others, possible lives, the world, etc. and incorporates reflexively into their self-making process (Appadurai, 1996; Thompson, 2005, p. 34). Furthermore, the emotions and sensations aroused by transnational media consumption (e.g., pleasure, resistance, irony, aspiration, anticipation, etc.) produce the imagined space in which agency, a cultural capacity for a better life, is generated (Appadurai, 2013, p. 179).

Global imagination becomes an even more powerful social practice when people consume mass media collectively in their daily lives (Appadurai, 1996, p. 31). According to the Nielsen Company audience report (Nielsen Company, 2016a), U.S. adults spent more than 10 hours and 39 minutes a day consuming media in 2016. This is not just the case in the U.S. In general, global audiences are more exposed to the mass media than before (e.g., an increasing TV sets in India, about 400 million viewers of the 2010 FIFA

World Cup per match, newspapers booming in Asia, Africa, and Latin America, the popularity of social media all over the world, etc.) (Kerwin, 2010). People are exposed to media products within multifarious contexts and with varied contents. These take numerous forms. Some contents are locally produced but display local perspectives on different cultures and places. Some works are jointly produced by creators from several nations or simply from a different country. On the audience's end, individuals are now able to access immensurable audio-visual texts from multiple regions. They are freely able to link to fan groups and bloggers and belong to interpretive communities (Radway, 1984) regardless of distance and time differences, thus, activities within interpretive communities are not necessarily based in local communities. As Castells (Castells, 1997) stressed regarding the network society, people can associate with people who are interested in certain issues, culture, as well as media products. In turn, subjectivity dialectically and contextually generates global imagination which might be deeply embedded with one's media use, but often disengaged from one's physical surroundings.

Accordingly, one of the critical quests of global media research is seeking the answer to the question "how can we better imagine the global?" (Darling-Wolf, 2015, p. 2). A prerequisite for answering this question is to explore global media consumption practices and examine the global imagination. How does media consumption under the fractured media environment intersect with local and/or national conditions and elements of individual identity? The answers to these questions would be suggestive for the global future as "the key component of the new global order" (Appadurai, 1996, p. 31).

Global Culture and the Production of Locality

Locality has typically been regarded as a limited, solid concept linked to specific physical spaces, historical backgrounds, and sensory experiences of everyday lived culture (Brah, 1996, p. 192). It was largely defined by the numerous associative links we think of when a certain place comes to mind. Peculiar weather patterns, the temperament of people in a neighborhood, commonplace scenes along city streets, local cuisine, and a thousand other little details often evolve into deep personal feelings about a place like attachment, nostalgia, pride, or resistance. Our locality, our place is often regarded as inherently linked to our imagination and memories about the physical settings where our daily lives are located.

However, the deepened interconnectivity between the global and the local provides an opportunity to contemplate the concept of locality. In academic research, the local and the global are often discussed within an oppositional binary framework which parallels the dichotomy between a Western/U.S. perspective and those of other nations. From this perspective, the global itself has not been clearly delineated and is often assumed to mean the Western or American. On the other hand, the local usually connotes a traditional culture distinct from the global. In the media and cultural studies field, the idea of globalization as a process of cultural homogenization contributes to this viewpoint. This notion hypothesizes that globalization, as a Western/U.S. centered commercialized cultural flow, encroaches on the local territories of "peripheral" regions (Dorfman & Mattelart, 1975; H. I. Schiller, 1969).

The relationship between the local and the global has been challenged with the progress of globalization. For instance, the term "glocalization" is frequently employed to

refer to how the global and the local are inevitably interconnected and generate hybridized local culture in the era of globalization, such as when local people are encouraged to become acquainted with greater diversity in their local culture (Robertson, 1992). The connection between the local and the global necessitates a rethinking of the place of locality within the issues of globalization (for example, Gustafson, 2009; Savage, Bagnall, & Longhurst, 2004). Places and communities are constructed and rearranged around increased human mobility and global interconnectivity (Gupta & Ferguson, 1992, p. 8). The local thereby becomes a space where an influx of transnational flows converges, and hybridized cultures are widely observed (García Canclini, 1995; Gupta & Ferguson, 1992; Hannerz, 1996; Kraidy, 2002, 2005). The idea of "hybrid culture" became popular to stress this state of local culture.

Given this, how can locality be comprehended? Under the heading of globalization, personal experience is most frequently understood as "one world" under conditions of time and space compression. Yet, on the contrary, the dynamics of experiencing the flexibility of time and space induce the formation of diversified localities. Each locale engenders difference and disjuncture under the influence of global flows and delivers an extensive heterogeneous locality. Accordingly, locality should be fathomed noting the loosened connections between a place and the formation of multiple imagined spaces of the global. The global is able to represent its discursive entity within which multiple forms of locality are simultaneously circulated and refashioned by multiple subjectivities (Appadurai, 1996, 2001). Appadurai redefined locality as "a complex phenomenological quality, constituted by a series of links between the sense of social immediacy, the technologies of interactivity and the relativity of contexts"

(Appadurai, 1996, p. 178). Localities exist together as multiple forms within a place, in terms of "temporary negotiations between various globally circulating forms" (Appadurai, 2013, p. 69). The local and the global are able to be better understood in dialectical relation. They arise together out of complex and interrelated ongoing processes (Darling-Wolf, 2015, p. 3; K. Glynn & Cupples, 2011, p. 102).

This reconfiguration of locality implies the construction of the local in relation to the ways in which the global is constructed and made potent within local contexts and practices by local subjectivities. As a first step, scholars attempted to understand the relation between emerging local culture and place. Doreen Massey (1994) stressed social relations among the members of the community arguing that a place should be understood as a shared space in which multiple localities are formed by diverse, but interwoven settings of interaction (p. 137). Accordingly, rather than thinking of locality as bound to spatiality, the dynamics of the locality are best understood in terms of social relations (Chouinard, 1989; Massey, 1994, p. 19). Similarly, Appadurai stressed the importance of the social relation while still emphasizing the dynamics comprised by moving people and disjointed transnational flows in the local. Geographical boundaries are not as meaningful as before for cultural scholars, while cultural geographies have been arising and dispersing through the flows of capital, migration, ideology, technology, mediated imagery, what Appadurai (1996) called disjunctured — scapes. As opposed to the previous understanding of local culture as being homogenized, each individual or community distinctively constitutes and negotiates its own global imagination in particular situations in responding to the influx of disjunctive cultural flows. Thus

Appadurai called the current state of locality "primarily relational and contextual rather than scalar or spatial" in a spatially stretched way (1996, p. 178).

Space still matters, but it achieves its meanings malleably within its contextualization. The sense of belonging or the feeling of home might flourish in spatially detached places. In turn, the complexities of locality are inevitably interwoven with and created by the multiple identities of physically and socially located subjects and communities. Mike Featherstone (1993) explained that the concept of local culture itself is relational depending on the situated individual identity. Each individual sets the boundaries of belonging depending on one's positionality. An individual's sense of home, in turn, is pliable depending on the situated context and the significance of "other localities" (Featherstone, 1993, p. 176). For example, when a Korean meets a Japanese face to face in South Africa, they might share their sense of belonging in contrast to the cultural otherness surrounding them. Yet, if they meet in a city in East Asia, they might be not that interested in the common ground of their cultural proximity and similarity. Instead, they might keenly sense their cultural differences or even arouse historically embedded antagonism toward each other rooted in past colonialism.

Instead of undertaking to define or describe locality in terms of a place, the above debate suggests it is more appropriate to examine how localities are constituted at this moment of globalization (Appadurai, 1996, 2013; Hardt & Negri, 2000, pp. 44-45). The question of the autonomy of place should be expanded to ask how people form localities based upon hybridized cultural flows and interconnectivity. In order to grasp this form of locality, Appadurai (1996) proposed to examine the rearrangement of "neighborhoods"

where these redefined forms of locality are actualized as “situated communities” in both spatial and virtual spaces (p. 179).

With the digitalized communication network, people in different geographic locales are able to form their sense of belonging somewhat arbitrarily in multiple communities. These alliances and associations are often easily constructed and negotiated. In turn, multiple localities can coexist in the same place while being created and sustained based on their accessibility and interconnection.

As previously discussed, the global imagination serves a critical role in constructing locality. Appadurai stressed the role of the media in that they are the most influential resources for “complex, partly imagined lives” and the “bedrock” of the cultural ethnography (1996, p. 54). However, this role of the media is activated as a “semiotic diacritics of great power” through its interplay with other social factors encountered in everyday lives (p. 53). Particularly, Appadurai stressed that transnational media flows have prospered over the last several decades and served a vital role in imagining one’s home community across local/national/global contexts. The next section discusses the focused cultural phenomenon, the Korean Wave, in the U.S. as a representative case of bottom-up cultural globalization.

Grassroots Globalization and Exploring Globalized Cultural Sovereignty

The rise of locality has induced us to rethink the meaning of the nation-state, global metropolitan areas, and the local. Transnational exchanges connected certain nations to each other more closely through migrant populations, economic aid, trade relations, military and political alliances, and technological development. While this perspective focuses on the institutional and governmental level, Appadurai reflected on

transformation in the role of the nation state. He argued that the nation-state is one of the key players that serve specialized functions for the political and economic dimension of globalization. Yet, it does not have an edge over the others (Kenway & Fahey, 2009, p. 12). More significantly, daily use of the Internet and broadened opportunities for transnational travel led him to question the efficacy of the sovereignty of both the nation-state and official sovereignties (Appadurai, 2014, p. 487). The traditional sovereignty of the nation-state has been undermined with the advance of this new form of locality indicating a "transnational destabilization" (Appadurai, 1996, p. 178).

Meanwhile, urban spaces have become more significant places to observe globalized culture. The idea of place branding a global city is a trend in a global era, e.g., the phrase "I love NY" (Morgan, Pritchard, & Pride, 2004; Ward, 1998). Images of a city with eye-catching scenery and symbolic monuments become a venue for global imagination, often in mediated forms. In this way, the local sometimes transcends the national and embodies the global based on the intensified connectivities all over the world. Accordingly, the culture of immigrant communities is more urban or trans-urban than national (Georgiou, 2006, pp. 8-9). At the same time, urban spaces like metropolitan cities also turn into spaces where "inclusion and participation emerge, next to others of exclusion, discrimination and racism" (Georgiou, 2006, p. 120).

Drawing on these discussions, this study assumes that the process of globalization generates distinct forms of cultural, unofficial sovereignty from the grassroots rather than from official national borders. Discussion of cultural homogenization has typically been initiated from a top down perspective such as the cases of cultural imperialism and dependency theory. However, unprecedented flows in the global media market, such as

Korean Wave, were not predictable or expected from this perspective. The actual hybridized culture can be understood by grasping both the structural transition and the cultural practices of the cultural performers.

The topic that is the focus of this research, the rise of locality within Korean American community, is one example of rising transnational cultural sovereignty. Many empirical audience studies in media studies scholarship have examined the meaning of ethnic media consumption, and still there are certain roles for the ethnic media among diasporic communities (Georgiou, 2006; Gillespie, 1995; Ogan, 2001). However, the Korean Wave created different circumstances for Korean Americans in that they became more easily able to consume Korean media than ever before and witnessed the thrust of this unprecedented mediascape from their homeland, which was exclusively within their community just about two decades ago. If their prior media consumption practices were caused by the feeling of home or sense of belonging, now they sensed that globalized Korean culture was becoming appreciated by different ethnic groups within their locality. The digitalized media environment and the rise of the Korean Wave gave a momentous opportunity to examine how these new forms of locality are generated by the transnational flows and global imagination within a community. Many global media concepts such as cultural proximity, hybrid mediated culture, even cultural imperialism have been discussed in Korean Wave scholarship. But examining global imagination and refashioned locality among the transnational audiences has yet to be adequately studied.

This is especially so in the case of Korean Americans who hold U.S. citizenship and deeply engage with mediated Korean popular culture and Korean communities. For instance, while watching live streaming Korean soap operas through satellite TV, sharing

her opinions about a new K-pop video on YouTube, or talking via Skype with a relative in Korea, a Korean American wife might create different kinds of engagement and belonging, as well as a certain immediacy with her homeland based on these mediated connections. In spite of this, she would still be physically and spatially located in the U.S. In this way, understanding locality as a property of social life in a certain time and space is problematic. Yet, locality itself becomes contextualized and spatially stretched through the Korean Americans' transnational engagement with Korea, their imagined community. Her locality, in other words, would be situated in the co-existence between immediate and hybridized long-distance interaction (Massey, 1994, p. 138). This study postulated that this shift in immigrant, ethnic minority groups' engagement and belonging motivates a certain modification of their social identities within the U.S.

It is questionable if this is due to an actual weakness of the national sovereignty or just a shift in its role. Due to strengthened cultural sovereignty, people continuously negotiate the direction of their lives. The bond between their identification with their homeland, or imagined homeland, discursively redefines the meaning of the existence of the nation in one's imaginaries. As Appadurai pointed out, the public/institutional role of the nation might be weakened, but cultural sovereignty might be strengthened due to the catalytic role of digitalized media. The U.S. and South Korea should be considered and contextualized too in this case.

Contextualizing the Korean Wave in Cultural Globalization

This section discusses the focused transnational media flow, the Korean Wave, in relation to the discourses within communication and media studies. Since the early phase of international communication scholarship, critical media scholars in the West/U.S. have

paid attention to the local media industry and market situation in postcolonial nations. Noting the steep growth of Western media flows into developing nations, these scholars criticized and expressed concerns over the ideological influence of the dominant Western/American media (e.g., Guback, 1969; H. Schiller, 1991). Similarly, the notion of cultural imperialism or dependency theory has been well-received among Koreans since Korea has imported films from Japan and the U.S. since 1903 (Yi, 2006). On the other hand, the popularity of Korean media products in foreign nations has invigorated Koreans to consider a notion of globalization different from Americanization or Westernization.

South Korea's Relation to Other Parts of the World

Constant and frequent contact with East Asian countries has occurred throughout Korea's long history, as well as substantial interactions with foreign nations. More distinctively, the modernization of Korea in various sections was interwoven with its colonization process similar to many other Asian nations. It experienced the involvement of foreign powers, such as 35 years of Japanese occupation (1910-45) after the Chosun Dynasty and the U.S. military regime between 1950 and 1953. Political/economic debates over foreign involvement in the processes of modernization, particularly concerning efficiency and negative/positive influences on national development, (Mason, Kim, Perkins, Kim, & Cole, 1989; Takashi, 2012) have continued considering the fast pace of Korea's development (e.g., industrialization (1950-60s), urbanization since the 1960s, and then the pursuit of democracy in the last twenty five years. Simultaneously, it is undeniable that local culture in Korea has been under intensive influences from the occupations and foreign powers.

With the memories of the interferences, enforcements, and occupations by the world powers–China, Russia, Japan, and the U.S., nationwide emotion toward foreign cultural influences is unfavorable. During the Japanese occupation, the colonial power of Japan forced Koreans to adopt and adjust to the Japanese systems of language and customs in public institutions and schools. Koreans who experienced the Japanese colonization era recall the violent colonial power with traumatic memories. Many of these memories were repeatedly represented through cultural products as well as history education. After independence in 1945, people held the full desire to be an independent, modern nation. Cultural imperialism was publicly and frequently discussed. Koreans postulated that their local culture was genuine and rested on their homogeneity of race/ethnicity and language, while they considered the Japanese culture to be vulgar and undermining of local tradition and values (H. M. Kim, 2003). Resonating with the anti-Japanese emotion of Koreans and the desire for nationalistic attitudes, the Korean government officially banned the importation and circulation of the Japanese popular culture within its domestic market since its independence in 1945. This had continued even after the Treaty on Basic Relations between Japan and the Republic of Korea in 1965 (S. H. Lee, 2015, pp. 273-274).

In spite of the official ban on and antipathy toward Japanese culture, Koreans have had an emotional familiarity with it for several reasons. No culture can be "unadulterated" from the influences of outer cultures. Culture itself is innately and continuously hybridized (Morris, 2002). This is particularly prevalent in the sphere of popular culture where hybridized fabrications of culture with foreign engagements are easily presented. The elite of Korea had an affinity for Japanese popular culture and

enjoyed it privately. Youth groups fascinated by Japanese culture could obtain diverse Japanese media via the black market. The official ban by the Korean government was porous. Producers of the national broadcasting company plagiarized the formats of Japanese television programs which the majority of audiences were not able to spot (H. M. Kim, 2003, p. 150). Thus the Korean popular culture industry has not been invulnerable to the influences of Japanese culture. Moreover, the Korean media industry was mostly shaped by the standards of Japanese production (Chua, 2004, p. 207). JungIl Doh (1998) critically stated that "for the last three decades, the stance of the Korean society on the Japanese popular culture is to lock the front door closely but open the backdoor widely; or say no by waving a left hand yet gobbling up with a right hand" (p. 2).

Contrary to their complicated feelings for and secret relishing of Japanese culture, Koreans conceived of the socio-economic system and culture from the U.S. and Western European countries as an advanced form of modernity to catch up to. The U.S. military regime maintained in Korean between 1945 and 1948 established the most important political and economic alliance between the U.S. and Korea since the first South Korean government — President Lee's regime. Favoritism toward U.S. popular culture was grounded on the planned and practical efforts of the U.S. government since 1930s. Kim (2000) argued that the U.S. government had well-planned foreign policies to establish their cultural hegemony in the world since the 1930s. According to the documents of the U.S. government, the U.S. government systemically executed this cultural policy in Korea during its occupation. For example, it targeted mass audiences, not the elite, to familiarize them with their cultural products and controlled/regulated local radio and film

industries in Korea (K. Kim, 2000, pp. 14-29). Beginning in 1946, the U.S. military forced South Korea to import a certain number of U.S. films. This led to Hollywood film domination in Korea at the time (Jo, 1998). At the same time, both U.S. popular songs and Hollywood films enjoyed popularity in Korea. Hollywood films were consumed as an escape replacing the painful reality and political ideologies of the 1950s. Korean films of the 1950s reproduced the lifestyles and values presented in these Hollywood films (S. M. Lee, 2011).

Korea experienced a disjointed transition toward modernized culture distancing it from its traditional local culture and East Asian culture while receiving transnational media flows. Meanwhile, the notion of cultural imperialism and nationalism at both government and grass-rooted levels has been maintained as a social discourse against the encroachment of American culture. In responding to the dominance of Hollywood film over the global media market, small countries often maintained nationalistic perspectives on their local film industries employing a screen quota system, national subsidies, or a TV channel exclusively for broadcasting national cinema (for a European example, see Tunstall, 2008, pp. 255-264). Similarly, the autocratic Korean governments between the 1960s and the early 1990s strongly controlled the local media industry. The Jeon regime also used the media industry to lead people's interests into leisure activities rather than politics as shown the case "3S industries: sex, sports, and screen" in the 1980s (Uh, 1984). Meanwhile the military government employed a protectionist policy in relation to the national media industry limiting the quantity of imported TV programs and films in the domestic market. Thus, Korean people admired and enjoyed the quality of the Hollywood films and other U.S. media products. At the same time, they also believed

their influence on the Korean market should be diminished since they viewed it as a symbolic cultural power of Western dominance.

The Korean Wave as a Mediascape from East Asia

The notion of globalization has brought multifaceted changes in Korea. During the economic crisis in East Asia in the late 1990s and the IMF bail-out program in Korea in 1997, financial elites suggested minimizing government involvement in the national economic plan and pursing a free market. The Korean government employed the Western idea of market liberalization, which was shaped up as "an extensive liberalization of finance, international trade, and the labor market" (Chang, 1998, p. 1555). Specific actions were enforced to open the domestic market to foreign capital, labor, agricultural products and merchandise, education and medicine since the 1990s. This shift also incited endemic layoffs, social discontents, general fears, and even furious public resistances like self-immolation protests in 2007 (Cha, 2007).

The changes in foreign economic policies within East Asia in the early 1990s eventually curtailed a cultural firewall. Market openness between nations led to the modification and intensification of the popular culture industry within East Asia. China's transformation under Deng Xiao Ping resulted in more profit-driven cultural entertainment products, increasing importation from and cooperation with foreign nations (Stockman, 2013, pp. 169-170). With the joining of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) in 1996, Korea also needed to increase the importation of cultural products and the influx of capital from foreign nations (Alex & Kim, 2013, p. 523). Subsequently, the official ban of importation and distribution of Japanese cultural products was abolished in 1998 by the Joint Declaration of the New 21st

Century Korea-Japan Partnership (Han, 2000, pp. 14-15). The U.S. government demanded the abolition of this protection policy for the distribution of local films as a pre-condition to the Free Trade Agreement between the U.S. and Korea. The Korean screen quota system was cut down as an insignificant regulation on January 26th in 2006, despite the strong resistance of filmmakers and films stars (Korean Film Council, 2006).

Concerns and criticism over cultural diversity and cultural imperialism intensified when the notion of globalization started to force the open market policy in different industries including culture. Meanwhile, early analysis of the Korean Wave noted that the economic crisis in the late 1990s in the Asian region gave an opportunity to the Korean media industry. For instance, Taiwanese audiences were accustomed to watching transnational media content through its more than 100 channels filled with dramas from Hong Kong, China, and Singapore (H. M. Kim, 2005, p. 195). The economic crisis in Asia made nations consider importation of Korean products because of their competitive prices compared to other Asian media products. The price of Korean dramas, for instance, was one fourth that of Japanese programs and a tenth of Hong Kong television dramas in 2000 in Asian media market (S. Lee, 2003 as cited in Shim, 2006, p. 28).

Korean popular culture has phenomenally spread over East Asia and Southeast Asia since the late 1990s. Its popularity is also evident among Asian diasporic populations all over the world. Cultural products such as television programs, films, online games, publications, cartoons, commercials, character products, and pop music have spread widely beyond Korean borders. For instance, the Korean TV drama *Jewel in the Palace* (2003-2004) was exported to sixty nations with an average viewing rate of almost 50 percent of TV watchers in multiple East and Southeast Asia markets. It

generated more than $2 billion by 2006 (Shim, 2006). This cultural exportation has mainly occurred in Asia (China, Japan, the Philippines, Indonesia), but has expanded to include the Middle East, Europe (the Czech Republic, Poland, Bulgaria), and the Americas (the U.S., Brazil, Argentina, Mexico) (K. H. Kim, 2014; Marinescu, 2014). For instance, various non-Korean fan groups in the U.S., including Caucasian, Latino/Hispanic, and Asian migrants purchased 95% of Korean drama DVDs in the U.S. in 2003 (The Korean Herald, 2008).

Determining the contributing factors in the rise of the Korean Wave is complicated, though scholars discussed both global and domestic levels. Global factors for the rise of the Korean Wave include technological developments such as digital TV networks, open market policy, and the economic crisis in Asia in the late 1990s (Heo, 2002; Selinger, 2013, p. 48; Shim, 2006). In addition, the Korean government has actively promoted its cultural industry by subsidizing the cultural industry field and academia, as well as establishing a government agency for the cultural industry (Alex & Kim, 2013; M. Oh & Larson, 2011, pp. 6-8; Onish, 2005). With this boost, Korean popular culture is not only known and savored among Koreans, but also among non-Korean ethnic groups. Numerous fan-based web sites and commercial video-on-demand sites now stream daily Korean TV programs and films (S. Lee, 2015; J. S. Park, 2013). Many private fan produced sites provide voluntarily translated subtitles for these programs in different languages (Hu, 2010).

This transnational media flow is not only selling a cultural commodity. The Korean Wave opened the door to launch Korea onto the global stage. It has generated Korea’s soft power in the global market since the late 1990s and produced the

localization of the Korean Wave in other nations (Choi, 2011; Chua, 2013). In addition to boosting the sale of other Korean commodities such as foods, cosmetics, and electronics, the popularity of Korean TV drama fostered a Korean language-learning craze, tourism in Korea, consumer trends, and match-making services for Korean men in several nations (Choi, 2011; Creighton, 2009). Some foreigners have even opted for the more extreme "plastic surgery tourism," changing their faces to look like Korean celebrities (Creighton, 2009; Shim, 2006).

Noting the unprecedented development of the Korean Wave since the late 1990s, this study examines its reception among global consumers in whom global connectivity and imagination reside. Specifically, Korean TV dramas have captured transnational audiences in an extraordinary manner and become "active in the collective cultural consciousness (Ang, 1985, p. 5)" among them. In 2007, the Korean drama *Jewel in the Palace* (2003-2004) recorded extremely high viewer ratings in many nations (Hong Kong at 47%, Sri Lanka at 99%, and Iran at 90%). More recently, *My Love from the Star* (2013) enjoyed popularity, particularly in China and gave rise to the so-called "Cheonsongyi syndrome" named after the show's female lead. Chinese fans were enthusiastic about everything related to the female lead, including fashion and beauty items, lifestyles, places, and food culture. This information and related cultural discourses spread and amplified across borders in the forms of news, video clips, personal blogs, and social network sites with their own cultural and historical contexts.

Given this active engagement of Asian consumers with Korean media products, Asian-born mediated space facilitates a shared consciousness and generates global imagination among its audiences across the globe within which they reshape a pan-Asian

identity (J. Kim, 2014, p. 246). Since the 1990s, East Asian popular culture products like the Japanese drama craze and the Korean Wave have provided cultural content focused on "family-friendly values," and shared experiences of Asian modernity. Asian audiences were not able to achieve this through consumption of Western/U.S. cultural products (Chua & Iwabuchi, 2008; Iwabuchi, 2002; Iwabuchi, Muecke, & Thomas, 2004). Several reception studies on the consumption of Korean media products have been examined the influence of Korean media on their reflections about social identity factors such as gender, class, and sexuality (Chan & Xueli, 2011; Irene Yang, 2008; A. Lin & Tong, 2007, 2008). Meanwhile, national branding and postcolonial issues were raised and discussed in that the transnational Korean cultural flow intersects with the local/national/regional historical contexts such as colonialism, transnationalism, etc. (Huang, 2011; Iwabuchi, 2008; J. S. Park, 2013).

Within the U.S. cultural territories, the visibility of the Korean Wave has grown mainly among the Asian diaspora. Nevertheless, the Korean Wave launched a platform for cultural discourse and imagination at the transnational level that continuously circulates and regenerates through multiple virtual and physical spaces. Within this mediascape, people share their emotions and ideas, anxieties and aspirations, developing them into a reinterpretation of history and experience across local, national, and regional contexts. This allows them to associate with each other, form communities, and maintain alliances through both mediated and physical contexts. According to Appadurai's conceptualization, the Korean Wave catalyzes multiple virtual "neighborhoods" among its global audiences for creating virtual locality. Yet, the ways in which audience

emotions and imagined global connections create meaning and form localities in both their “situated community” and the local place need to be explored.

Given this dynamic and complexity within the region, the Korean Wave is just one prevalent mediascape in the processes of globalization. Eventually, the craze over Korean popular culture in Asian markets will wane. Some scholars argue that it will be slowly repositioned, as was Japanese drama in 1990s, as one of many diverse transnational flows in the Asian market (J. Kim, 2014). For example, the Chinese fever about Korean soap operas has increased, but the profit motive has given rise to competition from local Chinese dramas, collaborations or the employment of Korean celebrities in Chinese dramas, films, and advertisement.

Nevertheless, this shift from the rise of the Korean Wave in the Asian media market has developed newly reclaimed land in global cultural geography and given an academic space to discuss globalized media outside a Western-centered context. Some scholars question if the Korean Wave is a global shift (Cho, 2005) or a contra-flow against the global flow (Thussu, 2006). Furthermore, it is viewed as celebratory in that, finally, Asian nations were able to enjoy the prosperous local media content. On the other hand, we can critically question whether it is just a case of expansion of cultural industry based on the advance of digital technology and globalized capitalism, or simply an Asian version of Western media content in terms of its ideologies and original format.

Still, there is no doubt that this made it possible to share mediated experiences and cultural discourses in multiple Asian communities across the global village (Iwabuchi, 2010, p. 198; M. Thomas, 2004). Mediated narratives inevitably convey certain perspectives and values. These transnational circulations have impacted on

people's understandings of and emotions about their neighbor nations, and generally speaking, have provided a broader scope through which to view Asian communities among Asian audiences. Although there have been many discussions about the wax and wane, or the causes and influences of the Korean Wave, the popularity and influence of the Korean Wave has continued since the 1990s although its forms and fandoms have changed.

In light of these theoretical discussions mainly rooted in the Asian region and among Asian audiences, this research will move its focus to the role of the Korean Wave among the Korean American audiences. Although the Korean Wave was initiated and grew mainly in Asian nations, Korean Americans experienced this rise simultaneously through mediated spaces such as satellite TV and the Internet. However, the contexts and meanings of their experience of the Korean Wave are distinct from those of other global audiences. They are situated physically and temporally at a distance from their ethnic homeland and living with diverse ethnic groups from different cultural backgrounds. Korean Americans may experience the local upsurge of Korean popular culture as a lift for their ethnic subculture in the U.S. Certainly, this circumstance yields more distinct localities and global imagination among Korean Americans based on their engagements with their physical and mediated spaces. The following section will elaborate the circumstances surrounding Korean media consumption by Korean Americans in response to the surge of interest in the Korean Wave.

The Korean Americans in the U.S. and Their Use of Korean Media

Rooted in political, financial, and cultural affinity, the U.S. is the place where the majority of the Korean emigrant population lives. Seven million ethnic Koreans—about

14 percent of the current population of the South Korea, are living in foreign countries as Korean citizens or permanent residents of their adopted nations (Min & Chung, 2014, p. 3). In terms of the percentage of the homeland population, Korean transnational migrants rank first among immigrants in the U.S. and in sheer numbers, rank fourth following China, Israel, and Italy. Transnational migration from Korean to the U.S. started at the beginning of the 20th century. The history of the migration of Koreans to the U.S. goes back more than a hundred years to the sugar plantations of Hawaii in 1903. Since then, the U.S. continues to be a major destination country for Korean migrants (Bergsten & Choi, 2003, p. vii). North America ranks as the second most popular destination for Koreans at about 34% of the migrant population (about 2.5 million). The migratory population here is growing at a faster rate (about 7%) than other major places.

The socio-cultural characteristics and motivations of Korean emigrants to the U.S. have changed over the past few decades. In the 1950s after the Korean War, wives of U.S. military servicemen and their children, and orphans came to the U.S. They comprise the major immigrant population from Korea. During the 1980s, there were 25,000 international marriages between Korean women and U.S. military servicemen (Henican, 1989, p. 7). In 1965, the U.S. government abolished race-based discrimination in assigning immigration with the Immigration Act. Since the full effect of this law in 1968, the majority of immigration has been from Latin America and Asian countries contrary to previous immigrant populations from European countries. Almost simultaneously, the Korean government established a liberal emigration policy to control the domestic population. Most of the Korean immigrants in the U.S. (about 95%) also moved in the U.S. after this change (Min, 2013, pp. 9-11). Until the early 1990s, the main push factors

for emigration of Koreans to the U.S. were better educational and job opportunities and escape from political instability (pp. 12-13). According to data from the Office of Immigrant Statistics, the number of Korean immigrants increased to 35,000 per year between the mid-1980s to 1990. After this time, the number of immigrants steadily decreased with economic and political stability of Korea, down to 15.000 per year during the 90s. Yet since 2000, the number of emigrants from Korea has slowly increased for different reasons. The economic crisis in Asia in the late 90s was one reason. Since the Immigration Act of the 1990s raised the limit on professional and managerial immigrants and temporary workers (H-1B visa holders), Korean managerial and professional workers became the majority of immigrants. Further, the number of temporary residents has increased including those wanting to study, get training and internships, see their family or relatives, work temporarily, and go sightseeing. Particularly, the number of Korean international students enrolled in U.S. colleges as undergraduate and graduate students constantly increased. They ranked in the top 3 in size along with Chinese and Indian students. They became a significant resource for increasing the Korean American immigration population since they often adjusted their status from temporary to permanent workers through employment-sponsored categories after graduation (Min, 2013, pp. 30-31).

Since the late 1970s, Korean Americans have widely consumed ethnic/transnational Korean media due to their socio-cultural position in the U.S, language barrier, and their need for a sense of belonging, space and identity (J. S. Park, 2013, p. 124). Beginning with an ethnic newspaper started in Los Angeles in 1969, several ethnic/transnational Korean TV stations and numerous VHS rental shops

maintained popularity in U.S. cities until the late 1990s (S. Lee, 2015). Since the advance of the satellite TV and digitalized media, the meaning of ethnic media from the ancestral homeland has become more critical to the daily lives of diasporic people.

The focus case here, the advent of digitalized media networks and the upsurge of Korean Wave, ushered in a different phase of transnational Korean media consumption in the U.S. over the last several decades. Satellite TV from the Korean Broadcasting System started service in North America, Latin America, China, and Japan in 2001(S. Lee, 2015). Korean films and dramas are presented in commercial video services such as Netflix, Amazon, etc. Korean broadcasting companies and other piracy sites provide Korean television programs several hours after their broadcasting in Korea. K-pop music and official music videos are primarily released through YouTube, Spotify, and other online music services. Global audiences are able to enjoy them simultaneously with audiences in Korea.

In addition to online options, popular cultural events for Korean Americans and foreign fans are hosted in the U.S. because of the growing influence of Korean media content. Popular Korean films are released in theaters in major cities only a couple of weeks after their release in Korea, and the format of Korean TV programs such as *Grandpa(s) over Flowers*' has been sold to NBC. CJ Group, a subsidiary of the Korean conglomerate, Samsung, has hosted the Korean Wave festival, KCON (an annual Korean Wave convention) in Los Angeles and New York since 2012. It combines a K-pop concert with the sales of various Korean commodities mainly appealing to U.S. citizens. In fact, the Korean government and media companies have consciously chosen to promote the visibility of Korean popular culture in the cultural terrain of the U.S. Korean

research institutes and government agencies continuously explore opportunities to get into the U.S. media market. These include monitoring Korean content services and analyzing the ethnicity of Korean Wave fan groups in the U.S. This is because of the U.S.'s symbolic status as a powerful player in global media culture, as well as its financial status as a huge market for Korean media products (J. S. Park, 2013, pp. 123-124).

Prior research on ethnic minority audiences and their transnational/ethnic media consumption have primarily explored media practice, meaning making and/or negotiation of identities (Durham, 2004; Jacob, 2013; Ogan, 2001; Shi, 2008; Tsagarousianou, 2001). In a similar vein, studies of Korean American audiences have generally focused on the meaning of Korean media consumption and the role of Korean media in identity construction (C. Lee, 2004; M. Lee & Cho, 1990; Moon & Park, 2007; D. Park, 1990). Recently, several studies have considered the active stream and circulation of transnational Korean media and its influence on Korean Americans from the intra-ethnic perspective of an immigrant group (D. C. Oh, 2013, 2015; J. S. Park, 2004, 2013).

Different from these prior approaches, the current study pays attention to the shift aroused by the conditions of media globalization, noting the growing migrant population and their usage of digitalized media. Recent studies of transnational migrant groups addressed contemporary migrants' tendency to maintain various links to their homelands. Thus, their social lives often emerge transnationally (Faist, 2000a, 2000b; Levitt & Jaworsky, 2007). Accordingly, the nature of engagement and belonging for the transnational migrant group has become more dynamic and complicated than in the past. For example, Cohen (2008) stressed that the identity of transnational migrants can be

more actively negotiated between ethnic, national, and transnational identities. The characteristics of the diasporic community are also constantly reinvented and reconstructed as an imagined community in relation to their new settlement, their homeland, and groups sharing their ethnicity living in other places.

Advanced digitalized communication and developments in transportation are responsible in no small part for this change. With the advance of digitalized media, audiences can more easily access transnational media content. Ethnic minorities often strategically consume transnational media as a way of connecting to their place of ethnic origin while negotiating their in-between position in their host society (W. Y. Lin et al., 2010; Ogan, 2001; Shi, 2008). Several studies of the Korean migratory population reported similar consequences. For instance, international students from Korea participate in the communicative space of their ancestral homeland more actively than people who actually reside in Korea (J. S. Park, 2004). In their "located-in-between" state, such persons may even develop a banal form of nationalism through Korean media consumption (Y. Kim, 2011). Their transnational lives in a global era are comprised of continuous (physical and virtual) border-crossing experiences. In turn, the boundaries between places or nations become porous (Appadurai, 1996; Gupta & Ferguson, 1992; Ong, 1999).

This situation is exacerbated if the transnational media from the homeland becomes more prominent, as has been the case with the Korean Wave. Upon the popularity of Korean media content in global market, consuming Korean media content evoked a certain conversation similar to the "TV talk − the embedding of TV experiences in conversational forms and flows" (Gillespie, 1995, p. 23) in Korean Americans' places

and their virtual neighborhoods on the net. Furthermore, they now have the chance to talk about Korean culture with their neighbors, co-workers, or friends who live in their physical neighborhoods and might also witness or enjoy the Korean Wave. Korean Americans easily encounter and associate with both Korean and non-Korean fans in mediated spaces from all over the world, including virtual communities in mediated contexts like YouTube replies, news reports from Korea about the Korean Wave, and visual images of glamorous K-pop concerts from the Korean news media.

With this background, this research aims at achieving a better understanding of the actual impact of the Korean Wave on contemporary local culture. The dissertation's research subject, Korean Americans who are fascinated by Korean popular culture for the first time, or who ritually relax by consuming Korean media products, occupies an intriguing position in global imagination. This study postulates that the escalation of the Korean Wave within the U.S. gave rise to multiple and complicated interconnectivities that influence how Korean Americans negotiate their social identities as ethnic minorities. By embracing this media culture, they can construct flexible bonding with both mediated and physical places across local/national/trans-national boundaries. Some formerly conceived of Korean media products and culture as shoddy compared to U.S. media products, even if they had constantly enjoyed Korean media content before. They are observing that local mainstream media in the U.S. and global audiences in many different regions embrace the transnational cultural flows from their ancestral homeland, which had rarely previously spread beyond their own ethnic group before. Examining their global imagination will shed light on whether — and, if so, how — grassroots

global culture substantially reshapes their daily lives and further challenges as experienced by Korean Americans.

Research Questions

This research investigates the role played by the emerging mediascape of the Korean Wave within the Korean American community in shaping the cultural dimensions of globalization. As a theoretical foundation, this study employs Appadurai's conceptualization of the "global imagination" and "the production of locality" as key elements of the current conditions of cultural globalization. This study explores how these activities are performed within and across ethnic groups. Most broadly, it considers the ways in which the rise of the Korean Wave created new contexts for social relationships, thus shaping Korean Americans' global imagination and influencing the generation of locality.

According to Appadurai, the history and past experiences of the local condition are the blueprint for the future. Given the contrast between their memories of their homeland as a developing Asian nation and their new settlement in the U.S., which holds cultural hegemony over the globalized world, first generation Korean immigrants might work to assimilate into the dominant community rather than retain their Korean identity (Min & Chung, 2014, p. 13). Yet, as Glynn and Kim (2014) argued, with widespread East Asian popular culture as a global context, "Asians are now more aware of belonging to Asia and being Asian" (p. 28). Thus, emotions and sensations surrounding their locatedness-in-between are intricately interwoven with the local values and beliefs that Korean Americans amalgamate in shaping their own positionality in their current locations. Appadurai further notes that the imagination operating within and through

transnational media flows provides imaginative space for generating emotions and sensations, which eventually shapes our agency and produces a newly configured subjectivity. In particular, he stresses aspiration as the significant cultural capacity and counterpart to global imagination because it underpins a future-oriented logic of development (Appadurai, 2013, p. 179). With this understanding, this study addresses how the rise of the Korean Wave reshaped Korean Americans' imagination of the United States, Asia, and Korea, and these countries' positions on the global stage. It also considers how emotional elements such as pleasure, irony, anxiety, or aspiration resulting from individuals' global imagination influence Korean Americans' reflexive self-making process.

RQ1) How has the rise of the Korean Wave shaped individuals' global imagination?

RQ1a: How has the rise of the Korean Wave influenced Korean Americans' perception of Korea's place in the world?

RQ1b: How has the rise of the Korean Wave influenced Korean Americans' perception of other parts of Asia in the world?

RQ1c: How has the rise of the Korean Wave influenced Korean Americans' perception of the U.S.'s place in the world?

RQ2) How might Korean Americans' perception of their imagined national/regional/ transnational place intersect with other identity factors?

RQ2a: How might this perception influence Korean Americans' gender roles?

RQ2b: How might this perception influence Korean Americans' personal grooming, fashion style, etc.?

RQ2c: How might this perception influence Korean Americans' future plans?

Prior studies of the transnational popularity of the Korean Wave have found (Creighton, 2009; Heo, 2002; Marinescu, 2014; Shim, 2006) that consuming Korean media products creates an extended affinity for Korea among Korean Americans. However, the precise ways in which Korean media products motivate Koreans living in foreign territories to associate and identify with Korea in the process of forming their transnational lives has not been discussed adequately. Literature on the Korean Wave and the consumption of transnational Korean media by Korean Americans acknowledges that the media environment in the U.S. has experienced an intensified influence of Korean popular culture. Korean Americans are consuming more transnational Korean media contents than before (S. Lee, 2015; D. C. Oh, 2015). This study posits that the popularity of Korean media culture and its increasingly easy access through digital communication and social media has enlarged the cultural space in which diverse ethnic groups are easily involved. Thus, it explores how the rise of the Korean Wave shaped individuals' sense of engagement and belonging in different contexts and influenced the production of locality in Philadelphia.

RQ3) How has the rise of the Korean Wave in the U.S. shaped their engagement and belonging with physical and mediated contexts and their socio-cultural identities?

RQ3a: How are social identities shaped by individual engagement with physical and mediated contexts in Korean Americans' daily lives within Korean American communities?

RQ3b: How are social identities shaped by individual engagement with physical and mediated contexts in Korean Americans' daily lives within non-Korean American communities?

RQ3c: How has the rise of the Korean Wave shaped Korean Americans' sense of engagement and belonging in their local, national, and transnational contexts?

This project assumed that locality under the conditions of globalization is not objectively understandable anymore (Massey, 1994). As one approach to comprehending locality, this project examined locality in connection with the rise of transnational media culture and communicative spaces generated by an ethnic minority group. Global imagination, rooted in the consumption of transnational media, and the production of locality are concurrently interrelated without order. Consuming transnational Korean media and participating in its fandom would be a new form of locality in the U.S. At the same time, these activities are generating global imagination and vice versa. With this understanding, research question 3 particularly aimed at illustrating how the Korean Americans' transnational interconnectivities and the popularity of transnational media flow create local interactions and relations in the contemporary time-place of Philadelphia. The next chapter explicated the research methods used to answer the research question above and illustrated the actual sites and subjects of this research project as well as the data collecting process. My own reflexivity as a qualitative researcher was discussed as well.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

Ethnographic Research of Global Media Culture

This project is a case study of global media research employing the concept of globalization as an analytical framework to understand dynamics between the global and the local, focusing on the role of the globalized media culture. Distinguishing itself from the approach of past international media studies concerned with Western centered homogenization, current global media studies stresses the multiplicity of processes in globalization. The shift has opened the door to interdisciplinary approaches, using both the methods and theories of political economy and cultural studies (Miller & Kraidy, 2016, p. 31). Against a backdrop of a parallel structural shift in the global media economy, this study traces the role of transnational South Korean media flows through both the actualization of the influence of the media and the formation of collective subjectivity within a Korean American community.

Since the primary goal of this research is an exploration of a Korean American community's media culture and their perceptions of globalized media, a qualitative method with an ethnographical approach was employed aiming at a deepened comprehension of the research subject. The purpose of qualitative research is discovering, describing, and interpreting the "situated form, content, and experience of social interaction" (Lindlof & Taylor, 2002, p. 18). Using ethnographic fieldwork is especially valuable for this study in attaining a comprehensive understanding of cultural space where a transnational cultural force, the Korean Wave, has intersected with the local culture. In order to achieve a holistic view of this kind of social phenomenon, Geertz explained that the researchers should go to a specific cultural space and "directly

look at what the practitioners of it do" (Geertz, 1973, p. 5). For field work, ethnography's suggested research methods include participant observations, observations and conversational interviews in natural settings, and field notes in order to generate thick descriptions to record the social context and the daily activities (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2011, p. 193). Through these multiple ways of collecting data, ethnographic researchers have uncovered and contextualized the meaning of daily practices, and how and why people fulfill their basic necessities and make sense of their daily lives (Alasuutari, 1995, p. 27).

The conditions of globalization present challenges for the traditional approach to ethnographic research. Appadurai (1996) said that examining globalized culture is the "unraveling of a conundrum" because of the perplexing nature of locality in a globalized and deterritorialized world (p. 52). Mass migration and hybridized culture are burgeoning in every place. It is difficult to describe any local place simply as a solid physical place within which to observe culture. The traditional ethnographic approach assuming a close bond between a place and locality did not fit well to this circumstance. Cultural scholars have reconsidered the nature of the ethnographic approach in order to grasp heterogenous arrays of globalized culture at a local level (Marcus, 1998, p. 108).

Appadurai's new approach, 'cosmopolitan' ethnography, pays attention to different ways of constructing locality (Appadurai, 1996, pp. 51-53). He stresses that we should not understand culture as a solid substance. Instead, in the global era, culture is "the dimension of difference." We are experiencing the shift of culture becoming "the process of naturalizing a subset of differences" (Appadurai, 1996, p. 15). The subjects of this research, Korean Americans and their ethnic culture, are part of the cultural

difference in the U.S. society. As a process of globalization, the embrace of a mediascape from their ancestral homeland rendered more complicated the culture of their local place. The Korean Wave is alive beyond their ethnic community and has become localized in their living spaces. In the global era, it is inevitable for anyone to experience a wider spectrum of differences in terms of their social identity, possessed culture, or engagement with different communities. Thus, this research aims at illustrating how these differences brought by transnational media culture became a part of local culture in Philadelphia.

At its heart, ethnographic research possesses strong appealing features such as thick description and contextualization, which can be useful in resolving the conundrum of local culture under globalization at the grassroots level. García Canclini (2014) encourage the use of ethnography by stating that the researcher should make an effort to produce knowledge on globalization through "a collection of narratives" from cultural performers that might be discursive but has explanatory power at the current stage of globalization (p. 23). In a similar vein, global media scholars Murphy and Kraidy (2003) have suggested a dialectic strategy to illuminate the process of globalization. It seems more appropriate to move the purpose of ethnographic research to illuminating how large-scale forces operate in multiple locales (Ortner, 1995, p. 259). Similar to the notion of multi-sited fieldwork (Marcus, 1995; 1998, p. 3), Murphy and Kraidy also recommend going to multiple locales to draw out communal impact while striving to build a theoretical framework of globalized media culture. Echoing these discussions, this research moved its lens to a blind spot in the globalized media culture where a non-Western media flow operated to structure everyday lives in a Western cultural space.

This study is in line with a host of audience ethnographies which have strived to contextualize the circulation of media within a specific community (for example, Y. Kim, 2009; Mankekar, 1999; Radway, 1984). Similarly, I participated in cultural activities of the Korean American community in Philadelphia to observe the various spectrums of their media culture. Ethnographic media studies have been built up with continuous discussions on what the actual media influences on the audience group might be. Several subcategories of audience studies, such as media reception ethnographies, media use, and fan studies have often adopted ethnographic methods (Murphy, 2011, p. 385). In a similar vein, the current study examines the reception of the Korean American community, in order to reveal the "meaning making" of audiences based on their media practices and local culture.

This study particularly appreciated the usefulness of the ethnographic approach to immerse in and investigate a minority group. The methods of constructing identities among minority groups occupy significant positions in audience studies. Elements of their identities such as gender, class, race and ethnicity reflect and/or resist the dynamics of cultural power and actively construct identities. The ethnographic approach has efficiently illuminated whether and how certain people in a group constantly negotiate their positionality and identities while making sense of their lives under the influences of media consumption. For instance, Gillespie's (1995) research demonstrated how a researcher entered into a community to investigate the ways that second generation teenagers of Bangladeshi migrants in the U.K. enjoyed their transnational ethnic media and differentiated their identity from the generation of their parents. Ethnographic research methods are especially useful considering the conditions of the media

environment today. Individual viewers are surrounded by a multitude of media contents that coexist at their fingertips through multi-platforms. For my informants, according to their age, gender, and/or class as well as peer group, their favorite media contents might be copious. Hence, analysis of my informants' media consumption cannot be reduced to analyzing the binary relationship between audiences and texts. Rather, I attended events and places involved with or occupied by the spreading Korean culture and observed their interactions with people and practices. By doing this, I attempted to extend the space of popular culture to be conceptualized among my informants including how my informants individually and collectively organized their time and space through their daily lives and habits.

While concentrating on the media culture of an ethnic minority group, this research purposefully drew a broad boundary to define who is a Korean American in order to embrace the varied dynamics created by the process of globalization within the Korean American community. This research strived to shed light on different facets of identities, comprised of various genders, ages, generations, and classes. The ethnographic approach has been useful in other cases for its in-depth approach to elucidating the similarities and differences among the research subjects. Upon the advance of satellite TV, Ogan (2001) immersed herself in a Turkish immigrant community. Her research illuminated differences between generations and classes in their consumption of media products from Turkey, Turkish ethnic media, and/or the mainstream Dutch media. Similarly, the researcher of the current study met and interacted with diverse members of the community in different sites to make sense of their meaning making grounds.

The digitalized media network also necessitated that other researchers rethink the methods of prior media ethnography. Participant observation of the site of the media consumption was employed to examine audiences' media practices and brought insights about the dynamics between family members (for example, Lull, 1988; Lull, 1990). Abu-Lughod (1997) noted the ubiquitous presence of televisions and their extensive significances in the lives and imaginings of people and urged the production of more ethnographic case studies (pp. 110-111). Due to the advance of the digitalized media environment, the physical places where people are located are less relevant to meanings created from their media practices. As a result, researchers have a more complicated responsibility to trace these nodes of meanings in the media web as best as possible.

In order to cope with this transition, this study has employed multiple research methods drawing on ethnographic techniques. The data for this research was obtained mainly from two different contexts. To obtain the primary data, the researcher engaged with the local Korean American community in the Philadelphia metropolitan area and recruited participants for in-depth interviews to collect multiple narratives in their own language. An effort was made to generate the data in natural settings with all data collecting methods including participatory observations, continuing conversations through web-based messenger programs, and participation in cultural and community events. The primary data were obtained through semi-structured one-on-one or group interviews in places convenient to informants. In addition, diverse types of raw materials such as ordinary talks, attitudes, activities, any audio-visual data generated by participants were included as secondary data and analyzed. The researcher made an effort to grasp their meaning making process through interactions with the participants in

multiple natural settings. She also generated field notes, digitalized data such as text messages, and audio-visual images as empirical data.

Contextualization of Korean Immigrants' Lives in Metropolitan Philadelphia

Diversification of Korean Americans in Philadelphia

In our global era, a metropolitan city is a significant cultural space at a global era where diverse communities emanate, and hybridized culture thrives. In the media, cities like New York, Paris, London, and Tokyo—so-called global cities—are often portrayed as fancy cosmopolitan places where diverse groups are embraced and mingle with each other against the backdrop of modern skyscrapers and traditional architectures. Indeed, metropolitan areas are spaces where an increasing influx of immigrant populations resides. For example, the population in the metropolitan area of the northeast region is about 97% concentrated in a few central counties. The concentration tendency of metropolitan cities is magnified by international migration (Mackun, 2009, p. 12).

One of the five biggest cities in the U.S., the site of this study, Philadelphia is an ideal place to observe the dynamics of transnational cultural flows, one of the five biggest cities in the U.S. As an historic city, Philadelphia offers multiple sites to enjoy ethnic foods such as the Reading Terminal Market, the Italian market, Chinatown, and the Vietnamese district in South Philadelphia. At the same time, Philadelphia is a city where multi ethnic groups continuously move in. The population of the city is comprised of diverse races including Black (44. 2%), Non-Hispanic White (32.4%), Hispanic and Latino (13. 3%), and Asian (6.9%). according to the 2013 U.S. Census. In recent years, Philadelphia became the largest and fastest growing foreign-born immigrant population among its peer metropolises. The immigrant population of Philadelphia and its suburbs is

about 500,000, comprising 9% of the total population. Koreans have ranked among its top ten immigrant groups since the 1980s (Singer, Vitiello, Katz, & Park, 2008). Although the U.S. is not free from transnational cultural influences as a land of immigrants, it has become more common to encounter sites where the Asian, African, or Latin cultural forms such as fashion and foods are juxtaposed with the local U.S. culture. The rapid advance and circulation of transnational culture has increased the prevalence, especially in ethnic districts such as Chinatown, of opportunities to consume and spread multiple cultural forms.

Although Korean Americans have not constructed as much of a marked town within the city — certainly when compared to Chinatown located near downtown Philadelphia — about thirty thousand Korean immigrants have settled in several pockets around the city, including North Philadelphia near North 5th Avenue, Olney and Cheltenham, West Philadelphia, Upper Darby, and Cherry Hill/Marlton. The northeast Philadelphia area including Olney, Kensington, and Port Richmond, has been occupied by multiple ethnic groups including whites, African Americans, Puerto Ricans, Polish émigrés, as well as Koreans. Among these groups, Koreans and Polish émigré were relative newcomers after the 1965 Immigration and Naturalization Act (Goode & Schneider, 1994, pp. 9-10). The number of Koreans, born-in Korea and moving to the Philadelphia metropolitan area has been increased constantly. By the 1970s, Koreans were one of the top ten new immigrant groups. In the 80s, first generation Korean Americans were the seventh-largest national origin group among foreign born people. In the 90s, they became fourth; and by 2000, they were the second largest group among foreign born people in Philadelphia (Goode, 2017). One of the reasons for this increase is

the family-centered values in Korea. Grandparents often moved to the U.S. to care for grandchildren. In many cases, three generations live together. The elders eventually teach Korean to the second generation of the Korean Americans and mediate Korean cultural customs.

The first generation of Korean immigrants chose Northeast Philadelphia for certain reasons. Since the 1965 immigration law was enacted, more Korean immigrants arrived in to Philadelphia. Financially, Korean immigrants could only bring a limited amount of money with them—one hundred dollars due to the government policy banning the drain of national wealth between 1965 and the mid-1980s. First generation Korean emigrants were also encouraged to send their money back to family in Korea as support for the national development (Yoo, 2005). Thus, they had to settle in the Broad Street area near Olney and Fifth Avenue, one of the poor neighborhoods in the city of Philadelphia. Compared to other ethnic groups already settled in the area, Korean immigrants were highly educated and skilled. They quickly started private businesses such as small retail and wholesale stores in this district in the 70s (Goode & Schneider, 1994, pp. 9-10). They also took seriously the living environment particularly for their children's education. One of my informants who grew up in this area in the 70s said that North Philadelphia was favored among Korean Americans for the excellent school district with the Jewish community nearby, in Jenkintown and Elkins Park. Since then, Korean ethnic organizations such as churches, social service groups, cultural organizations, and alumni associations have also been located around Northeast Philadelphia.

Throughout Korean immigration history, the characteristics of Korean immigrants in Philadelphia have become diversified. The socio-economic conditions of their homeland and the dynamics between Korea and the U.S. are the primary influences on immigrant lives. The economic renaissance of Korea up until the late 80s initiated the homecoming among Korean Americans, or at least caused them to consider returning to Korea. However, the IMF crisis in 1997 boosted immigration in Korea again, and Korean Americans gave up their homecoming migration (Goode, 2017). After the mid-1980s, Korean immigrants could bring unlimited capital with them. Thus, they started upscale businesses and spread to the suburban areas for residence. Meanwhile, the Northeast Philadelphia area was declining due to suburbanization of the city (Goode, 2017).

Higher education and medical/health care institutions in Philadelphia have yielded a continuous Korean migrant population. Higher education has been considered a key element of upward mobility in Korean society, especially obtaining degrees from the U.S. Nationally, U.S. colleges and universities hold about one million international students from foreign nations. International students from Korea rank as 3rd in numbers after China and India (Institute of International Education [IIE], 2015b). Even the Korean term "Girugi (goose)" father was used to describe a father who sees his family only during the break (Onishi, June 8, 2008). A father lives alone in Korea to earn money for the education fees and living costs of his wife and children in foreign countries, mainly in the U.S. It became common in middle-class as well as upper class culture to consider their children's education in foreign nations as a popular option. Celebrities who are successful in their careers send their children to the prominent schools like the Ivy League in the U.S. Considering Pennsylvania is the one of the top six states hosting international

students, where 46,000 international students are enrolled in a college or university (Institute of International Education [IIE], 2015a), it is not surprising that many international students and their families live around Philadelphia.

Medical/health care institutions in Philadelphia also provided a labor market for Korean professionals. Just within the city of Philadelphia, twenty-six hospitals are listed (City of Philadelphia, n.d.). Many nursing homes and hospitals in satellite cities demand professionals even from overseas nations. The immigration of Korean nurses has a long history. They served as an important source of foreign remittance, especially during the 60s and 70s. In the case of the U.S., the government recruited nurses from overseas and Korean nurses were welcomed as a professional labor force along with nurses from the Philippines, India, Canada, etc. since the early 2000s (Nichols, B. L., Gessert, C. E., & Davis, C. R., 2007). Korean American nurses have constructed a community around the Philadelphia metropolitan area based on the secure job market and higher salaries compared to the working conditions in Korea.

Korean American Neighborhoods in Philadelphia

Korean ethnic stores with signs in Korean line along Fifth Avenue toward CHeltenham, where the H Mart shopping mall (including a bank, grocery marts, food courts, bakeries, restaurants, hair shops, academic institutes, pharmacies, auto shops, spa, karaoke, etc.) is located. Several Korean pubs and restaurants also run their businesses in this area serving local Korean dishes, such as the Korean liquor Soju, BBQ with karaoke, fried chicken, as well as street foods like Korean style spicy ramen & rice cake (라볶이) and seaweeds dumpling (김말이 튀김).

Figure 1. Korean ethnic stores on 5th avenue in North Philadelphia.
July 30, 2017.

Newcomers may be disappointed at first to see the sites of the Korean American community in contrast to their expectation of the modern U.S. society. Aged, shutter-closed, or even abandoned buildings in the North Philly district are hardly found in the space of contemporary Seoul. The signs in Korean or in a Chinese character, such as Dduck (떡, implies the store is a mill for rice cakes), Yak (藥, Chinese character of the medicine, means pharmacy), and a jewelry shop remind one of the scenery of the 70s or 80s in Korea. The early settlers designed the signs in Korean like the stores in Los Angeles' Koreatown (Goode, 2017). Although some fashion items like clothes, shoes, hair accessories, and cosmetics are not quite as trendy as shown in contemporary Korean dramas, they were still easily found in the stores in the H Mart building. Meanwhile, the growing urban population in North Philadelphia brings with it safety issues. Even during the day time, a Korean hair shop at Castor Avenue ran the business locking the front door. The owner of a Korean bar watched at the door to make sure customers got safely into their cars on Chew Avenue, next to Fifth Avenue. Under this circumstance, most

Korean Americans lived in the suburban areas while continuing their ethnic businesses in North Philadelphia.

Figure 2. Jason's Cozy Day, a Korean pub near 5th Avenue in North Philadelphia. Image from Instant Google Street View, 2018.

Although the development of the business district in the Korean American community seemed late in coming compared to contemporary Korea and remained time locked somewhere in Korea's past, Korean Americans now consume Korean media with only a lapse of a couple of hours or even simultaneously with local Koreans in their ancestral homeland. The advent of satellite TV and the digitalized media environment added unprecedented interconnectivities between these spaces and their ancestral homeland. Korean news and dramas from major broadcasting channels are shown in restaurants, cafés, and food courts, and deliver issues to Korean Americans with a Korean perspective. Korean Pubs and cafés in North Philadelphia, Chinatown, or University City

always have screens that show the glamour of contemporary K-pop groups. The Internet is a major site where Korean Americans access and associate with their mediated ethnic community. They can freely access the websites spreading Korean media contents as well as several local websites for Korean Americans like The Korean American Association of Greater Philadelphia website, *PhilaKorean* for information sharing, and a U.S. national online community for female Korean migrants, *MissyUSA*. Through these virtual spaces, images of events of Korean American communities, hip places or exotic dishes from Korean restaurants in Korean town, fan activities of K-pop, and other Korean cultural contents are spread and make connections across locales.

Sampling

Within this geographical and technological setting, this study broadly defined Korean Americans as individuals who are ethnically Korean and have lived in the U.S. more than five years. Considering the flexible relationships between audiences and their consumption of media contents in the digitalized media environment and the hugely increased volume of mediated text to which they are exposed on a daily basis, this research did not specify a certain media texts or a medium itself in recruiting the research subjects. Instead, at the time of the interviews, informants were selected if they enjoy Korean media products at least three times per week, and participated in activities of the Korean ethnic community.

Besides the research subjects' media consumption and their daily media practices, this research aimed to explore the ways in which different generations, age groups, and genders of Korean Americans related to Korean media and the Korean Wave. Generation is a critical variable here since persons of various ages and experiences interpret and

constitute their identities differently and participate in their ethnic groups in different ways. In general, the following terms are used to denote the timeframe of Korean Americans' immigration: first generation (individuals who immigrated as adults), 1.5 generation (those who immigrated to the U.S. as children and adolescents with parents) and second-generation (the U.S. born children of the first generation immigrants). For instance, while first generation parents continually struggle with belonging, psychological distress, discrimination, parenting, etc., their children, one and half or second generation immigrants, who have adjusted to their surroundings, act as language and cultural brokers (Yoo & Kim, 2014, p. 6). Age is also a significant factor in this study. Popular culture is often enjoyed and circulated through one's peer group. Especially with the spreading and popularity of Korean culture, the youth, mainly one and half, second generation Korean immigrants, or international students, more actively engage in spreading and enjoying Korean popular culture (D. C. Oh, 2013, 2015; J. S. Park, 2004). Finally, gender is also a central component of this study since it is intricately intertwined with the consumption of a certain cultural products as well as the context of consumption. Media products are often designed for targeted consumers (e.g., developing genre in dramas) and social spaces are often distinguished by gender on the local level. I could not firmly identify the social classes of my informants, especially for the youth group. Most informants of the senior first generation either own private businesses or work in manual labor occupations or service jobs due to the language barrier. They were mostly educated in Korea. Other informants were all at least college-educated, some with advanced degrees.

My project utilized both online and offline sites for recruiting informants. Exploring the Korean American community in the Philadelphia area through the Internet was the first step in the sampling process. This made it possible to approach and enter different local communities. While collecting information on local activities in the Korean American communities, I emailed leaders of community groups or just attended local events. I also considered contacting a couple of large Korean churches in the early stage of fieldwork since the role of the Korean church as a center of Korean community was renowned in Korean immigrant society. However, exploring the Internet helped me to conveniently locate several communities in Philadelphia without gate-keeping Korean churches. I realized that different communities had emerged and continued in the local area such as Korean school alumni groups, Korean birthplace based groups, Korean student organizations, and Korean American youth groups. My informants were comprised of different Korean American groups including the Temple University Korean Students Association, the Korean American Association of Philadelphia, the Society of Young Korean Americans (SYKA), the University of Pennsylvania Korean American student association, and multicultural/Korean churches. I also employed a snowball sampling technique which is useful to gain access to other migrants who are connected mainly by their own organic networks (Lindlof & Taylor, 2002, p. 124). Although I did not start recruiting in the Korean church, I ascertained its role as a concrete base for the Korean American community. With few exceptions, most of my informants attended a Korean or a multicultural church and they met their close friends within the church community. Thus, several informants who participated in interviews together, in fact, attended the same church. They also referred to how other Korean Americans who grew

up together consumed Korean media in their church. Therefore, although I did not initiate recruiting for this project at the Korean church community, I sensed that my informants were part of the Korea American church community.

For ethnographic research, it is critical to enter a specific community and discover a key informant/gatekeeper who mediates between the researcher and the local community. Thus, media audience researchers who have entered communities often described in detail the process of entering their focused community and finding the key informant (e.g., Murphy, 1999; Radway, 1984). In a similar vein, I contacted the leaders of the Korean American communities online and joined the online communities they created in the early phase of my data collection process. During this process, my ethnic identity as a Korean American and my student status helped me to enter the Korean American community and located myself within the Korean American community. Besides their enjoyment of and pride in Korean popular culture, they were interested in and welcomed me as a new comer to their community. Often these leaders voluntarily sent me invitations via text messages or group mailings to other meetings and sometimes introduced other informants or significant members of their community. Data collection from the interview of twenty-nine research subjects was conducted over approximately a ten-month period, starting in July 2016 to the April 2017. The interviewing continued until there was no new information found; thus I sensed that I had reached a saturation point.

Table 1. Informants' demographic information and Korean media use.

	Generation	Name /Occupation	Gender	Age	Years in U.S.	K media consumption per week	Favorite media/genre
1	2nd	Cindy Young KA	F	19	19	14-15	Watching dramas, comedy shows, music, Internet browsing for KA's community E.g. Soompi, Koreaboo
2	2nd	Rachel Young KA	F	21	21	14-15	TV dramas & shows/ K-pop/K-pop concerts/ Korean Internet portal sites
3	2nd	Amelia Young KA	F	21	21	5-6	Binge watching TV dramas, fan club member through website, Internet browsing for KAs. E.g. Soompi, Viki
4	2nd	Hannah Young KA	F	20	20	10-12	K-pop/BTS fan/ Big Bang and Exo concerts/Politics and media industries in Korea
5	2nd	Mila Young KA	F	20s	20	10-12	K pop, TV dramas & shows
6	2nd	Emma Professional	F	30s	30	Only with parents at home	TV dramas
7	2nd	Helen Professional	F	30s	35	10	TV dramas
8	1.5st	Siwon Professional	F	30s	18	12	K-pop/TV dramas & shows
9	2nd	Emily Professional	F	30s	about 38	When she has time	TV dramas
10	2nd	Jenna Professional	F	40s	45	7	Internet/TV dramas/radio/K pop/Instagram
11	2nd	Andy Young KA	M	21	21	10-12	TV dramas/K-pop
12	3rd	Alex Young KA	M	19	19	10-12	TV dramas/ K-pop
13	1.5	Joon Young KA	M	20	10	14-15	TV shows (One night two days with father/ K-pop songs while working
14	2nd	Joseph Professional	M	30s	36	35	Internet news/ Korean cable channel
15	2nd	John Professional	M	30s	37	When it is needed	films
16	1st	JiHye International student	F	20s	About 7	14-15	Internet/Facebook/Youtube (Korean clips) /TV shows
17	1st	MinSeo Professional	F	30s	13	14	Internet/TV shows, dramas
18	1st	HyunJi Professional	F	30s	20	10	Internet news, webtoon/cable channels
19	1st	HyunJung Professional	F	30s	12	7	Internet/Podcast/TV dramas
20	1st	Heena Professional	F	30s	9	12	TV discussion, sports, dramas/portal sites
21	1st	YounHee Professional	F	40s	11	7	Internet/Podcast/TV dramas
22	1st	Mina Professional	F	40s	15	14	Internet/K pop/TV dramas and shows
23	1st	SeongJin International student	M	20s	About 5	7-8	Webtoon / Youtube
24	1st	Hyuk International student	M	32	8	8-10	TV shows, Internet portal site, films
25	1st	SuJin Senior	F	60s	20	10	Internet/TV shows/books
26	1st	Yoonkyung Senior	F	60s	20	Over 50 hours (TV)	Various TV programs including news, educational program

Table 1 (continued).

27	2nd	Sean Senior	M	50s	Over 50	Only films	Korean films/ His wife watches TV dramas
28	1.5	Jeongwon Senior	M	50	35	10	Internet/TV shows
29	1st	Myungsoo Senior	M	70s	50	7-8	Watching historical dramas/news through Internet

*American style pseudonyms are used for the informants who were born in the U.S.
** 1st generation means a person who was born and raised in Korea and then moved to the U.S. 1.5 means one who migrated to the U.S. as a teenager because their parents moved to the U.S. 2nd generation means a person who was born and raised in the U.S.

Data collection

This study collected data from multiple sources of information as the traditional qualitative research methods suggests (Creswell, 2007, p. 75). The major source of data was generated from the semi-structured, open-ended, in-depth interviews, with a group or with individual key informants. In addition, participatory observations of ethnic cultural activities were conducted with a view to identifying triangulating data patterns (Fortner & Ghristians, 1981). A general survey and the informed consent form were given to the sample group to collect demographic data and patterns of Korean media consumption behaviors among participants, as well as information about participant availability and willingness to cooperate with this project. Topics for the questionnaire included: nationality, age, generation, time period in the U.S., education level, sources of entertainment, media consumption, and community activities. The approximate length of each interview was 60 to 80 minutes. The participants' native language was used in these interviews, either Korean or English.

Most interviews were performed as individual, in-depth interviews, but eleven informants were interviewed with other informants who were close to them (e.g., one's spouse, friends, or church family). In total, eleven out of twenty nine informants were

interviewed as a group: eight as a duo, and three as a triple. Interviewing as a group naturally happened. On most occasions when asking my informants to be interviewed, I met them at a social or cultural event. They easily accepted my invitation to meet me together over a cup of coffee like their casual meetings. One of informants, Andy, introduced his three buddies for an interview. He felt proud that he introduced them to the Korean media. After that, they always talked about Korean dramas and K-pop singers.

Interviewing multiple informants together generates a dynamics and richness in the conversations (Hesse-Biber & Patricia Leavy, 2011, p. 166). Not surprisingly, each individual in the groups came from different contexts, for example, their degree of engagement in Korean culture, years of living in the U.S., and occupations. Therefore, when we started to have a conversation together, their experiences and perspectives were portrayed differently. A second generation participant, Joseph, was more passionate and assured about the cultural power of Korean media whereas his wife, HyunJi, who moved to the U.S. in her 20s, was rather skeptical. In these conflicts, I observed how they legitimated and digested different ideas into a better understanding. At some moments, I could empathize with the perspective of one informant more than the other. Through these processes, my own assumptions were challenged and denaturalized. These group interviews often included jokes, talk off-the topics, and real life stories. The nature of these conversations allowed me to grasp the vividness of their daily lives better than in the one-on-one interviews.

When, for example, four male friends were all together to talk about their excitement over K-pop music and dramas, they joked about how all of them were insanely engaged in Korean popular culture every day. Meanwhile Alex, a 3rd generation

Korean American, explained his struggles and how he came to appreciate his ethnic identity through engagement with Korean culture together with his Korean American friends. Not only Alex, but most of my informants had some sore experiences as an ethnic minority. It might not be easy to reveal it to me at first, but within a group, they could discuss it without hesitation, sometimes even with jokes. Thus, interviewing multiple informants together revealed a different dimension of the phenomenon. This so-called group effect (Morgan & Krueger, 1993), would not come through in the one-on-one interview.

Thick description (Geertz, 1973) was thoroughly employed to achieve "a fuller sense of place, context, community, intercultural exchange, and the consciousness that is articulating that experience" (Murphy, 2011, p. 397). With the consent of informants, field notes and a voice recorder were used to record the interviews. The researcher also used notes and technological aids such as a voice recorder based on agreement with study participants.

Reflexivity of the Research Process

The impact of the digitalized media environment is a critical part of this research. However, this shift also influenced the ethnographic research practices I used to approach the Korean American community. Online webpages of several Korean American communities helped me to locate points of contact. Beside the snowball sampling process, I searched online websites for official Korean American associations and easily discovered several web pages representing these organizations. One Korean American youth group in Philadelphia claimed to socialize with anyone who liked or was interested in Korean culture. This led me to just go their meeting place in the old city to enjoy a

Korean style fried chicken meal and found out who these Korean Americans are. I discovered that this organization actively utilizes social networking services like Facebook and Meetup to connect and reach out to people.

In addition to its convenience, digitalized connectivity bridges gaps between people by allowing them to meet without awkwardness or suspicion. At the first meeting I attended, I noticed that this group's use of digital culture made it easy for people to approach each other, including myself. In addition to meeting Korean Americans, I also met more than ten persons from multiple races and ethnicities who were interested in Korean culture or had lived in Korea. It was a casual meeting over a meal and tea/coffee, one of numerous local meetings scheduled via Meetup. However, it was eye-opening to realize how one culture can change the direction of our community. People chatted endlessly about Korean culture and discussed Korean cultural events in Philadelphia. Even after the café closed, people stood on the street and kept chatting about their plans to visit, excitement about K pop celebrities, and interest in local Korean restaurants. Non-Korean Americans passionately discussed their experiences of Korean culture. Some of them planned to meet again the next day to attend the performance of a Korean traditional flautist visiting from Seoul for a public performance. I reflected on this evening many times. People of different backgrounds who had no clues about each other before this evening, like a Vietnamese medic who traveled internationally, an African American filmmaker who served as a U.S. solider in Korea, and Chinese American students who gathered a team to perform a K-pop choreography, met and shared their lives. The casual tone of the meeting allowed attendees to explore different socio-cultural groups and smoothly removed the barriers between strangers. Furthermore, the Korean

Americans in Philadelphia are pretty much aware of the sociocultural contexts of international students from Korea via the communities to which they belong or the media. This context gave me a chance to immerse myself in the community and network with confidence and positive expectations for my study.

Since this research explores the multi-voices of the ethnic minority in Philadelphia, the political implications of representation, the question of who can speak for whom and for what purpose, was central to my ethnographic research. Instead of narrating the informants' opinions in my own language as researcher, I tried to consciously account for my own presence in the completed text of the research and to deliver the informant's own articulations (Murphy, 2011, pp. 381-382).

In the case of this research, my ethnographic identity in the field was not distinct from the group under study. This became a vantage point from which to consider the political implication of representation. I sensed that on many occasions, the boundary between researcher and research subject was blurred. Informants included international students, single women, researchers, and mostly consumers of Korean cultural content in their leisure time. Chin (2001) pointed out that it is too simplistic an approach to dichotomize the identity of an ethnographic researcher and the native in a binary framework for in this age, identity has become more flexible and easily recreated than ever before (pp. viii-ix). This is especially true for the current project. The focus group of this research, Korean Americans, was intentionally defined as either permanent immigrants or temporary migrants that have lived in five years in the U.S. In this way, my study aims at reflecting the broad range of experiences in the ethnic community at the current pace of globalized media. When conducting the field work in Philadelphia, I had

lived seven years in the suburbs of the city. In addition to the ethnic commonality, I could understand their experiences as migrants and residents of the neighborhood to some extent. All of us have negotiated our identity as immigrants or ethnic minorities though there were some variations among other the dimensions of our identities.

Therefore, although I may lack the outsider's "pure" ethnographic eye, my complicated ethnographic identity became useful in collaboratively generating the narratives of these Korean Americans. Most of the informants who felt comfortable with me and my identity expressed their thoughts and feelings freely. They wanted to understand the purpose of the research and were concerned about how their identities would be represented in the research. Sometimes they asked if it would be acceptable to say, "with this much honesty." Especially for an ethnographic audience study in a global era, Murphy (2011) suggested that examining the reflexivity of the audience is more significant (p. 391). For instance, Kim (2012) stated that her identity as a woman and a mother facilitated the reflexivity of the informants.

As a local resident, I had genuine curiosity about the Korean American community in my neighborhood and was easily invited into the Korean American community. A few people that I had known as friends actively helped me to continue snowballing to recruit informants from among their colleagues, family members, church families, etc. After I interviewed several first generation Korean Americans and attended community events, I became familiar with the active members. I met them again in other social meetings, not only the guests, but also the formal speakers at the meetings (e.g., Korean American politicians and a leader of local ethnic association). This active, but modest number of community members publicly represented the community and ran

most of the local events through their networks. They were also supposed to represent the Korean Americans in Philadelphia in cases of cooperation with the Korean government or other institutions from Korea. Accordingly, most of them welcomed newcomers and made efforts to build a stronger ethnic community in both size and activities.

Probably more than these social meetings, the Korean Protestant and Catholic churches are the major places where a majority of Korean Americans regularly meet, communicate, and socialize within the community. When I introduced myself as a Korean or asked something in Korean in Korean stores, a few times Korean American seniors asked whether I was attending a church. I have attended several different churches since I have lived in Philadelphia and utilized my familiarity with Christianity. In fact, I discovered that the dynamics among members and the practices of the Korean church are almost identical to a church in Korea.

The role of the church within immigrant society is usually magnified as compared to its homeland. Usually major church activities are designed around the family unit. The church actively facilitates small group bible studies and social activities, children and youth education, and missionary work. This pattern is innately linked with the characteristics of immigrant society. For the first generation of immigrants, Korean churches serve the central purpose of forging connectivity. As a matter of course, newcomers voluntarily contact or are introduced to the church community when they first land in the U.S. without a need for information or resources. Church is as much about social networking as it is about religious faith. Korean private business owners circulate their business information through church bulletins and church family networks. In most cases, it is not difficult to guess which churches the business owners are affiliated with.

Church members, in turn, spread information about their services and activities with flyers, calendars, or other small souvenirs along with their business information. A Korean restaurant near Upper Darby even displayed Korean business advertisements on their paper table mats.

It is rare to meet someone who is completely unaffiliated with a church among Korean Americans. More than one hundred protestant churches and two catholic churches are located around the Philadelphia metropolitan area. In general, second generation Korean Americans accept their parents' religion and belong to that church community. Church activities form a major part of their social activities while they are growing up with Korean American peer groups. Many Korean churches, sometimes claiming to be multi-cultural churches, also provide English worship services or English mass (EM) to second generation Korean Americans.

Belonging to a church community is critical for them as it provides a trustworthy Korean community in which to root their businesses and family lives. One informant who came to the U.S. and ran her own business for more than 20 years said that it is hard for Korean American immigrants to trust each other, especially concerning financial matters. Another informant said that "once the person (who took money) ran away across the states, we cannot trace the person forever. Friends here are different from my friends in Korea." Although most relationships are unstable in an immigrant society, helping each other within the community is stressed as a virtue of Christians. Through these activities, individuals can build their reputations in local communities. Attending a church is also critical for development of discipline and formation of cultural identity in children. The church community emphasizes ethical discipline, including the prohibition of drinking,

smoking, and drug use. For immigrant parents concerned with the complicated identity of their children, the Korean church is a place where their children can belong and share their struggles in assimilating into the U.S. society with their peer groups.

Thus, it seems natural that the second generation of Korean Americans would learn the local Korean culture while they grow up in a church community. Min (2013) stressed the significant role of the Protestant church in constructing the ethnic identities in the Korean American community, particularly among the second generation of Korean Americans (p. 209). Most of my informants appreciate their membership in the Protestant church and church peer groups. My informants said that "all of my best friends are from my church" or "I could be peaceful when I accepted God." Yet, contrary to their conservative values and ideologies, the Korean churches in the U.S. have become the place where Korean popular culture is appreciated and spreads among young Korean Americans. Being introduced to it by their church peers, I could easily enter the conversations of young Korean Americans regarding their church communities. I was invited to their church events and had coffee with them near the church while one of their friends held a meeting at church. They were friendly to me and treated me as a sister in God. We typically enjoyed conversations after the interviews, both extending the pleasure of our meeting and giving them opportunity to reflect on the experience together through sharing.

For the senior first generation of Korean Americans, my linguistic commonality with them as a native speaker of Korean was useful in approaching them. Age matters in Korean cultural contexts. The older care for and advise the younger. Thus, the senior Korean Americans willingly helped me with this study. We met at cafés or they invited

me to their work places or homes. They have been interested in the news from Korea over the last several decades. Korean Wave was very familiar to them since they consumed lots of Korean media. They shared their criticism and worries about, or pride in, Korea politics and culture including the Korean Wave.

In terms of age, it was, relatively speaking, easier to initiate and continue relationships with the middle-aged group in their 30s and 40s. Like me, they work or study actively in the U.S. in different jobs and we shared a similar age group. Through messengers and mobile phones, I could easily contact them and hang out. While I could share the challenges and cultural differences in the U.S. society with the first generation professionals or international students, the second generation Korean Americans in their 30s or 40s, mostly invited me to try local activities related to Korean culture, such as visiting a newly opened Korean bar, attending Korean/Asian film screening events, or watching a Korean film at a local theater. There are clear differences in attitudes toward embracing the rise of the Korean Wave between the first generation of professionals and the second generations. This will be discussed more in detail in the analysis section.

In some cases, my confidence based on ethnic commonality was challenged, mainly for differences of age and gender. Middle aged men were hard to approach since they did not feel comfortable meeting a female researcher in person if they were married. Understanding this limitation, I approached and asked for the interview at a public meeting or was introduced via their family members. Another barrier was that Korean males in middle or old age hesitate to show their interest in popular culture or watching television since they regard it as lacking decency or nobility. They stressed that they do not watch many television programs or know Korean popular culture well. One informant

emphasized that he only watched excellent Korean films, whereas his wife enjoyed the Korea dramas. Another middle-aged male stressed that he only watched the Korean current affairs television shows since he is interested in the Korean reunification. Later in the interview, he commented that he also watched Korean entertainment shows since the church families talked about it.

My findings and discussions based on the analysis of the data were categorized according to the generation of immigration since the generation determines the major elements of life conditions among immigrants. I often gained significant and unexpected findings through the activities and interviews with the young second generation Korean Americans. These findings are discussed in detail in each analysis section. Most of the young second generation immigrants in this study have not experienced Korean culture in Korea except for short trips with family or friends. Thus, their attitudes, values, and imagination about their ancestral homeland were different from the 1.5 or first generation informants who had lived in Korea before they arrived in the U.S. Age wise, most of the second generation Korean Americans were relatively young, college students or professionals between 19 and 38. The youth group often actively participated in fan culture and circulated their ideas on popular culture via the Internet. In this way, young Korean Americans can converse about Korean culture freely across ethnic groups as English native speakers and within their in-between identity.

Chapter Breakdown

The rest of my dissertation, chapters 4 to 7, is comprised of analyzing data to seek answers to the individual research questions. Chapter 4 explores research question 1 which asks how the emerging global imagination of Korean Americans upon the rise of

the Korean Wave is associated with their imagination about the actual places, Korea, Asia, and the U.S. This discussion is linked to the negotiation of informants' Korean, Asian, and American identities. Chapter 5 discusses research question 2 which examines whether — and if so, how — Korean Americans' global imagination reshaped other identity factors including gender roles, attractiveness, and life plans involved with dating and marriage. Research question 3, the focus of Chapter 6, highlights how the Korean Americans' global imaginations upon the rise of the Korean Wave have generated new forms of locality in the Philadelphia metropolitan area. This chapter discusses how my informants engaged within Korean American/non-Korean American communities and sensed their engagement and belonging in their local, national, and transnational contexts. Chapter 7 discusses all of the above findings and contributions which are not included in the previous chapters. In addition, the limitations of the current study and suggestions for further research will be presented.

CHAPTER 4: DIGITALIZED KOREAN MEDIA, ETHNIC IDENTITIES, AND GLOBAL IMAGINATION

How can we identify the beginning of the Korean Wave in the U.S.? Most scholarly literature on the Korean Wave in Asia describes the rise of the Korean Wave since the late 1990s with the distribution and popularity of its media content in other Asian nations including China and Japan (for example, Cho, 2005; Chua & Iwabuchi, 2008; J. Kim, 2014). In these nations, responses from local audiences were apparent since the majority of transnational media in terms of television programs, K-pop music, and film was delivered through traditional platforms like TV broadcasting or theaters. On the other hand, the circumstance of consuming transnational media in the U.S. is rather distinctive. The U.S. entertainment media had dominated the global media market. They are still occupying a privileged status in the mind of global audiences as well as the overseas distribution network. Consequently, as opposed to global audiences who have been familiar with transnational media products with dubbing or subtitles as their ordinary media practices, the U.S. audiences had relatively limited accessibility and experiences of consuming transnational media contents (Darling-Wolf, 2015, pp. 134-135).

Before digitalized communication, such as Internet-based information websites and audio-visual streaming services, immigrants found the ways of exchanging news from and consuming media produced in their homeland. Due to the high price of long-distance phone calls, Korean immigrants could not call their homeland often. Instead, they tended to belong to Korean churches through which they communicated with and became informed about Korea (Suh, 2015). Philadelphia's Korean ethnic newspapers,

such as PhilaKorea (필라델피아 한국일보) and Korean Phila Times (주간필라), delivered information on current affairs, news, and advertisements from Korea, the U.S., and the Korean American communities. Most popular media from Korea was available at local Korean grocery stores. With the advance of the audiovisual recording technologies like video home system (VHS) tapes and compact disc digital videos (VCDs), Korean TV dramas and popular entertainment shows were recorded and rented at the local Korean grocery stores. Most Korean Americans have memories of binge watching on Korean TV dramas with their families in the living rooms during the weekend or a summer/ winter break since usually Korean dramas use very addictive serial forms. Even after Korean American families adopted satellite TV services, seniors sometimes preferred to borrow VHS tapes and enjoyed watching VHS tapes since they could follow the storylines at their convenience.

The advance of digital communication and media has reshaped media practices among Korean American families both in quantity and quality after 2000 when the usage of the Internet proliferated. Audiences who actively seek their favorite contents, are able to access a multitude of cultural products on the net. Therefore, it might be difficult to postulate how the rise of the Korean Wave has progressed in the U.S. Yet, it is clear that people's engagement with Korean media via digitalized communication and social media extended the popularity of the Korean popular culture within the U.S. (Jin, 2016). Korean Americans who did not actively consume Korean media, are now being increasingly exposed to Korean media content (S. Lee, 2015; D. C. Oh, 2015). In general, using digitalized media devices, the amount of daily media consumption by Americans has increased to approximately eleven hours a day in 2016. Media consumption via

digitalized and mobile devices is now undermining the usage of the traditional media, radio and television, particularly among younger generations (Nielsen Company, 2016b). This technological development brought particularly significant changes to my informants' practice of media consumption because their favorite contents are now mostly transnational media from Korea.

This chapter first demonstrates how the rise of the Korean media rooted on digitalized media formats impact Korean media consumption. Then, it explores the rise of the Korean media in terms of media globalization in the U.S. intersects with the ethnic identity of the Korean Americans. Finally, it seeks the answer of the first research question: how the Korean American's global imagination upon the rise of the Korean Wave casts their perception on the places of Korea, Asia, and the U.S. associated with their own ethnic identity.

Digital Media Made Differences

A Korean hair salon with a Korean sign stood in a residential community on a broad road in the west side of Philadelphia. When I opened the door and stepped into the salon, the setting of the space reminded me of a small hair shop in a rural town in Korea. The first floor of a residential house had been remodeled as a business space. Whenever a customer opened the door, a bell hanging on the door made a jingling sound. The hairstylist, a Korean woman in her 60s who was cutting the hair of a customer, greeted me in Korean. In the foyer, a coffee machine and small paper cups stacked on the cabinet were ready to serve the customers. On the dark colored sofas along the wall, another customer quietly sat and watched a Korean daily evening show via a flat TV monitor while waiting her turn. Out-dated Korean women's magazines were stacked under the TV

monitors. A laptop in front of the large mirror on the vanity was connected to the monitor and showed the same program for a customer having her hair done. At the corner of the vanity table, a flyer for a local upholstery store owned by Koreans was posted on the wall along with other Korean stores' business cards. A narration in a funny tone by a Korean showed a port city in Korea and people savoring seasonal sea foods. People in the show tasted the raw fish and showed their excitement by a "two thumbs up" pose for the camera. "Where is the port, do you know?" the lady who was sitting in front of the vanity mirror asked the hair designer while she focused on cutting the lady's hair. Continuous shows from the Korean broadcasting channel provided the milieu of a trans-local mood in the local hair salon.

> HL: When did you set the TV set like this?
> YoonKyung: About… eight years ago? My nephew paid the membership in Korea to access this streaming website of Korean programs. ⋯ The site says that we can watch it 2 hours after airing in Korea. Usually I can watch the nightly news of Korea in the morning here. I can watch the 9 pm news in Korea at the 9 am morning here (it is exactly 2 hours after they air).
> HL: Then you watch the Korean TV from 9am to 6pm?
> YoonKyung: Yes. It is always on. If customers want. News, dramas, shows.
> HL: You watch more TV than when you were in Korea.
> YoonKyung: (laughter) Yes. But I just turned it on for customers. Sometimes important news in Korea. News from the U.S. I do not know English. Korean news reported that the new president of the U.S. was Trump. I knew that, but I could understand what Trump promised. His detailed policies. Korean news reported it once it received the news from the U.S. I understood them via Korean news. ⋯ In my store, all the programs are in Korean, I speak only Korean. Customers joke that inside of the store is Korea and outside is the U.S.
> (YoonKyung, 60, 1st generation, senior, interviewed in Korean)

Like the Korean hairstylist above, my informants watch Korean television programs, browse Korean websites, or listen to K-pop music for five to fifty hours per

week via digitalized media. Their platforms, purposes, reasons, and kinds of pleasure vary depending on their circumstances. There are some differences among informants depending on their individual motivations, but informants who indulged in Korean media gained access to many streaming services around 2006 via the Internet. During the past decade, the development of media technology has progressed and the Korean American community has continuously used emerging media technologies.

> My mother always watches it. Used VHS, then cable, CD/DVD, .. Then my brother-in-law worked hard to save the programs on USB disks (for her). Then we installed (the program for Korean TV watching) via the Internet.
>
> (JeongWon, 50, 1.5 generation, senior, interviewed in Korean)

Informants were familiar with the way to access online streaming websites for Korean media regardless of their ages. A senior informant in her 60s explained how she used streaming daily, or couple of times a week, to enjoy her favorite content. Some of these sites are currently commercialized by major companies such as Hulu, On-demand Korea, and Viki. My informants also had ample knowledge of piracy websites that provide free streaming services with commercials. These websites are often banned in Korea to avoid copyright law issues. Links to them are created right after programs air and they disappear in a few days.

Previous studies of immigrant audiences found that first generation of immigrants mainly enjoy the media from their homeland for their cultural orientation including variables of language skill, educational level, length of stay, and religion (Ogan, 2001, pp. 147-148). In the same vein, Korean Americans whose mother tongue is Korean use Korean media more than the U.S. media. International students and professionals who came to the U.S. after the popularization of streaming services consume Korean media

every day as a way of relaxing and feeling connected to home. In general, they engage in more Korean media consumption than their peer groups in Korea or than they did in Korea before coming to the U.S.

> In the last five years in the U.S., I have caught up on the Korean pop culture again. I hope to reconnect to the Korean culture. Koreanness? … that I'm familiar with. Maybe I feel lonely. I look for something familiar and close. Consuming Korean media and pop music would be the easiest way to relieve these feelings. All day I should look at English. Then I need something to be relaxed and absorbed in at home, even it is just played as a background sound. But it is not noise but made me feel I'm in Korea. Korean radio sound generates a certain milieu that makes me feel at home, no extra energy needed. One way of relaxation, mindlessness. My friends in Korea are too busy. They think TV is too low standard culture. So I do not talk with them about TV.
>
> (Mina, 40, 1st generation, professional, interviewed in Korean)

Through their description of the ways they use Korean media, several characteristics of the digitalized media can be seen to influence the media practice of my informants. Their practice of Korean media consumption has ostensibly changed with the use of digitalized mobile media especially throughout the last several decades within the Korean American community. Most of my informants agreed that the accessibility of digitalized media devices stimulated them to spend more time using Korean media. Prior research has shown that among second generation Korean Americans, Korean media consumption acts as a "social adhesive" bonding them to their family and ethnic peers (Oh, 2015, pp. 119-125). According to the data from my informants from different age groups, this explanation is still legitimate. Particularly, the second generation of Korean Americans is experiencing the most profound changes due to the digitalized Korean media influx. Formerly, the second generation of Korean Americans watched Korean media content only when they stayed with their family as a family activity. Yet, digital

technology and the smart phone made it possible to share content easily within an interpretive community like their parents or transnational older relatives in Korea.

> Jenna: I consume a lot of Korean media. Korean dramas, Korean radio. There is an app I have on my cell to listen the radio station. I hear some news and then my parents sent me some Korean news. It's a Christian thing. My uncle (in Korea) sent me a ten minute video, the Korean news, what they think about Donald Trump. When I go home, my parents watch a lot of American news, American television, but they also watch Korean television whether the Korean news or reality shows, or Korean dramas.
> HL: Do you think the second generation of Koreans enjoys Korean dramas more than before?
> Emma: I think so.
> Jenna: Yes, the accessibility to watch it that makes me watch it.
> (Jenna and Emma, 30-40s, 2nd generation, professionals, interviewed in English)

> It wasn't really when I went there. It was after when I thought about it, I was like, "Hey, maybe I'll give this a try." I listened to it (K-pop music) and I really liked it. It wasn't the fact that I went to Korea that changed my outlook. It was when I came back and I reflected and I thought upon it. I was like, "hey maybe I will give this a shot." I listened to it and really liked it, so I got into it.
> (Andy, 19, 2nd generation, college students, interviewed in English)

More significantly, Korean media is available in the U.S. simultaneously or with only a couple hours of time lapse after airing in Korea. Korean Americans concurrently catch up on Korean news, web-based cartoons, Korean portal websites, and popular TV programs with their families and friends in Korea or with other global audiences. My informants use Korean media as a daily practice. Sometimes, Korean media replaces the American media and the majority of them use only Korean media to access news, social affair programs, entertainment shows, dramas, and news about U.S. society.

> I like reading Chosun Ilbo (a Korean daily newspaper, via the Internet), CNN, watching TV like TVN (a Korean cable channel), CNN, I like… Really the two, the Internet and TV and very active on Facebook. So I think I am using Korean media about six hours a day.
> (Joseph, 30s, 2nd generation, professional, interviewed in English)

> (Watch mainly) Korean dramas… a few U.S. dramas… *Doctors, Good Wife* (titles of Korean dramas recently released)… I watch dramas a lot these days. Weekend dramas too? I watched a lot. Watch them every day. Working, cooking, using iPad. Played them via an app. Three different dramas. Monday/Tuesday, Wednesday/Thursday, Saturday/Sunday dramas on the day of air (in Korea). Because morning here is night of the same day in Korea (The show already broadcasted in Korea on the day of air in the U.S). I also watch TV shows. Entertainment shows, *Infinite Challenge (무한도전), Non Summit (비정상회담), Please Take Care of My Refrigerator (냉장고를 부탁해),* like these. I definitely watch all three of them. Monday is a busy day. Should watch them all on the day of air. I should watch all of the weekend programs in Korea. I just play them and finish all the housekeeping stuff. Cleaning, laundry, all of them.
>
> (Minseo, 30s, 1st generation, professional, interviewed in Korean)

Individualized media consumption becomes normative. My informants explored a multitude of media content, as much as they wished. Content to which they had not been exposed before is now freely accessible at their fingertips. Most significantly, the transformed media environment drove the second generation of Korean Americans into spontaneous and vigorous consumption of Korean media content. If they had passively participated in watching Korean television programs with their parents before, now they explore different genres and formats as their favorite subjects.

> First, I watched in the living room and then website got more popular. We sort of watching it on the computer or laptop and then, now we watch different things. So I watch in my room and my mom watches hers and my brother watches his. I think like what I watch is like "yuchihe" (유치해, means childish) for my mom and then my mom watches like "ahchim drama" (아침드라마, morning soap operas for housewives)… like "no thank you" (for me).
>
> (Cindy, 19, 2nd generation, college student, interviewed in English)

> I watched Korean television programs with parents. After grown up, I watch what I like. TV dramas where I can see similar age groups to me. Mom and Daddy watch the daily dramas. But I like the most popular one, like the *Descendants of the Sun*.
>
> (Rachel, 21, 2nd generation, college student, interviewed in Korean)

Lastly, it is now commonplace for Korean Americans to communicate and interact with friends and relatives in Korea, diasporic Korean users, and global fans of Korean pop culture over the world through digitalized communication. As far as they can speak Korean, second generation Korean Americans freely access Korean based websites to explore information and satisfy their curiosity about things that interest them. First generation immigrants enjoy the technology that provides transnational connectivity across borders. It provides Korean Americans immediate connectivity and comfort when they are able to converse with those close to them and share their daily lives more intimately across the nations.

> Amelia: So I'm in a fan club Gong Yoo (a Korean actor) on Korean online website. It was really complicated to get in the community website.
> HL: So what do you do the club?
> Amelia: I just look at photos, and they want you post something. How he is doing or stuff like that. I just maybe once in a while I see pictures of him and stuff like that. I have tried Big Bang (a Korean idol group). I've tried a lot of different celebrities. Now it's just easier to access to the Naver (a Korean portal site). I didn't realize how to navigate the website, but now I found out it's so easy. You just type the name and then information is all there and what shows they are in. So now that I'm aware that. I don't need to use the English based Korean pop culture websites anymore.
> (Amelia, 22, 2nd generation, college student, interviewed in English)

> My sisters in Korea recommended some programs, and then I watched them. My conversation with family (in Korea) is about very trivial things. Sometimes big things. I talked to them all. I do not have many people here to talk to. Everybody is busy here. I talked to them about something big. I think it is same as I was in Korea. There are many small stuffs. I do not have to talk what was happening. Just like "I was pissed off. I don't feel good today. Bad body condition. Frustrated. Drank." Just like that. I rarely talk what I did today. There are not many differences I'm in Korea and now in the U.S.
> (Minseo, 30s, 1st generation, professional, interviewed in Korean)

> These days, with Kakao Talk (a messenger based on a smartphone), we can use voice talk, exchange all kinds of information. It is free! Before the smart phone, we used the international phone card, $10 or $20. We should

> buy it. It is gone now. I think Kakao Talk is terrific. Huge influence! Internet is so advanced and it is easy to access convenient information. It is true that the world is in my hand! Every information is from the cell phone. Sometimes even scary. Whenever I want, I can contact people everywhere. I have six hundreds on my Kakao Talk. That's very convenient. I really, really like Kakao Talk.
> (YoonKyung, 60, 1st generation, senior, interviewed in Korean)

My informants collectively felt global connectivity through their daily practice of Korean media consumption. In addition to convenience, simultaneity, individualized use, and global connectivity brought a new form of media practice and communication into their daily lives. Also, there were fissures among my informants depending on the essential dimensions of their identities such as age, gender, or transnational experience. Appadurai argues that this collective media consumption stimulates the unique feature of a global era, global imagination. Understanding this media circumstance, the next section explores how their global imagination is associated with the rise of the Korean Wave, to answer the following questions: How do Korean Americans articulate the Korean Wave in the U.S. rooted on their own experiences? Furthermore, it is important to examine how their articulation of the Korean Wave intersects with and reshapes their imaginings about Korea, Asia, the U.S. — their ethnically, racially, and physically belonging places.

Transnational Korean Media and Negotiating Ethnic Identity

This section discusses the work of the imagination by Korean Americans who experienced the upsurge of Korean popular culture in the U.S. Appadurai (1996) stressed the role of global imagination fostered by the mass media because it offers a space in which individuals and groups cultivate their own subjective agency (p. 4). Currently, further development of electronic media, advances in mobile digital devices like the Smartphone, and the expansion of social media foment more frequent and convenient

usage of transnational Korean media content. How does this unprecedented cultural occurrence reshape Korean Americans' imagined worlds? This chapter describes how the Korean Wave enables the work of imagination among my informants. More precisely, how has the rise of the Korean Wave facilitated their emotions, which are deeply interrelated with their ethnic identity, and global imagination about Korea, Asia, and the U.S. and altered their perceptions of these places in the world? Then, I will discuss how my informants' daily lives and life course are associated with their sense of globality.

The Burden and Excitement of my Korean Side

As Appadurai stressed distinctive transnational flows as a process of globalization, Korean Americans have been familiar with a multitude of Korean flows throughout the last several decades. In addition to the continuously increasing migratory population from Korea, the U.S. has been a major importer of Korean products. According to the Office of the United State Trade Representative, Korea is the 6th largest goods trading partner of the U.S. promoted by the U.S.-Korea Free Trade Agreement since 2007. Goods and services imports from Korea totaled $80.8 billion in 2016, mainly comprised of vehicles, electrical machinery, machinery, pharmaceuticals, and mineral fuels. A Korean brand car has been included on the top 10 best-selling list and the market share of Korean brand mobile phones is over 50% in the U.S. (Statista, 2018; Statcounter, 2018). It has become ordinary to encounter people buying and using products from Korea in local places.

Compared to the active exchanges of commodities and capitals, Korean culture was rather exclusively enjoyed within the Korean American community. Consuming ethnic culture mainly happens within corresponding ethnic communities (see, for

example, Durham, 2004; Ogan, 2001). For youth groups from immigrant communities, enjoying their ethnic culture is often limited to the ethnic community, such as family and ethnic peer groups. For the early immigrants into the U.S., the priority of discipline was to assimilate into U.S. society. Therefore, communication studies mainly discussed how Asians minorities tried to acculturate into the totally different U.S. culture (Choi & Tamborini, 1988; Hwang & He, 1999; Yang, Wu, Zhu, & Southwell, 2004). A 1.5 generation business man in his 60s remembered the moment of a meeting at the Korean church in the 1970s when no Korean American parents opposed closing the church's Korean language school. Language was one of the primary constraints besides race for the first generation to overcome as they acculturated into mainstream U.S. society. Thus, speaking English fluently and achieving higher education for their children was the primary goal of the first generation of Korean immigrants.

> Yeah, even to think about when I was in Korea, my grandparents, my grandfather, he was very conservative. He forbade speaking Korean. "한국말 배우지마" ("you don't need to learn Korean"), "그냥 영어만 배우고, 영어 잘해" ("just learn English and do it well"). What he said. What was that mean?
>
> (Jenna, 40s, 2nd generation, professional, interviewed in English)

> My husband's parents knew the importance of the education. But at the time Korean education was not available. Because they came to America as the dream country and the country for success. What they wanted was just giving the better things to their children's generation. American dream through education but that did not include Korean education because at the top, forty years ago, there was no Korean nanny or Korean school was not available here. So they had very limited time even to interact with them because they were both working parents. As immigrants, life was very difficult because they don't have the fluency like American people have. So they want to just give that for their children. They want to give them the best education they could give. But that did not include Korean education.
>
> (HyunJi, 30s, 1st generation, professional, interviewed in English)

All these circumstances, HyunJi explained, are why her second-generation husband is not fluent in Korean. They illustrate how the first generation of Korean immigrants had to deal with Korean language, a key to the Korean ethnic culture.

On the other hand, it does mean that an individual who only speaks English is to a certain extent estranged from his or her ethnic identity and culture, as well as communicative activities across generations. Thus, Korean parents sometimes intentionally let their children be exposed to Korean media and culture (Oh, 2015, p. 120). This explanation is legitimate among my second-generation informants too.

> Amelia: I think my parents wanted me to speak Korean. My dad understands English because he has been here for 23 years, but whenever I speak in English to him, he'll like pretend to not understand. So he forced me to use Korean. But my siblings, they don't speak Korean too well, like my sister maybe and my brother doesn't speak too well.
> HL: That's interesting. Usually the first kid can speak better because if you speak Korean then your siblings can communicate with you.
> Amelia: Yeah exactly. I think that's how it always is.
> (Amelia, 22, 2nd generation, college student, interviewed in English)

> Emma: Honestly, I found the Korean shows are pretty dumb. You know it's not the show, and I guess even when I was in the high school once I would watch them because they were played. But I also watch the story line. It is so predictable. All of that.
> Jenna: The story like is very strappy.
> Emma: It kinds of draw. It has so, so long. You can live. Like if you have one week vacation, you do nothing but Korean dramas. So I think for that reason, I never watch with my own initiative. But I do, because I can keep learning Korean language. I would like to improve my Korean language but also my parents also sent me some Korean links. But it takes me too long to read Korean and maybe with my parents I watch only the Korean.
> (Jenna and Emma, 30-40s, 2nd generation, professionals, interviewed in English)

> I was about 16 years old, there was a turning point. My friends were all Americans. I started forgetting Korean. My parents did not like that situation. They intentionally emphasized the Korean ways. So, I returned. Me and my brother. We did not have any Korean friends. Then we started getting along with Korean friends. My parents planned that, I guess for

> now because we need to adjust to them. ⋯ In our generation, parents did not know at all about the American society and we should support them in everything. We need to stay within the Korean community. They did not want us to leave the Korean community. They want us to belong to the American society but didn't want us being away from them. That caused lots of conflict between generations. At that time, whenever Korean American friends got together, we all complained about that.
> (JeongWon, 50, 1.5 generation, senior, interviewed in Korean)

> It (Korean culture) must be a shabby culture to second generation. Why? Korean culture is you learn from your parents, parents' culture from Korea. What the second generation of Korean Americans learned from the older people. Do you like your parents' culture? Actually, no.
> (HyunJi, 30s, 1st generation, professional, interviewed in English)

As my informants described, coping with the Korean culture while assimilating into the U.S. society as a mediator between two different cultures is an arduous burden for 1.5 or second generation Korean Americans and it sometimes felt absurd. Their emotions toward culture were formulated in a same way. The majority of their understanding of Korea was from their parents' tastes and past experiences from Korea that inherently bear a generation gap. Thus, Min and Chung (2014) described that in some cases, second generation Korean Americans experience low self-esteem because they do not fit into an ideal type of a Korean or an American.

Then how do the Korean Americans perceive the rise of Korean popular culture distinctive from prior inflows from Korea? About five year ago, a friend in Seoul, Korea, asked me if *Gangnam Style* was really popular in the U.S. She was wondering and doubtful if the Korean pop song was really rising in the U.S. Her question drove me to look into how *Gangnam Style* was represented in the U.S. media. I easily found YouTube clips of the Korean singer, Psy performing his signature horse dance in Times Square surrounded by fans shouting with excitement about the rhythmical music. At that time, I

also doubted whether the Korean Wave was inflated by Korean media since up to this time, the Korean Wave was often portrayed in foreign countries as part of a nationalist discourse and sometimes in an excessively glaring manner. Yet, that was just the beginning of *Gangnam Style's* popularity. Boosted by its official music video via YouTube, the song gained popularity all over the world including the West, the U.S., and Middle Eastern countries. It had logged a record-setting 3 billion views on YouTube as of 2017. As a result, Psy has become a rising star in the U.S. media broadcasting performances with iconic pop singers such as Madonna, Lady Gaga, Beyoncé, and MC Hammer. He even performed at the American Music Awards in 2012.

As powerful as these mediated events were, the experience became more vibrant when I observed people enjoying it at a local place. I realized its popularity when I listened to the song *Gangnam Style* in a local restaurant in downtown Philadelphia. Likewise, my informants remembered the moment when they heard the song via the U.S. media in their local places.

> I think the most popular one of Korean Wave in the U.S. up until today would be *Gangnam Style*. One day I listened *Gangnam Style* from the U.S. radio. I thought I misheard at first. Then "what? Is that right?" I thought so. Later I listened it again and the song aired again. "Wow… *Gangnam Style* from the U.S. media." I felt [paused, facial expression was complicated] the song must be great.
>
> (SiWon, 30s, 1.5 generation, professional, interviewed in Korean)

The popularity of *Gangnam Style* showed that many Americans experienced the trend of this Asian song. But for Korean Americans, it might be more than something new. Before Psy, there had been attempts to introduce the K-pop singers in the U.S. dominant media. For example, an idol girl group, Wonder Girls performed their dance with the song *Tell Me* in 2009 on *The Wendy Williams Show.* Their performances,

concerts, and fan events were often reported in the entertainment news of Korean media. However, unlike *Gangnam Style*, they did not obtain lots of attention in spite of their efforts and marketing in the U.S. Yet, the huge popularity of one Korean song represented by the number of viewers at YouTube had undeniable repercussions in the U.S. entertainment industry. As one of my young Korean American informants described, her mother and relatives were amazed. "Psy is really incredible. He made it in the U.S.!" Besides their tastes in music itself, the upsurge of Korean popular culture touched the nationalistic mind of my Korean American informants as "pop nationalism."

It may be impossible to say what precisely the Korean Wave in the U.S. is, or to determine when this radical shift happened, considering that many of my informants had been exposed to Korean media and participated in this fervor. However, the most notable shift upon the rise of the Korean Wave is clear: the positive emotions toward their Korean side among youth groups of the second generation. As major agents of appreciating and performing pop culture, they immediately noted its boom through global interconnectivities and joined in the wave.

> SiWon: At first, I heard that Girls Generation had a concert in South America and Paris. K pop SM concert in Paris. Several years ago. So I just thought SM had a concert. Then I watched a video clip of the concert. People sang along with their songs.
> HL: Who told you that?
> SiWon: I think I read it from a newspaper. While reading it, I thought "wow! They are popular." Not only SM. There are many popular Korean singers. 3 or 4 years ago, I thought aha K pop became a trend. And there is Arirang TV in the U.S. They showed K pop. The K pop celebrities appeared and introduce the Korean culture in English. Then I looked at the information more about them through the channel. The TMG magazine in the U.S. it is mainly dealing with gossip on the celebrities. They sometimes talked about the K pop stars. About one year ago? Jung Han, the youngest one of the EXID (a Korean idol group), he said he was excited to come here. Then they (the writer of the TMG magazine) criticized that he has

> an accent and his pronunciation was wrong. I sensed that these people do not have to look at K-pop but they still talk about it. They must have interest in K pop. Then the U.S. people uploaded the YouTube clip. Yooju (a member of an idol group Girl Friend) fell down repeatedly on the stage about twenty times. They talked about how hard the girl group tried.
> (SiWon, 30s, 1.5 generation, professional, interviewed in Korean)

American and Western media have been criticized in their failure to represent the racial minority group fairly by marginalizing or objectifying these racial/ethnic others (for instance, see Espiritu, 2004, Park, J., Gabbadon, N., & Chernin, A., 2006; Rosenblum, K., & Travis, T., 2011). Given this situation, how do individuals of this minority group construct their ethnic identities? Stuart Hall's explanation of the ideological work of the media provides some insights here, especially into the relation between racial/ethnic minorities and the dominant media. Hall described the critical features of ideologies: ideologies are constituted through the articulation of different elements into a set of meanings; ideologies provide us with the means of 'making sense' of social relations and our place in them; and ideologies work by shaping their subjects' position of identification and knowledge. By doing this, Western media has played a role in the production of ideological discourses about races while being complementary of the white majority (Hall, 2003, pp. 271-272). For youth who belong to racial/ethnic minority groups in a white dominant society, it has been inevitable to have a sense of being marginalized or shamed while constantly exposed to the white dominant ideological discourse through the dominant media.

However, the globalized media environment and digital media technologies have provided easier access to transnational media. Transnational media became an important resource for diasporic youth to connect with their ancestral homeland. As illustrated in

the interviews and the daily media consumption of my informants previously, the whole Korean American community has swiftly adjusted and updated their technological knowledge and resources to obtain the best access to Korean media content. For my immigrant informants, consuming transnational Korean media actually allows them different forms of symbolic local practices. In Korean media content, a different chain of meanings is deployed in their social discourses, different ideologies are used to make sense of their social relations, and finally, their racial differences become invisible in the racially homogeneous spaces of Asia. Thus, as Appadurai (1996) explained, consuming huge volumes of Korean media content offers "strips of reality" to Korean American audiences which complicate the ways in which they make sense of their place and subjectivity.

> Rachel: I listen to music a lot. I have a broad taste. I enjoy K pop a lot. These days.. Korean hip-hop. Do you know Loco or AOMG? I listen to AOMG a lot. I like hip-hop.
> HL: You know. Hip-hop started in the U.S. Why do you listen to Korean hip-hop?
> Rachel: I don't know. Well. I enjoy watching Korean TV, like some Korean celebrities. Then I am interested in them. I listen to Korean music much more than the U.S. music. Well, how can I say? It fits me well.
> (Rachel, 21, 2nd generation, college student, interviewed in Korean)

> We grow up in America and we need to fit into culture. American culture and Korean culture. We are born outside. We are in the college and there, in the school, we have to switch gears and accommodate and try to re-handle like the culture. And I think we sometimes don't understand what would be the root of our culture. Why our parents think that way? Why did their behave this way? And I think second generation Koreans including me watch Korean dramas to understand better and I think it is *therapeutic* sometimes. Therapeutic like "Oh! This is why. So it's not only our family. The ordinary people can think that way (in Korean)."
> (Jenna, 40s, 2nd generation, professional, interviewed in English)

That theoretical assumption becomes vivid through the narratives of unconscious emotions and experiences from my informants. They are always negotiating identities to make sense of their subjectivities and lives. For instance, they internalize the oppression as natural or deserved. At the same time, they also recognize the limitations of the mainstream media in the U.S. and produce counter discourses. Consuming Korean media provides them opportunities to rearticulate their place with translocal/global imaginations. One of my informants employed the term "therapeutic" to explain her pleasure in consuming Korean dramas, what hooks describes as a healing process (hooks, 1984). Korean media images and narratives feed them alternative discourses that might be interpreted subversively against the predominant racism of their local place.

Young second generation informants articulated the significance of the Korean Wave as giving visibility to the innate qualities and values of Korean culture at a global stage as well as their local places.

> Yeah, I think being Korean right now is a good thing because obviously there's so much coming out of South Korea that everybody enjoys, like cars, technology, and K-pop and all that kind of stuff. I think that it's a good time to be South Korean I guess.
> (Andy, 19, 2nd generation, college students, interviewed in English)

> In Philadelphia, there is now Joseon Dynasty exhibition. In the Art Museum in Philadelphia. It hugely impacts Philadelphia. Many people they looked at Korean art and think about it.
> (Joseph, 30s, 2nd generation, professional, interviewed in English)

In this atmosphere, they do not have to play a cheerleader role to boost its upsurge since they witnessed many people who did not even know the language, meaning, or anything about Korean culture participating in the fervor over the Korean Wave. Most of my informants felt excitement, pride, and generally positive feelings about it. The global interconnectivities made them start to recognize that there are numerous fans of the

Korean culture. They are not necessarily their physical neighbors living in Philadelphia or the U.S., but global citizens who can share their excitement toward the Korea culture.

> Some of my friends, they like Korean pop music. They went to the Big Bang concert in New Jersey. They were humongous in the last year. They came to New York and my friends from D.C. It is humongous. It was huge. ⋯ In terms of content, I mean I found it entertaining. Second, I don't know the Korean story teller and director, but resources. I think they are good at bringing emotions and draw in the end. The contents of the Korean drama have been changed. Become very modern and very Western. I think it is very entertaining.
> (Jenna, 40s, 2nd generation, professional, interviewed in English)

> I have this one friend from high school because like she recently contacted me again cause like I posted on like, my Snapstory or something about like BangTan (BTS), and she is like "what! You like K-pop?" So she kind of like just talked to me about it. There is obviously like a big international fan base community with like any Korean entertainment. I feel like it's an issue in the social media. I see it a lot on Tumbler, a lot of people like specifically white people, appropriating like Asian, Korean culture specifically, cause it's such like a big thing right now. Like K-pop, K-dramas everywhere, even in America, and like Buzzfeed has like a Korean guy because everyone likes Koreans.
> (Hannah, 20, 2nd generation, college student, interviewed in English)

The popularity of and interest in Korean culture first changed how my informants perceived the representation of Korean culture in the U.S. Koichi Iwabuchi (2002) used the term "cultural odor" to describe the association of cultural products with their place of origin and way of life (p. 27). This cultural odor can be recognized as a "cultural fragrance — socially and culturally acceptable smell" after a certain moment. It is related with the quality of the cultural commodities, perception by the audiences, and the widely perceived symbolic images of the country of invention (Iwabuchi, 2002, p. 27). For my informants, the cultural odor of Korean cultural commodities changed into a cultural fragrance from their homeland and that has just happened during the past decade.

> I think for me, it's the fact that I can relate back to my Korean side, I was going to say. My Korean side. I also really like the whole culture around

> K-pop itself because it's really different from what American idols have in terms of their fans and all that kind of stuff, I really like the K-pop.
> (Andy, 19, 2nd generation, college students, interviewed in English)

> I was more embraced by the American before. Like being exposed (to) American culture in general. People looked at Asian culture in a negative way, so people would look at Japanese and Korean in a variety show (in the past). It was like "They are so weird. Why they do that? That's not normal." And I thought, "Yes, that's not normal." But now, I am thinking it's funny. I don't know how I do think about it. I feel like there was innate feeling of shame (in the past), sometimes I guess when I thought about it. But now I guess I can say that it is not present anymore.
> (Hannah, 20, 2nd generation, college student, interviewed in English)

These young Korean American audiences complicated the way they conceived of themselves and the place of their ethnic identity responding to socio-cultural discourses and their reflective subjectivities. Different from the racial hegemony in the U.S., now they innately own their privileged cultural status for their given ethnicity.

> Yes, so K-pop I think in and of itself, there's huge culture and a following behind it. Even in America, not just Koreans, but there are so many people that enjoy K-pop like white people. I've met a lot of Americans that really, really enjoy K-pop, that they don't understand what any of the lyrics mean, but they really enjoy the cultures and the idols and the following behind it. That's what my friends really like, but I personally more like the music of it.
> (Andy, 19, 2nd generation, college students, interviewed in English)

> Emma: I think there were two streams. I mostly listen to radio station. So it's just an easy way to look at music. When Gangnam style gets really popular, the first time, I know it was come from the phone and I heard it on radio as I was driving. And I thought what station I was listening what even realized. It was such as a shock here, Korean song on American dramas. Just full on. So I was like, so confused. "What was going on?"
> Jenna: Exactly. And there was so many Americans listening to Gangnam styles. And also, Girl's Generation in the Late Show with David Letterman show
> Emma: It was fired!
> Jenna: You know Big Bang. People even read it about in the NY times. About how they are the most popular band in the world.
> (Jenna and Emma, 30-40s, 2nd generation, professionals, interviewed in English)

As evident in the multiple narratives above, the rise of the Korean Wave within the cultural sphere of the U.S. actively intersected with the ethnic identity of second generation Korean Americans. Young Korean Americans who became fans of Korean popular culture took this opportunity to joyfully embrace the ethnic dimension of their identity. To the contrary, informants who were born in Korea and moved to the U.S. as temporary workers, international students, and permanent immigrants did not engage with this cultural phenomenon as much as the young second generation informants. The next section illustrates these different dynamics.

K-pop is for the Asian Youth, not my Favorite

The most distinctive differences regarding participation in the Korean Wave between young second generation Korean Americans and other informants (including 1st generation professionals, international students, and first generation senior immigrants), concerns their ways of postulating their Korean identity. This process is complicated and influenced by conditions such as their native language, bilingual ability, and the significance of their lives in either Korea or their own in-groups. Thus, while young Korean Americans were going through struggles and flexible formations of their ethnic identity, other informants, who preferred to speak in Korean, were more affirming of their Korean identity. For instance, my informants called the group who migrated to the U.S. as adults for jobs, school, or marriage "Korean Koreans" to differentiate these groups from second generation Korean Americans. The rise of the Korean Wave is not actively involved in the process of identity negotiation for this group of Korean Americans.

Most of the professional migrants and international students in their 20s to 40s, regardless of its popularity within the U.S. or Asia, had continuously enjoyed their own favorite Korean media products. These products convey a deeper level of cultural codes and symbols than the trendy dramas or K-pop lyrics. Consuming these media connects them to their memories or feelings of belonging in their lives in Korea. For instance, the setting of a drama should be "real" by their understanding of the Korean context and the lyrics of the songs probably resonate with their experiences and imaginations as Koreans.

> I think economic development is the reason. I mean that's the reason our K-pop does not look shabby. It used to be. Because we are the country with some money. People know Korean brands now. LG, Hyundai, Samsung.
> (HyunJi, 35, 1st generation, family owned business, interviewed in English)

> JiHye: I doubt about the quality itself. I prefer songs from the 90s. I like the ballad songs. I do not like that noisy music (K-pop).
> SeongJin: I do not know about the quality. But I think the quality cannot be ignorable. That's why people like it. But, I don't think this trendy music is really music. I enjoy the melody line, but they don't have sophisticated melody. It sounds like B rated music. It looks like made for the club. Just bounce. I'm with Hynjin. I also like music from 90s, ballad genre. That's why I rarely listen trendy songs. I rarely listen to K-pop.
> HL: do you think the K-pop is for foreign markets?
> SeongJin: Hmm.. I rarely thought about it, whether it is for the foreign or domestic market. I thought, they were made in Korea but, for somehow, they were recognized as its market power and became famous in foreign market.
> (JiHye and SeongJin, 20s, international students, interviewed in Korean)

These informants only recognized the cultural phenomenon of Korean Wave in terms of earlier trends they had witnessed in Asia around 15 years ago. Most of them had experienced Asians, especially Chinese, approaching them to ask about Korean pop culture in Korea or watched it through the Korean media. Now, these international students or young professional immigrants could meet Asian fans of Korean popular

culture in a third space, the U.S. But their experiences are not as thrilling or new compared with those of the young second generation Korean Americans. For them, these experiences are perceived just within Asian American communities. They are also rarely exposed to American media or English-based online fan communities. Thus the visibility of Korean culture in the U.S. was not that strongly felt among my informants in this group.

> HyunJung: I have a Chinese friend. She asked about IOI (an idol competition program from Korea). So I told her that "I don't know at all." Then she explained me about the show in detail. ⋯ I just listened what she said. After couple of times of the same situations, she knew that I was not interested in it at all. Then she stopped talking about it to me. A Chinese student, about 22?
> HL: Did you ever try kindly explaining the Korean culture?
> HyunJung: Well. I don't know it well (about the idol). They know better. Really. Chinese are into the Korean culture and fashion. I don't want to deliver inaccurate information. It would be better to let them know about it by themselves. They also asked about the Korean drama *Descendants of the Sun*. I even did not know the English title. She watched it too. Knows better than me. They use the Internet.
> (HyunJung, 30s, 1st generation, professional, interviewed in Korean)

It is hard to conclude that the visibility of the Korean Wave in the U.S. is deeply linked with the changes in their attitudes and values about practicing Korean culture in their daily lives. Yet, if they consumed and were exposed to Korean culture every day as a source of pleasure, it might be easier for them to actually exercise the cultural customs from their homeland in their daily lives in the United States. International students and professionals sensed and appreciated the visibility of Korean culture, but they willingly chose to present their ethnic culture as merely a "cultural fragrance" (Iwabuchi, 2002, p. 27). They are fluent English speakers compared to the first generation in who are in their 70s or 80s. They also mostly study or work with non-Koreans. Thus, they have figured

out how to use their differences to give them an edge in acquiring a better position rather than remaining a silent minority. At the same time, this group is pretty open to adopting U.S. culture which is not usual in their homeland. Their inherited culture and their newly settled culture mutually influence the constructing of their in-between identity.

> I am working with various races/ethnicities. Especially my clients are highly educated. Thus, they did not show their contempt feelings because I am a Korean. They do not say "where is it?" but I assume that they just trying to be conscious about any discriminative comments. So I use it as a marketing strategy. I call them with their last name, do not call them by their first name. and always respond to them with the formal way. Like Yes, Sir, yes, Ma'am. I really mean it. And then I also bow to them in a Korean formal greeting way. People are surprised at first. Then I tell them "this is a Korean way." Then they eventually got used to it. I also shake hands after a good meeting and also hug with them. I try to use both cultures' customs.
>
> (Minseo, 30s, 1st generation, professional, interviewed in Korean)

> No matter what is Korean culture, I recognized how I could cope with the good Korean culture in the drama. Then I try to do that to my parents. If I find something positive in the U.S. drama, I employ it too. I do not necessarily adjust my values depending on whom I meet. I interact with many second generations in the Korean church I attend. They are totally different. For example, I am a teacher at the church, and I believe I should call the other teachers with a formal title, like Teacher Jonathan. Nevertheless, he is just 21. However, these kids are different. They are just 12 or 13, but they call the first name. Then the other second generation teacher told me that that could make them friendly. I couldn't get it at first, but it might be right. There are different cultures.
>
> (HyunJung, 30s, 1st generation, professional, interviewed in Korean)

Min (2013, pp. 31-32) stressed the role of the bilingual international/professional immigrants who have continuously increased in numbers during the past several decades. With their multicultural background and language skills, they can bridge the gap between the first generation of seniors and the second generation of Korean Americans. Further, they contribute to transnational ties between Korea and the U.S. Their strategy may seem incompetent to the eyes of the senior Korean Americans who worked hard to make their

children adjust to the dominant white culture in order to belong. But rather, this is most often an intentional strategy caused by their life conditions and used by them to be recognized and succeed. They might, for example, leave after a while due to their visa status or future plans. Though continuously exploring their next steps, they understand that they cannot completely fit into the local while working toward their goals. Meanwhile, Korean Americans in this group create their subjectivity close to the global culture. This shift is a reciprocal reaction since local people and other migrants are now more informed about different cultures and hope to know more about Korean culture under the conditions of the globalization. I will discuss this further in the chapter 6 to illustrate locality.

Korean Wave is not Mainstream Culture

Age significantly influences the capacity for appreciating a specific culture. Responses on their thoughts concerning the impact of the Korean Wave from first generation and few second generation informants in their 50s or 60s sharply contrasted with the young second generation. Age was a key factor in determining their daily media practices, as well as their way of engagement in the flow of the Korean Wave. Most of them are too busy to participate in the fandom of the popular culture. Rather, media consumption is one of their individual activities for relaxation at home. At the same time, K-pop music mainly targets the youth group from teenagers to those in their 20s. My senior informants might recognize famous K-pop performers since these celebrities were often spotlighted as a symbol of pride in the Korean media. However, except for a few performers like Psy, they barely recognize the idol stars or songs since they do not enjoy

that genre. They are not that familiar with globally circulated Korean media products since they mostly enjoy different genres of popular music and dramas from Korea.

> Susan: I think (the Korean Wave) impact is huge. (To show) what is Korea. I think in Europe it would be bigger than in the U.S. Europe, China, and Asia. South East Asia.
> HL: You got the information from the media?
> Susan: Yes, I mainly heard that from the news. I experienced some.
> HL: You haven't experienced it in the U.S.
> Susna: I rarely felt it. I did not feel any special thing for the Korean Wave here. I think young people might know more. My generation cannot give a good answer for that. We would say "we do not know." I rarely sensed about the Korean Wave. I heard the story that the young are crazy about it. We did not experience it directly.
> (SuJin, 50s, 1st generation, senior, interviewed in Korean)

Further, they strongly believe that this transnational cultural flow from Korea is not regarded as a major shift in recognition or national power. For them, the Korean Wave is only popular among part of the youth in the Korean American community and their few American acquaintances. They thought it would not last that long because they have watched trends of popular culture historically only last for a short season.

> I do not think the Korean culture is that powerful in the U.S. Electronics or cars are amazing. But, is there any film which was successful in the U.S.? Or any entertainer? Psy was once popular but not anymore.
> (YoonKyung, 60, 1st generation, senior, interviewed in Korean)

> It does not have so big of impact on the mainstream society. Even though the people go to, eat the Korean cuisine but they do not think about Korean free trade acts. They are thinking about something else. And they enjoy their children probably enjoy K-pop, but that's it. That's their American life otherwise. How deep does it impact? I don't know otherwise. It could be deep at this point. However, after few years, young people become adults and influential people. They may now show great affinity and closeness to Korea and what's going on in Korea. So I think the door is open to an impact of Korean Wave in American society. But it is maybe in the future.
> (Sean, 50s, 2nd generation, senior, interviewed in English)

Whereas international students and young professionals said they were not into the K-pop music that much since they understand and enjoy different genres of Korean popular music, senior informants questioned whether this genre of music even conveys the authenticity of Korean culture.

> What is K-pop? It is popular for some reasons. But young people identified with what, tall, good looking, women in short skirt dancing? Some guy with a lot of hair, shocking clothes? As they get older, they cannot identify with that. ⋯ K-pop is very superficial. It has not very deep value in it. They choose it for the look, when they think about the K-pop musicians. They always think about the height and the weight. Next, you need to do plastic surgery and clothing and dance. That usually can come with hours of preparation. Finally, maybe there is some musical skills. Then I do not even there is any need for originality. Song writing, innovation in music. I don't think that would be part of it. I think 12 or 20 young women or young men dancing on the stage. After several years they can be replaced by some group or some other people. So there is no value in them. You can get rid of them. They cannot make their living if they do not have talent. They did not market development by themselves. I mean someday. But mostly now, this is kinds of manufacturing of the show.
> (Sean, 50s, 2nd generation, senior, interviewed in English)

Apparently, they do not buy the idea of cultural hybridity. That might be because they have more concrete ideas about what is Korea and what is the U.S. Therefore, the visibility of Korean popular culture must be meaningfully measured in terms of a certain impact on the political and economic results. Thus, first generation Korean Americans, especially seniors, were somewhat skeptical about the influences of the rise of the Korean Wave in the U.S.

> I think it depends on what opportunity is created from this situation. How these Korean movies, dramas, and histories, and Korean foods, Korean political situation, and customs. How that will relate to the interest in Korean's well being? Because there was some impact on Korea per se among young people. Yes, it has an effect on Korean American society, but not really so visible for the older people. The older people are delighted to watch the Korean movies and people.. so many European Americans, Caucasian American, native American and some African

> American are very interested in the Korean history. Dramas, and movies and films. But it does not change their routine.
> (Sean, 50s, 2nd generation, senior, interviewed in English)

From these Korean seniors' perspective, the Korean Wave can be significant depending on how the major entertainment industry or mainstream society responds to Korean culture or ethnic Koreans. For them, grass-roots cultural globalization is not valid as a potential force for challenging hegemony. Rather, they felt that the youth who are fascinated by this "mass culture" are a small group who want to escape from reality. Thus, it was natural that they felt proud of the globally renowned Korean American classical cellist in their neighborhood much more than K-pop stars.

> I think the Korean American college students who are enjoying Korean culture are only part of the Korean Americans. Maybe 20%? The younger Korean Americans, under 5 years old, they rarely have interested in their Korean identity. College students are not representing the whole Korean American society. One of my customers went to MIT, a female student. And then another one went to MIT too. Then, their parents came and said their daughter hates to belong to the Korean meeting at MIT because they only speak in Korean. She complained that "why these Korean American students do not try to hang out with the other Americans?" The other students also joined the club and talked in English, but the students from Korea only used Korean. As we know, that university is a top school. Then they need to make a milieu to assimilate to other American students. If only Koreans get together, they cannot be a big shot later.
> (YoonKyung, 60, 1st generation, senior, interviewed in Korean)

It is not just that they want that their children to become successful. Rather, it is more desperate than that. They witnessed many struggles within the Korean American community and concluded that Korean Americans could not become successful since they did not belong to the in-group of mainstream society. Thus, the senior informants enjoy Korean media content by themselves, but they hope that the second generation Korean Americans will adopt the cultural norms of mainstream U.S. society. Enjoying and being crazy over Korean culture is regarded as wasting time or even worse, a

distortion of their situated reality in the U.S. These older Korean Americans thought that if their children speak English well and obtain their education in the U.S., they would get into white mainstream society and avoid the discrimination and hardship they bore in the past. However, for second generation Korean Americans, there are clear and finer boundaries between races and ethnicities to conquer these differences. As a Korean researcher, I could hear the honest comments about switching — a tendency to use their own native language — between the international students and the second generation students at the local Ivy League school, University of Pennsylvania's Korean Student Association group.

The following section discusses how the emotional shift among Korean Americans generates global imagination about the places of Korea, Asia, and the U.S. since these places are linked with the ethnic dimension of their identity. Since consuming mediated images is inevitably associated with imagination about place, how does global imagination reshape the imagined worlds of Korean Americans? The next section examines the ways in which their global imaginations offer complicated orders in response to global hegemony.

Imagining Korea Every Day in the U.S.

Appadurai stated that transnational media consumption is mutually interconnected with transnational migration. He viewed that due to their in-between identity, it is natural that the immigrant group keeps imagining moving or returning to their ancestral homeland. Thus, they are more easily affected by transnational media and assimilated to the global culture (Appadurai, 1996, pp. 4-6). In addition to transnational media consumption, the conditions of globalization allowed Korean Americans to connect with

their ancestral homeland culture. They move across the borders more often for sight-seeing, finding a spouse, meeting family members, or attending schools in Korea. Visiting their ancestral homeland after high school graduation became customary for Asian American students. Both mediated images and their Korean American viewers are not "easily bound within local, national, or regional space. (p. 4)" Here, Appadurai (2013) argued that the collective sense of imagination is central to individual agency creating aspirations or a "navigational capacity (p. 187)" for a better life.

According to the data, the global imagination of individuals in their located place and other mediated places is not totally emancipatory. Instead, it is contextualized depending on individual circumstances embedded with one's past experiences, citizenship, and generation. Global imagination about Korea, Asia, and the U.S. among my informants are, therefore, quite varied. I discuss the young second generation of Korean Americans first since they are both actively engaging in consuming Korean mass media and, at the same time, producing their global imagination about Korea. Then I compare the imagined worlds of the young professional immigrants/international students and the older first generation immigrants.

Young Second Generation Korean Americans' Imagined Worlds

Most of my second generation Korean American informants acknowledge Korea as a very developed nation. This is a huge shift among young Korean Americans because white upper middle class society has been generally regarded as a model for modernized and developed culture. Although that opinion might be reserved for now, the second generation has witnessed a developed and modernized Korea with distinctive features.

Compared to their parents who moved to the U.S. in the 1970s and 1980s for better opportunities, their imagined Korea is very different.

> I never thought Korea is a developing country. Because obviously (it is) very developed. Not higher in respect above America, but much more equal in the sense of education. Technologically they are far more advanced than us. Not only because they are tinier country but just there are genius there.
> (Hannah, 20, 2nd generation, college student, interviewed in English)

> I think probably 2, 3 years ago it really started taking off. Psy, yeah. *Gangnam Style*. Then people who don't even listen to music who know about Korean barbecue started associating it, too. Then it just kind of exploded.
> (Joon, 19, 1.5 generation, college student, interviewed in English)

> I felt really empowered when non-Koreans are interested in Korean culture. I feel like so proud, so amazed. I want them to know Korea is the greatest country on this world.
> (Joseph, 30s, 2nd generation, professional, interviewed in English)

Korea's global recognition might be one of the major factors for their positive feeling toward Korea. However, as Appadurai described, their positive emotions toward the cultural dimension of Korea creates a totally different subjectivity and idea about Korean culture. Youth groups of the second generation who are fascinated by Korean popular culture talk about Korea every day and imagine it as a very cool place. Multiple contacts through media, Korean neighbors and friends, and memories of visiting make them feel close to Korea. They look for better features in Korea compared to the U.S. and hoped to understand more about the culture. Their positive emotions toward their ancestral homeland and ethnic identity made them imagine Korea as a privileged place.

> (By consuming Korean news, TV programs) I want to keep up trying to understand what is happening in Korean society… you know just cause my heart. I want to live in Korea. I want to be in Korea but (am) in Philadelphia. I can't do anything about it.
> (Joseph, 30s, 2nd generation, professional, interviewed in English)

> Whenever I go to Korea, I feel like at home. I don't feel like I'm in a foreign country. I feel like I fit in really well. One thing I'm really jealous of in Korea and I always tell people, is that if you walk out of your apartment in a city, within five minutes, there is everything. PCbang (Internet café), Noraebang (Karaoke), all the restaurants, shops, everything you can do is within five minutes walking distance. The night life in Korea is so much better than around here. Because where I live, I have to drive a car to get somewhere. I can't walk anywhere.
>
> (Andy, 19, 2nd generation, college students, interviewed in English)

> It is not just feeling close. Well. The place I hope to visit. What should I say? It is just familiar place? Not that new for me anymore and I feel I know something whatever I exposed to the images about Korea. Maybe I'm so interested in Korea. I watched lots of Korean TV programs and looked at the streets there. I found many images on Facebook too. Like food porn and the scenery of the streets. I think it is very up to date these days. ⋯ Before, I did not know much about Korea. A few Korean pop singers? Once I visited there, I understand much more than before.
>
> (Rachel, 21, 2nd generation, college student, interviewed in Korean)

Through mobile based messengers and social network services, they could be connected to Korea as a group or as an individual. This immediacy through globalized media made them generate close emotional attachment to Korea. This engagement and belonging is more extensively discussed in Chapter 6.

Their imagined Korea is actively forming and continuously reshaped. In particular, Korea's long history made them excited about Korea. Up until now, Western European history was often represented and identified as the root of U.S. society. In fact, the Korean Americans could not fit into this history, even in their imagination. Now they have an alternative imagined space with which they can relate that has rich and deep traditions, represented in the Korean media in a fascinating way.

> I don't think it was the music video (*Gangnam Style*) per se, although that was a large part of it. The music video was just kind of a gateway for people to look at more Korean media, but that basically popularized it and started making more people watch it. It is just not Korean American. I think the Psy video right now it has the number one most views on YouTube. It's like a couple billion already. Because of that, people know

> more about K-pop, or at least they've been exposed to K-pop. That means the more people who are exposed to it, that means more people will be enjoying and looking it up and things like that, and then getting deeper into it. That video was a big part of it, but it's not the main reason. Because if that was the only thing, then people would just drop it. That basically made people want to watch more. Then because K-pop and other Korean cultural stuff is very interesting and people enjoy it, then it started catching on because of that.
>
> (Alex, 19, 3rd generation, college student, interviewed in English)

> It was just like dumb things like the whole chinky thing and then people would like "oh! You are like Kim Jong Il's granddaughter." Or like "are you from North or South Korea?" When you are a kid, you are just like "These kids are mean to me. Why are they mean to me? It's because I'm Asian. Why couldn't I be born white?" One big thing when I was younger, like I feel every kid wants to be like a princess. But when I thought about princess, I thought about like a white princess in Europe. But now, if I think about me being a princess as a kid, it would be like I would like wear a pretty hanbok (Korean traditional dress) and I would live in a palace. I really like the use of colors (of hanbok), like the primary colors and all that.
>
> (Hannah, 20, 2nd generation, college student, interviewed in English)

For them, Korea is an attractive place that they really hope to visit, and where they hope to study, or work. Professionals visited Korea for family trips and tourism hoping to stay there for a while. Several college students were excited that they would visit Korea in order to participate in the study abroad program sooner or later. They also heard much information from someone who moved to Korea for work as a professional like a lawyer or an English teacher. With respect to the influence of the Korean Wave, they also hope to work in the entertainment industry as producer and entertainers.

> I feel like, I need to leave Philadelphia. I even think I might live in Korea. The U.S. is fine too. I just have experiences in Korea and the United States. so it might be changed later. But the U.S. and Korea are the place I feel comfortable. I am familiar with the culture.
>
> (Rachel, 21, 2nd generation, college student, interviewed in Korean)

> HL: so you don't want to just be there or do you have a plan? I mean maybe that video entertainment company in Korea you considered applying to?

> Hannah: I thought it would be cool. I think it would be interesting to be able to work in one of the production areas for like a couple years. (Hannah, 20, 2nd generation, college student, interviewed in English)

Their aspirations toward Korea do not mean they regard Korea as the best place or a more privileged place than the U.S. Yet, unlike their parents, they aspire to migrate to Korea as a temporary move. Their ancestral homeland of Korea offers them another possibility to consider. On the other hand, they are also aware of the negative side of Korea which they have experienced in Korea, heard about from relatives or friends in Korea, or been exposed to through the media. For this reason, their excitement about their Korean dimension of identity is not totally rooted in mediated images or fantasies. When we started talking about contemporary Korean culture with young second generation Korean Americans, they honestly discussed their difficulties fully accepting the customs and values from Korean culture. They were scared of the competitiveness of Korean society. Most of them did not agree with the hierarchical culture in working places. The extended family system in Korea (which in fact, has almost perished in Korea) is also hard to take from the young Korean American's perspective. Performing gender and sexuality as a social practice was often mentioned along with their Korean media consumption, and this issue will be elaborated further in the next chapter. Yet, they do not have to deal with these negatives directly while they are in the U.S. The negative or different aspects of Korea they sensed were not comprehensively discussed. But through their intercultural experiences, the second generation Korean Americans constructed deeper understanding of themselves by reflecting themselves against two heterogeneous cultures.

> I'm like very thankful I grew up in America. I heard nothing can be compared to be hard to get the acceptance in the top school in Korea.

(Cindy, 19, 2nd generation, college student, interviewed in English)

> One of my friends worked here and then moved to Korea for a job. She said, Korean company is too hierarchal. They socialize and drink together after the work even one does not want to. Whatever they felt, they should say yes, yes, yes. Here, if you say no, other colleagues say, oh OK. Another instance that I have a faith in Christianity, thus I do not drink or smoke. But Koreans do not accept to that excuse. Their culture is clearly there. It is not matter with my ability to work. Then it might be better to show my ability in the U.S. That makes me to discourage to work in Korea. I could see many cases from my friends or media. I felt like Korea is different from what I imagined.
>
> (SiWon, 30s, 1.5 generation, professional, interviewed in Korean)

> I'm noticing much more cultural differences when I watch it. One very basic difference in our culture is that everyone lives together in Korea. Grandchildren and their grandparents always live in one house. ⋯ I think it is still odd if you think the Korean man still living with his parents. ⋯ They will cook for you and clean for you. ⋯ If you are an adult, you should find your own live.
>
> (Emma, 30s, 2nd generation, professional, interviewed in English)

> I heard that people from here suffered for the cultural differences. Even here, Korean American college students frustrated for that hierarchal culture among Korean students group in the U.S. college. I heard that a lot.
>
> (Rachel, 21, 2nd generation, college student, interviewed in Korean)

> If they asked me if I can live in Korea now, I might not say yes, honestly. I live here for long time and if I move there, I should restart everything. It is different to come here as a student or an adult. One of my friend worked here and then moved to Korea. She said that Korean company has lots of hierarchal system and regulations. They have a social life after work. She did not want to drink but should. In Korea, we should say yes yes yes, but here, if we say no thank you, then oh, it's ok. Their culture is there and it is less matter with my ability.
>
> (SiWon, 30s, 1.5 generation, professional, interviewed in Korean)

Nevertheless, these young Korean Americans' imagination and aspiration are irregular and unexpected from a broader perspective. Several studies have explored the impact of Western cultural power as a significant pull-factor for global youth group in East Asia to migrant into the western countries (Fujita, 2009; Kim, 2011). Considering

that these studies mainly discussed transnational culture from the U.S. and Western Europe to other regions, the global imagination and aspiration among the young second generation of Korean Americans was unforeseen. These young Korean Americans were born and raised in the U.S. and educated at a college level. Compared to their parents' experiences as first generation immigrants, it must have been much easier for them to assimilate into U.S. society. The younger generation probably confronts less of the intense and overt racial discrimination in the U.S. than their parents did. Therefore, they have possibly developed a more positive ethnic identity than their parents through cherishing their ethnic culture, engaging in ethnic social networks, cultivating affiliations to their ancestral homeland, and perceiving their ancestral homeland's global power and influence (Min & Chung, 2014, pp. 7-12).

Jeongwon, a 1.5 Korean American in late his 40s, stated that Korean Americans eventually realized that they could not get into the "mainstream society"—probably meaning the white culture— and instead established strong connections to the Korean community. My young second generation Korean Americans informants felt isolated and were challenged throughout their middle school and high school years for their race and ethnicity. Their affinity to the Korean culture was amplified and reinforced through their peer groups from school or Korean church since they mostly enjoy Korean culture together as Andy, Alex, and Joon did. They said that most of their close friends were Korean Americans.

> HL: You did not feel any social pressure that you should be in the white community?
>
> Rachel: I don't think so. Well. When I started middle school, people try to find their own characters. At that time, I had some concerns like "whom I should get along?" Then when the 7th grade, I met the friends I can hang out with. Then I haven't had any concerns like

that. I did not think I should transform myself to get in a certain community.

HL: These friends are Korean Americans?

Rachel: Yes, yes, yes! I met one Korean friend and I met her friends too.

HL: So she is the one who became your best friend?

Rachel: Yes, since 7th grade to high school. We also came to the same college. She is a Korean American too, but she cannot speak Korean. Somewhat different. She meets lots of Vietnamese friends. I meet Korean friends. But we are happy together.

(Rachel, 21, 2nd generation, college student, interviewed in Korean)

As described in Rachel's story, their agency was subtly limited by the politics of race in their early age besides their comfortable feelings from cultural closeness as Asians. Globalized media and simultaneous interconnectivities helped my informants and their Asian friends to share common interests in and global imaginations of cultural trends in the Asian region. What would be the meaning of this shift for Korean Americans? Huat (2004) argued the Asian nations started a conversation across borders and possibly participated in constructing a potential East Asian identity rooted in their common consumption of popular cultural products within the region. Transnational cultures from Asia made them explore and negotiate their identities as Americans. This trend was expanded by diverse Asian ethnic groups and distinctively developed by their "-American" identities within the U.S. cultural territory. I meet diasporic Asian students who could speak several distinct Asian languages, including Korean, since they were interested in different cultures from other countries. At least among these youth groups, conversations have been initiated and Asian Americans collectively imagine Asia.

Amelia: Even though we are the minority, I know there is so many of us whether we are Korean or Chinese and stuff like that. So yeah, I never embraced to be Korean, I just didn't outright speak out about it too much, but now that Korean food is so popular that, "oh, where can we eat good Korean food?" so there are more opportunities for me to talk about it. A lot of my friends and I were very open people. We are very open to different cultures, so I just

met really nice people. But yeah, I've one Thai friend, and she and I are very very close. She listens to Thai music, she watches Thai dramas. She is actually 1.5. She enjoys Korean food, Korean dramas. It's like when she is with me, she likes watching it with me, eating with me.

HL: So you guys are really open to different culture.

Amelia: Yeah, so I think I just met very good groups of people. I mean right now I haven't met too may new people, but all the people that I've met so far are very open people that are willing to learn about new cultures and stuff like that.

HL: That's very different from your parents' generation, right?

Amelia: I guess so because my parents' generation there were a group of friends who are mostly just church friends, but now because I speak both English and Korean, my group of friends is bigger than theirs. They like Korean beauty products and things like that.

(Amelia, 22, 2nd generation, college student, interviewed in English)

One of the senior second-generation informants, Sean, described Koreans based on his past experiences as: "very shy to say 'kimchi', look at the Korean something. I think they naturally do not want to expose themselves. They seem to want to fit in (the mainstream society). They do not want to differentiate themselves from the U.S. society." His description of Korean Americans hinted at the cultural hegemony of the U.S. that Korean Americans have faced and bear as immigrants. Yet, the symbol of Korean culture is being replaced from the very peculiar flavored cuisines to globally renowned, glamorous celebrities in Korean media contents. The second generation youth fall in love with them. This evolution has brought Korean Americans ethnic visibility in their own right in U.S. society and has served to set them apart from other Asians, including the Chinese or Japanese.

Emma: The girls' generation, when I was international students, I saw the girls from Japan they were probably from Japan and China. They were crazy about them. You know crazy about these k pop girls and K-pop people. So I heard about K pop from Japan and China, and I would be like "who is that?" and they are like (surprisingly) "you don't know….?"

HL: You feel close to Korean or Asian people because of the Korean Wave?

Emma: I would say I feel more comfortable to Asians in general just because cultural minority? Not barely through media. So for example I have just white friends who went to the K-pop concert. So especially K-pop is so popular now, so even if in the U.S. they would like to go to the K-pop concert. People go there all over. I guess my friend from India, she is Asian and she loves Korean dramas. It was so funny that I was actually talking to my service, AT&T or something. She was from Singapore. From my name, she was talking to me about the Korean drama. Korea is just so globally conceived. I would like to say cultural connectivity.

(Emma, 30s, 2nd generation, professional, interviewed in English)

At least recently, the countries are starting to recognize each country individually. The way North Korea was perceived is very different from the way South Korea is perceived right now, which before it was mixed, or all of Asia was this way, something like that. Recently I think it's based on its own country's achievements and things like that, or how that country acts on a global scale. I think at last that's changed. It's not really Asia. It's based on the country.

(Alex, 19, 3rd generation, college student, interviewed in English)

HL: I heard that AOMG (a Korean hip-hop group) had a concert in New York

Cindy: Yeah (clapping)! Yes! Yes! Yes!

HL: So you went there?

Cindy: No. I couldn't, but I really wanted to.

HL: One of my informant said, she went to the concert twice and 80% of the fans were for foreigners (she called non-Korans as "foreigners").

Cindy: Right right, because *it is in America.*

HL: But she was surprised how people knew.

Cindy: AOMG.. yes, that's interesting actually.

HL: How could you know?

Cindy: I listened to another music from?

HL: Youtube?

Cindy: Um.. actually they were really famous. You know.

(Cindy, 19, 2nd generation, college student, interviewed in English)

Through their experiences of the Korean Wave, second generation Korean Americans positively imagined a cosmopolitan U.S. society where all kinds of transnational culture can flourish. As Cindy quickly responded above, for these second

generation Korean Americans, it is no wonder that many non-Koreans came to the K-pop concerts since these happened in the United States and Korean popular music is so good for anybody. Likely, they hope for a little bit more interest in Korean culture so they can share it with others. Throughout the interviews and participant observations, I heard about numerous experiences in which these young Korean Americans met different races at a Korean rapper's concert in New York or a Korean idol concert in New Jersey. Their Caucasian and Indian colleagues showed interest in Korean dramas or their neighbors' asked questions about Korean songs. These experiences among my informants developed beyond just enjoying the Korean popular media. Korean Americans had broader curiosity from people whom they might not have interacted without the rise of the Korean Wave. Thus, these young Korean Americans hoped to connect more and represent their ethnic culture. As Andy's explanation implies, the rise of the Korean Wave provided the foundation for the empowerment of his cultural and ethnic identity.

> Americans still embrace diversity even if you don't assimilate. You know you can still relate well enough to be very successful in strong community in America.
>
> (Joseph, 30s, 2nd generation, professional, interviewed in English)

> I just really like the fact that I'm Korean. I think the Korean culture is so neat. To me, it's just something I can have that's different from Americans, right? It's like I have this distinctive feature that these guys don't have. Not to say that in a mean way, but I have this feature that these guys don't have and I can explain what that part of my life is to them and hopefully they'll appreciate it and learn.
>
> (Andy, 19, 2nd generation, college students, interviewed in English)

International Students/Young Professional Immigrants' Imagined Worlds

Most international students and young professionals were intensely connected with an imagined Korea through the media and their direct communication with family

and relatives on a daily basis. Therefore, they had clear missions or purposes for staying in the U.S., though most of them hoped to go back to Korea.

> Mina: I do not know well. But I think I can live well if I will be there (Korea). I could see much positive side than before. I think the mediated Korean society might not realistic. For example, Reply 1988 is a perfect fantasy about neighborhood, I think. I also romanticize many things without a sense of reality. For example, my fantasy about marriage? When I watched the Korean society mediated by the Korean dramas, I thought I would like to live like that way. It might be fantasy. Probably.
> HL: You have more confidence because you understand the culture well?
> Mina: well, I might not understand everything, but these shows portrayed many good things. What I miss here. Keep reminding me about that.
> (Mina, 40, 1st generation, professional, interviewed in Korean)

The impact of the Korean Wave in Asia was actively discussed and often boosted by the Korean media since the late 1990s in Korea. International students in their 20s had their own individualistic tastes in media consumption, which did not necessarily echo the popularity of K-pop songs and global fandom. Unlike the second generation of Korean American students shared and sought information on English language fan sites like Soompi, Reddit, or Koreaboo, they did not seek out any fan groups or activities. Instead, they chose to access Korean fan sites based in Korea which were regarded as more authentic. Thus, the digitalized media environment extended their cultural sphere rooted in their homeland.

Probably for that reason, international students were rarely exposed to the Internet community or fandom for popular culture here. Contrary to the experience of second generation Korean Americans, they usually said they could not experience the phenomenon reflecting the upsurge of the Korean Wave contrary to the experience of second generation Korean Americans.

HL: Do you think Americans know something about Korea?
Minseo: They only talked about Psy.. *Gangnam Style*. The friends of my son because it was really popular among them. *Gangnam Style*. It was more popular between children. It is fun. The music video. The grown-ups just thought it was just fun and they mentioned about it to me. I became to know the *Gangnam Style* from my son and the parents of his friends.
(Minseo, 30s, 1st generation, professional, interviewed in Korean)

I do not know what the difference is now. For now, as I told, when the Chinese students approached me very friendly, I sensed that Korean pop culture is now at global stage. But I do not know what it was before. If I was here when the popularity of the *Jewel in the Palace* started, then I may know clearly what the difference is. At that time, Korean people brought the drama CD or VHS tapes from Korea. If I was here at that time, I might sense the difference. But, honestly, I do not know the difference brought by the Korean Wave.
(SeongJin, 20s, international student, interviewed in Korean)

Honestly, nothing. In the computer lab at Temple, I never saw any real American watched the Korean media content. I never experienced that. People say, the Korean Wave in China, or in Vietnam. But anyway, it is in Asia. Not in the U.S. Well, one time, when I felt amazing that when I was at Casino in Las Vegas. I listened to the song by Wonder Girls. I thought "wow! Wonder Girls is doing something in the U.S." However, Korean media hugely promoted how Wonder Girls was successful in the U.S., but I never saw any of their album in actual music store in the U.S. except that time. I lost interest after that. Except Psy. But I did not experience the fervor toward Psy in local. All I heard are just mediated information. People said Psy made a YouTube record, but it was shown in the media. I couldn't meet any American fan around me.
(Hyuk, 30s, international student, interviewed in Korean)

International students who moved to the U.S. for a better opportunity for education are constantly negotiating their imagination about Korea, the U.S., or any other future destination after graduation. The language barrier, pressure for academic achievement, homesickness, and uncertainty about the future were all sources of anxiety. Watching Korean media content is often seen as a "guilty pleasure" way to spend time. Still, they spent many hours consuming media from Korea constantly pursuing a feeling of connection. For them Korea is the place to which they hope to return. This tendency

developed into a banal patriotic feeling (Kim, 2011). Thus, the ethnic identity and nationalist mindset among these international students became prominent.

> JiHye: I use Facebook a lot but there are many friends I only know their face. So I rarely upload anything there. I just look at the newsfeed what people push the like button. I rarely read the post that the U.S. friend liked. Mainly the pictures and videos that my Korean friends liked. Personally, I felt more and more that there is not much common ground with the U.S. people. It was better when I was a high school student, but it got worse in the college.
> HL: What do you talk about with Koreans then?
> JiHye: Well, we talk about songs, Koran student association stuff.
> SeongJin: I talk about the homework and also religion too. I think religion is important to me. There should be something common to start conversation. But we grew up in different culture, so there is nothing we (Koreans and Americans) can share. Yet, if they are interested in K-pop, I can talk with the person.
> JiHye: Right, there is a student I talked often these days. We just did our assignment together and then he talked about the *Old Boy* (a Korean film) and said Minsik Choi's acting was amazing. Then we talked about it and then became close. I rarely open my mind to the American students but we started to talk these kinds of small thing then we talk every day after that.
> (JiHye and SeongJin, 20s, international students, interviewed in Korean)

At the same time, the rise of the Korean Wave in the U.S. offered opportunities for the international students to experience and generate transnational cultural solidarity much more easily than before. I met JiHye and SeongJin first at a welcoming party for the Korean Student Association of a University in Philadelphia in the fall semester of 2016. The association emphasized constructing a network of Korean international students helping each other to navigate university life and life in the U.S. Within the circle, Korean values and ethnicity are reflected by the members and officers of the group. Based on this value, Korean international students promote friendships within a group with which they can share their lives and difficulties in the U.S. Although JiHye and SeongJin both said they did not witness the changes brought by the Korean Wave, I

could feel the change in every official activity they hosted, mainly events such as Korean foods, K-pop music festivals, and Korean movie nights. The goal was to gather people who are interested in Korean culture regardless of their nationality.

On the night of the welcoming party, there were many second generation Korean Americans, non-Koreans — including Caucasians, and African Americans as well as Korean international students. It was impressive to me as these youths who had different races/ethnicity and cultural backgrounds walked to the hall. These students were shy at first, but eventually they played games together and mingled with Korean Americans. Moreover, I hung out with the members of the association for a lunch together at a student center and drove to a local multiplex theater to watch a newly released Korean movie together, I realized that half of the Association was second generation Korean Americans.

> HL: I thought it was interesting that the second generation and the international students were getting along together well. Is that a new thing for the Korean Student Association?
> JiHye: Right. They are really excited about the Korean culture. I opened my mind to them. ⋯ They hope to spread the Korean culture too. I cannot tell the other second generations hate Korean meeting, but these students have a passion for the Korean culture.
> (JiHye, 20s, international student, interviewed in Korean)

It is notable that these international students and the young professional migrants have become close to the Asian group. They easily understand and communicate with other Asian students since the Korean Wave. The young Chinese international students who had consumed Korean media products in their homeland and in the U.S. simply felt an affinity with Korean international students. I met a young Chinese student who only watched Korean dramas while she grew up in China with her mother and grandmother. Similarly, most of the Korean students had been approached by Chinese students asking

about Korean media content. On the other hand, cultural proximity provided a common topic to talk about once they became friends. In terms of publicity, they often promote Asian culture as a group.

> HL: Are there any other experiences where the Korean culture influenced your relationship with others?
> SeongJin: Well. I haven't thought about it.
> JiHye: I do not think so.
> HL: You never meet someone who was interested in Korean culture?
> SeongJin: Some Chinese students?
> JiHye: Chinese students are always interested in our culture. Every Chinese I have met.
> SeongJin: Right. I thought there are some advantages.
> HL: They are interested in Korea idol groups?
> SeongJin: Yes.
> JiHye: I think they just like Koreans. So, they liked me and I became close to them.
> HL: You think it is from the Korea popular culture?
> SeongJin: I do not know but they watch the TV programs I like too. *Running Man*, something like that.
> JiHye: They like Korean foods too….
>
> JiHye: We are planning to host a food fair to introduce the Korean foods and K-pop Night. We are going to collaborate with CSA, the Chinese Student Association, and Malaysians and Japanese students association.
> HL: Is there any reason you work with the Asian students?
> JiHye: That will make the size bigger and make people pay attention to us. Asian students are curious about the Korean culture too. Chinese student association is very big. It is good to be with them. And we are also friends.
> HL: how could you become friends?
> JiHye: because I look like a Chinese? (laugh together) well.. when I was a student at a high school here, Chinese and Koreans became very close. I started to have an open mind to them.
> SeongJin: I thought about it. But culturally we have divided as West and East. If there is an enemy outside, the inner circle start cooperating (with) each other.
> ……
> JiHye: Chinese people like Koreans. That's why we became friends.
> SeongJin: they seem like to watch many Korean programs. Like *Running Man*.
> JiHye: Right. They watch famous shows like the *Knowing Brother*. Well. For that, I think Koreans here are gaining benefits, honestly.

HL: So they approached you first.
SeongJin/JiHye: Right!
(JiHye and SeongJin, 20s, international students, interviewed in Korean)

Both of them perceived the curiosity, participation, and general favor toward Korean culture and Koreans by the second generation Korean Americans or the Chinese/Asian students. It is true that Korean media products did not replace mainstream popular culture in the U.S. However, the Asian diaspora including Korean Americans are more interested in Korean culture. They witnessed that they watched Korean media content individually within a similar time frame and found contact points among them. This familiarity and affinity generated within Asian communities brought opportunities for developing deepened understanding among these young groups.

Younhee: Well, sometimes my patients watched Korean dramas at home and talked me. Colleagues rarely talked. I think media influenced them a lot. Vietnamese patients liked it a lot. They also like Koreans. Always talked about Korean dramas. Chinese too. Like Koreans. Well, maybe only Ms. Yuki does, but Japanese people also enjoy Korean dramas. Whenever they meet Korean, they always talked about Korean dramas.
HL: How about Caucasians or African Americans?
Younhee: Well, White are interested more in the Korean foods. They commented what I had was pretty. They are mostly very positive and express their interests well. But they rarely exposed to the Korean media. ⋯ Mainly the Asians (consume Korean dramas).
HL: Is that helpful for your work?
Younhee: Definitely. It is easier to open mind. When we started to talk about the Korean drama, "right I know the person" then the patient talked about it. They also talked about how they watched the dramas. Then it goes to their personal stories too. Then we can make a rapport quickly.
(YounHee, 40s, 1st generation, professional, interviewed in Korean)

I appreciate this situation. As JiHye said, we are going to prepare the food fair. It is Asian food fair. But we are expecting that Korea section will stand out. For the K-pop and the Korean Wave. I think people will be interested in that. For example, I'm not belittling Malaysia, but we are in a better situation than Malaysia. The name of the Korea has value in it now.
(SeongJin, 20s, international student, interviewed in Korean)

> There are people who are very knowledgeable about Korean culture. They asked a lot of questions and then they asked really sharp questions about politics, or about the system or even the conflict with the North Korea. Or historical complex with Japanese. Those kinds of things. Incredibly shocking in my minds. But just value interests, like people have no idea where so ever. Oh! Where are you from, south Korea or north Korea? Like that kids of really kinds of ignoring people. Just communicating with them does make me feel more Korean.
>
> (HyunJi, 30s, 1st generation, professional, interviewed in English)

In his exploration of globalized culture, Iwabuchi (2002) found that local audiences in different nations had experienced different pleasures from their consumption of transnational media content. He examined the reception of popular culture in multiple sites of East Asia. At that time, East Asian media products from Japan, Korea, and China had started circulating within the region, partly replacing Western products. For instance, young Taiwanese audiences enjoyed Japanese media products feeling pleasure in watching their coeval Asiannesses. Japanese senior audiences, on the other hand, felt the nostalgia of their past while they were watching transnational media content from other Asian nations (Iwabuchi, 2002, p. 122; p.159). Vietnamese youth enjoyed Korean films for their modernized scenes of the city while they imagined their prospective future being as modernized as Korea (Chua & Iwabuchi, 2008).

Similarly, the fact that these diasporic Asian populations in the U.S. explore and imagine each other will become an extraordinary source for their future path. In fact, SeongJin and Jihye both explored job opportunities across borders, including Asian nations. During the interview, they talked about how they could better understand Asia, China or Vietnam, as well as the U.S. JiHye majored in drama acting and had returned from a Shanghai summer intern period before I met her the following fall. Since Chinese tourists enjoyed the musicals in Korea, Korean entertainment companies looked for

opportunities to launch their businesses in Shanghai. JiHye thought it would be great for her to move close to Korea and she also liked the Chinese culture.

What would be their imagined U.S? The first generation immigrant professionals and international students who migrate for better life conditions and education have different global imaginations. Since they voluntarily migrated to the U.S., most of them have concrete reasons for doing so based on U.S. hegemony. Social welfare, occupational stability, language, and academic atmosphere were their priorities for moving to the U.S.

> I had a dream, taking a class with the U.S. students in English? Once it happened to me, I really enjoyed it. I am not good at English, but I always want to be intelligent. Now I'm thinking I am in that imagined scene. That made me really happy.
>
> (SeongJin, 20s, international student, interviewed in Korean)

However, their imagined U.S. was continuously reshaped as they contacted and experienced different cultures.

> I imagined the U.S. was a very developed country in many ways than Korea. But that image was gone away at once when I landed at the JFK airport here. So filthy. I cannot even compare to the Incheon airport (in Korea). It was so poor standard. I understand that it was made long time ago. I understand that. Then I took a car to Philly. But the high way was so poor too. I thought there is a weakness too since this nation is too huge. I understand why people say the U.S. is good. But the gap between the U.S. and Korea becomes narrowed down. It is same I think about China. I thought it might be terrible. But my ex-girl friend sent me couple of pictures. It looks like Korea. So great. Like that. The U.S. is good but not as much as I imagined.
>
> (SeongJin, 20s, international student, interviewed in Korean)

Regarding cultural dynamics, most of their imagined U.S. was operated by white society. While they were clearly conscious of the increased interest from Asian diaspora, they were doubtful about the change brought by the Korean Wave since the "Americans" around them were not interested in Korean culture. This might be also related to the

power relationship. Most of their bosses and colleagues around them were Caucasian, but they sensed that there is huge cultural disparity with white culture.

> HyunJung: It is kinds of complicated. Chinese friends watch Korean dramas but my professors or other American friends, my colleagues in the lab, are not interested in Korean culture at all. I think it is only for those people who are interested in. My professor is not interested in Korean culture at all.
> HL: How does she think about Korea then?
> HyunJung: I didn't ask about it. I think she is interested in China. It is a huge nation. But Korea is… I saw that she asked about China.
> (HyunJung, 30s, 1st generation, professional, interviewed in Korean)

> SeongJin: It is hard to integrate with different races.
> JiHye: Well, there is a saying that if the enemy exists outside (Caucasians), we (Asians) need to unite within anyway. Maybe for that reason. (laughter)
> (JiHye and SeongJin, 20s, international students, interviewed in Korean)

Meanwhile they admitted the global hegemony of the U.S. is always there with the developed education system, priority on human rights, and the size of the U.S. What they sensed differently than before was that these American people started to talk about the situations in Korea in their daily lives. Their interconnectivities across borders made them keep imagining and comparing the other nations or possibilities.

> HyunJung: Pride as a Korean? Well, I don't think so. I was so embarrassed for the Sewol Ferry disaster.
> HL: People know about it?
> HyunJung: The broadcasting here hugely dealt about it. I even did not know the term, "ferry", so I told them "ship", then they said it was a "ferry". I think the U.S. people are interested in the Korea. Especially the issue was related with the children.
> (HyunJung, 30s, 1st generation, professional, interviewed in Korean)

Minseo is a professional migrant with a teenage son who only speaks English. She always referred to her son's media practices and how he understood and imagined Korea since he is more integrated with white peer groups. What she found about her son's media usage is quite different from my other informants in their 20 or 30s, who abided

within the national territories or ethnicities as illustrated in this section. The Internet has provided global cultural platforms to younger generations in the U.S. and they use transnational media products without a sense of difference or foreignness. This implies another new shift of the local-global interaction within mainstream society in the near future.

> HL: Do you think the national brand of Korea was improved?
> MinSeo: Well.. I do not know. First of all, if I said Korea, then people responded "where it is?" (in the past). But now, they say "Korea…!" And show more interest in it. Probably for the mass media? My son.. you might talk with him later. He knows CL (a Korean singer). I did not let him know about her. His peers thought she is very hip, but later he knew that she is a Korean.
> HL: So, they do not care about the nationality or race when they listen music?
> MinSeo: Just music, you know what Youtube does. It is really international thing. Just pick and listen, and then realize it is a Korean song. He likes Big Bang (Korean idol group)'s music very much.
> HL: Big Bang released a song in English?
> MinSeo: Well.. it does not sound like English. But.. Korean songs include lots of words and hooks in English. For instance, "Monster (a hook of Big Bang's song)…!" Then he can sing along that part like "monster!"
> HL: Where he learned about this song? From his Korean friends? Or American friends?
> MinSeo: I do not know well. As long as I know, he does not have many interactions with Korean friends. He rather gets along with American friends.
> (Minseo, 30s, 1st generation, professional, interviewed in Korean)

Senior First Generation Korean Americans' Imagined Worlds

> MyungSoo: It was so stranded when we arrived here at first. There are many stories on the people who emigrated from Korea. A person who was not successful in Korea, or moved for the children's education, neither one thing nor the other, just migrated into the U.S…. there might be a person was criminal or broke out and then flew. These people might have some fantasies on the people in the U.S. like American dream. When the Korean Wave came and Korea became a rich country, there were people who went back to Korea.

HL: Oh, really?

MyungSoo: I never thought about it for myself but I thought when I came here first, I thought that I would make lot of money then would go back to Korea. Human beings have homing instincts, always hope to go back their nations. Usually people do not want to create something new here. Rather they dream to achieve something here and then return.

HL: But in general, people have a positive impression of the U.S. culture.

MyungSoo: Yes, but the culture is still so different and we have the language barrier. Then we start thinking we, Koreans, should unite to move forward. So there are not many Koreans in Philly, but they say seventy thousand. We mainly meet at the Korean church.

(MyungSoo, 70s, 1st generation, senior, interviewed in Korean)

Senior informants I have met might be the ones who have engaged more than any others in the situation of Korean history, politics, social issues, and economics. Illustrated by the scene at the local Korean hair shop (noted earlier in this chapter), they connect to their homeland via media more than before and were very satisfied with the convenient and immediate accessibility to the Korean community brought by technological advances. International students SeongJin and JiHye told me that "they (senior Korean Americans) know better than us," "they might know more about the social current affairs than people in Korea." Informants in these age group mostly came to the U.S. to start their own businesses, most frequently with their whole family. As MyungSoo exemplified, their lives in Korea might not have been that successful. Perhaps they were born in the working class without any kinds of capital. Speaking foreign languages was not expected that much when they were educated in Korea, since there were not many transnational exchanges under the authoritarian regimes except with the U.S. military force. Thus, most of the informants I met who were in their 60s and 70s said they gave up learning or improving their English after arriving here. They rather stayed within the Korean community and continued their ethnic local businesses. Life in the U.S. was less

busy and complicated than in Korea, with the exception of the simultaneous media feeds from Korea.

Appadurai's explanations of the close relationship between migrants and their transnational media consumption work well, considering this group of Korean Americans has thought constantly about returning to their homeland. Actually, some did as MyungSoo described above. However, these thoughts often remain mere imaginings and their imaginations about Korea made them feel it has become more difficult to return to Korea. My senior informants, since age matters in Korea, assumed "there is nothing we can do" or feared the "saving face culture" and said "people might consider that the senior workers are not great, and pathetic." As 1.5 generation JeongWon remembered, his parents were almost "mesmerized" as they made the decision to migrate to the U.S.

> If I put myself in my parents' shoes, they left Korea. Thus, they looked like mesmerizing themselves when they arrived in the U.S. "Korea is not good. America is better." That idea might encourage them to live here. Then now we passed the difficult time and settled. ⋯ Then we have different perspectives. Try to compare the two society fairly. What is good in Korea or here.
>
> (JeongWon, 50, 1.5 generation, senior, interviewed in Korean)

Like his parents, my informants in their 60s or 70s who immigrated into the U.S. in 1980s or 1990s had very different ideas and complicated emotions toward Korea and its culture compared to the other groups. On the one hand, they firmly believed the U.S. overwhelms and prevails over Korea with its size, political development, clean environment, education system, and so on.

> I think I became an American now. I do not want to live in Korea anymore. I like here. Very comfortable here. I think there are many things great here. The environment is good and the air is clear. I do not want to go back there. Maybe for tourism or meeting relatives?
>
> (SuJin, 50s, 1st generation, senior, interviewed in Korean)

> Media on Korean culture will be consumed by Koreans. U.S. culture will be exposed to the American people, right? Then Korea is 50:1. The U.S. has fifty states. The size of the Korea is just similar to Pennsylvania, the whole Korean peninsula. Maybe Korean people say they are more interested in Korean products or culture. But in the whole perspective, we cannot defeat the U.S. Rich Korean Americans buy the U.S. luxurious brand (not products from Korea).
> (YoonKyung, 60, 1st generation, senior, interviewed in Korean)

> I think Korea should go after the U.S. The U.S. is the first nation in the world which established the democratic society. Korea is changing little by little. Then it ultimately should follow the notion of the U.S. The U.S. is the first country to complete the liberal democracy and then Korea should be the first nation in Asia which establish the liberal democracy. The history of the U.S. democracy is 250 years, but we are only 50 years. Considering that short period, we cannot compete with the U.S.
> (MyungSoo, 70s, 1st generation, senior, interviewed in Korean)

On the other hand, ethnicity was a point of pride for them. When they did not have any capital in the U.S society, they kept emphasizing to their children their distinctive potentials based on ethnicity. As MyungSoo stated, Korea should be the most prominent ally and successor of the U.S. in Asia. This is also based on their experiences of the involvement of the U.S. in Korea. Thus, seniors, especially male seniors, watched historical documentaries, current affairs programs, and historical dramas from Korea to explain their ethnic roots to their families. They lived in the U.S. but their Korean ethnic identity became more intensified because of these connectivities.

> HL: Do you talk a lot on Korean society?
> YoonKyung: Of course. Even I don't initiate, customers asked about my thought first on the Korean politics. Then I answer.
> HL: Did you talk like that 15 years ago?
> YoonKyung: Yes we did too.
> HL: How could you know about the news?
> YoonKyung: Well, at that time, we checked the Internet too. Now, we watch the news together, so we talk more.
> HL: Is it more active than before?
> YoonKyung: Sure, much more. ⋯. I think the politicians in Korea should be changed. They do not think about the big picture of the nation but take care of their own interests. As an ordinary person, I think

> we (South Koreans) should unite and then move toward to the global stage.
> (YoonKyung, 60, 1st generation, senior, interviewed in Korean)

Because of her strong Korean identity, YoonKyung seriously worried about the representation of the Korean political situation in the media. In this global media era, she felt that the conflicts of Korean politicians were a shame on the Korean diaspora. The language barrier limits these older immigrants' social activities to the Korean community; thus they do not need to seek deeper information about the U.S. society.

In their eyes, the enthusiasm about K-pop music videos is not welcome since it lost its authentically Korean character and has extremely Westernized features. Sean is a second generation senior, but he explained well why Korean seniors do not appreciate K-pop. Whereas he saw Korean films and dramas as representing a more authentic cultural identity embedded throughout their narratives and scenery, he saw K-pop as a much more hybridized media form with Western elements.

> K-pop is a Korean version of American black music without the depth. K-pop came at time when the U.S. music industry and European music industry is doing poorly. Because of economic napsters, K-pop filled into the market in Asia and Latin America. So it feels specialized young people who are hungry for that kind of thing. If you are really young, you care about how you look like and make a lot of friends. Something like that. So it's very appealing for that age. Something like that. But maybe not so much later. So I cannot say the K-pop is very unique.
> (Sean, 50s, 2nd generation, senior, interviewed in English)

Christian identity was often employed to enhance their identity and unite the community of senior Korean Americans. All of the seniors I met were attending a Korean protestant or catholic church. Church families were a major source of social activities. They did not hesitate to express their religious identity when they discussed their ideas about the media. Some of them spoke of their concerns about the popular culture in

media. The sexualized representations of the young singers were not appropriate from their Christian perspectives. Considering their faith in God, working hard and achieving success are regarded as blessings and signs of faith in God. Therefore, indulging in pop culture and media content was not seen as desirable.

> Well. There are many harmful effects people say. Pornography, gambling, social issues in newspapers. .. I think there is indiscretion on using the Internet. ⋯ I concerned about it. I heard that this thoughtlessness even invaded in the animation for kids.
> (SuJin, 50s, 1st generation, senior, interviewed in Korean)

Since the Korean media consumption of the senior Korean Americans include mainly television dramas and films viewed individually, their perception of the Korean Wave was abstractly shaped by this representation of the Korean media. This was quite different from the younger generations who actually participate in the online discourses on the Korean Wave. The experiences shared by the second generation in this research were often ignored or regarded as a short period or a trend by the senior Korean Americans. Most of them talked about the popularity of the Korean Wave in Asia. They paid attention to the response of the Asia market and felt proud of their ethnic identity. The Asian region is often portrayed as a significant market for Korea in a global era and this view was irrevocably linked to the seniors' imagination of the excellence of Korean culture in Asia. They sensed the increased visibility of the Korean products as they became more prominent in their local spaces, products that became counterparts to U.S. products.

> Sujin: I do not feel the shift is that strong. Maybe because I do not interact with Americans that much? I heard that there is a change but well, I cannot feel by myself.
> HL: What do you sense?
> Sujin: Well, it think it becomes better. When I watch the news. Korean is renown to others. In the U.S. and globally? You mean the Korean

> Wave, right? In China, that has been going crazy. Since the *Descendants of the Sun*. Chinese people were in love with the drama. Song Joong Gi and Song Hye Gyo (a couple in the drama), too. So it is a fact that Korea became renown to other part of the world.
>
> (SuJin, 50s, 1st generation, senior, interviewed in Korean)

> MyungSoo: American customers of my store did not watch Korean dramas or films.
>
> HL: Then is it just a popularity among Korean Americans?
>
> MyungSoo: Nono, when I talked as a representative of the Korean community with the White lawyers or politicians, they told me their family members like the Korean media.
>
> HL: Then they are now pretty open to watch the transnational contents?
>
> MyungSoo: Yeah, they said they watch lots of the Korean contents. In the past, they watched the Jackie Chan films from Hong Kong, but now from Korea. They said they watched various dramas. I cannot tell what the titles were. They watched what I had not watched.
>
> (MyungSoo, 70s, 1st generation, senior, interviewed in Korean)

These senior informants experienced the concrete U.S. hegemony in their daily lives in the form of language barriers, limited social activities, and racism. Thus, their imaginations of Korea and the U.S. were not that flexible or irregular. Most of them firmly stayed within their ethnic identity. Meanwhile, as Korean cultural products became prominent in Asia and more representative of Asia in the U.S., they also sensed the oblique visibility of their ethnic culture both at the global level and in the U.S. society.

Conclusion

Unlike the rise of the Korean Wave in Asia around the late 1990s, the connectivities afforded by the digitalized communication environment initiated the popularity of Korean media content among my informants at a later date in the United States. The digitalized communication environment brought changes in daily media consumption and communication among Korean Americans in the Philadelphia area.

Most of my informants discovered the convenient access to Korean media content via the Internet around 2006. Using digital devices, Korean Americans are able to watch Korean media almost simultaneously with those in Korea and communicate with families and friends without spatial barriers. Young second generation Korean Americans who only consumed Korean media within their families started watching Korean media individually.

This chapter examined how Korean American audiences' global imaginations were facilitated by their Korean media consumption, reshaping their ethnic identity and imagining about the places of Korea, Asia, and America. Young Korean Americans were fascinated by Korean pop culture and excited about its popularity in the United States. As a result, they became more content with their ethnic identity and imagined Korea as a cool place to visit, study, or work. On the other hand, international students and professional immigrants, who are more bounded within their Korean ethnic identity, perceived the popularity of the Korean Wave as rather limited within the Asian diaspora. However, they rarely felt the pressure to be assimilated into the local American culture. Instead, they kept exploring various possibilities for their next steps beyond the U.S. Senior first generation Korean Americans who mainly lived within the Korean ethnic community were mostly doubtful about the shift created by Korean popular culture within the cultural terrain in the U.S. Besides their ethnic pride, they emphasized the necessity of assimilation of young Korean Americans into the U.S. dominant culture as a mean of survival and criticized their embracing Korean ethnic popular culture as a regression.

CHAPTER 5: NEGOTIATING GENDER ROLES, ATTRACTIVENESS, AND LIFE PLANS

This chapter explores how my informants' perceptions of their imagined national/regional/transnational place intersected with other identity factors. The previous chapter discussed the reshaping of the ethnic identity of Korean Americans within the nexus of their imagined Korea, Asia, and the U.S. upon experiencing the Korean Wave in the U.S. This chapter discusses whether — and, if so, how — their modified imaginations about Korea, Asia, and the U.S. have been articulated into transforming identities. Here, I am especially concerned with how they construct gender identity, present their attractiveness through grooming and styling, and plan for the future.

In the media studies field, media representations of race and gender by media have been thoroughly discussed since the ways of visualizing social groups in mediated narratives are easily imbricated with social discourses and involved with constructing individual identities. Western media have been criticized because their representations of races have naturalized Eurocentrism and helped to solidify the legacy of racism as common sense, while voices from the colonized continents have been forced into silence (Shohat & Stam, 1994). Yet, as described in chapter 4, the rise of the Korean Wave in the U.S. and its appreciation by Korean Americans in the U.S. offered an emerging cultural phenomenon to be examined. While participating in transnational media culture, Korean Americans sensed that ethnic identity as a minority group has been empowered through their own imaginations as well as through social discourses. This chapter expands this discussion by exploring their developing identity, highlighting their perception of gender ideologies, managing their appearance, and crafting their future plans.

How does globalized media culture transfigure the impact of the dominant power structure? Some scholars believe the role of media in a globalized era is not necessarily to support dismantling the dominant power structure or improving the positionality of oppressed individuals. Appadurai (1996), for example, says that in a disjunctive global world, cultural reproduction has become diluted within displaced populations and modulated by the media and the ideologies they offer (pp. 44-45). Globalization processes produce a more politicized and fluid culture which situates men and women in a harsher position. Particularly regarding gender issues, Appadurai states that women are now confronted with rampant representations of gendered violence and fetishized images in the media. Further, women's work circumstances are fantasized by the media to be less gendered; but in reality, female workers must compete with men as well as manage the domestic work (Appadurai, 1996, p. 45). Similarly, Grewal and Kaplan (1994) argued that the conditions of globalization are strengthening a newer form of "scattered hegemonies" (p. 17). They noted that the media depict the conditions of globalization as a utopia, but power structures in local places are constantly being rearranged by both global hegemonic powers and local structures of domination, such as patriarchal nationalism or 'authentic' forms of tradition. Hence, while the transnational media environment might promote gendered construction of the dominant hierarchy, it is still a crucial site where global power and local contradiction struggle with each other (Hegde, 2011). Given this circumstance, Appadurai (1996) suggests that transnational media consumption facilitates individual agency to navigate one's future path, although this could be either disciplinary or emancipatory in nature. Employing his notion, I explore how my informants generate

local friction by fashioning their identities against the hegemony in the U.S. as a result of their Korean media consumption.

Popular culture and mass media always serve as vehicles for spreading idealized images of identities in a hegemonic culture. As a media saturated society, the U.S. is the place where white supremacist cultural values are deployed. It is not surprising that immigrant populations have been excluded and marginalized in the discourses of the U.S. media. Racial/ethnic minorities are often objectified or endure the burden of the presentation of their own group. Compared to the representation in American media, Korean media content does not showcase power relations between different races since it has been a relatively homogeneous society in terms of race. According to the Ministry of Justice of Korea in 2017, the increasing foreign population comprises only about 4 % of the total population. Most of these people are from the Asian region. This cultural proximity and alleviation from marginalization might be important sources of pleasure when Korean Americans enjoy Korean media content.

The focal subject here, Korean Americans' perception of gender roles, is complicated when they are exposed to and excited about the discourses and ideologies that Korean media content illustrates. The representations of gender roles in Korean media actively stimulates divergent imaginings about Korea among Korean Americans. Korean television dramas cover a wide range of issues and genre characteristics including features of soap operas and mini-series in the U.S. (Shim, 2004). It was once conceived of as a female genre similar to soap operas in the U.S. and considered low culture due to its poor production quality. However, this genre is constantly expanding its subjects and the range of its target audiences by dealing with diverse topics and enhancing production

quality. Television dramas no longer exclusively target female audiences although romance, women's matters, and the chemistry between men and women are still primary subjects dealt with in the prime-time television dramas.

How are Korean Americans' perceptions of gender roles different from or similar to those of the Western society where they are physically located? Conceptualizing gender roles in East Asia has been influenced by Western ideologies during the modernization process. Yet, even before that, there had been a hierarchy of genders both in Western culture and in the East Asian cultural tradition. The binary system of gender role relationships was naturalized and institutionalized. One of the most significant factors is that gendered labor divisions have been developed in both cultures. Femininity and masculinity were often conceived of as private/public, follower/leader, caretaker/breadwinner, emotional/rational value carriers in both cultures (Lin & Tong, 2007, p. 218).

Even though it is indisputable that the binary gender system has established unequal relationships between genders, in the case of Korea, scholars posit that deep-rooted Confucianist ideologies have naturalized the subordination of women through various socio-cultural customs. For instance, one of the earliest radical demands regarding women's rights offered by the farmers involved in the DongHak Peasant Revolution in 1884 was allowing for the remarriage of widows. That was regarded as a fundamental challenge to the Confucianist culture of that era (Hwang, S. H, 1992). Enlightenment on women's rights in Korea is regarded in earnest as resulting from the influence of Western ideologies such as individualism, liberalism, and Christianity in early 20th century under the Japanese colonization (Hwang, S. H.,1992). These notions

were conceived in contrast to the Confucianist social order at that time when people still cherished the harmonized, though male centered, community and paternalism (Lin & Tong, 2007, p. 218). With global connectivity, Korean Americans are exposed to new notions of gender politics and the global women's movement on a daily basis, either resisting against or adjusting to them. At the same time, the peculiar, yet deep-rooted traditions embedded in performing gender roles which Koreans have both individually and collectively constructed are hard to dismiss abruptly.

It might be impossible to measure or describe how much Korean society and U.S. society are similar or dissimilar in their conceptualization of gender roles. The burden of carrying gender roles can be relieved or worsened within their cultural contexts. The site of the family dynamics is where we can easily observe tensions and struggles regarding gender roles. I heard from several informants that young Korean Americans who engaged in the Korean American community complained that first generation Korean Americans still firmly preserve the old values including gender roles from the 1980s or 1990s. For instance, tensions between parents-in-law and daughters-in-law are ordinary in Korea due to patriarchal customs and orders. These tensions become more amplified between generations in the Korean American community as the first generation parents-in-law usually have high expectations and demands toward their daughters-in-law consistent with the old values.

My informants have constructed binary discrepancies between U.S. and Korean gender roles in their daily practices. With the ethnographic approach, using multiple exposures to and sources from the Korean American community, I was able to discursively understand how they make sense of and perform their gender roles

depending on context. For instance, a Korean American couple, a first generation Korean American wife and a second generation husband, described performing gender roles in their married lives as follows:

> Joseph: I treated her in a Korean way.
> HL: What is a Korean way?
> Joseph: Always speaking in Korean, always eating Korean foods, always doing meeting Korean people. Doing cultural educational activities. I think going to Korea. I think Korean ways.
> HyunJi: I believe it's an American way because he is doing all the things. He makes foods and I don't cook. And then he will do the house chores. I don't do that. My parents-in-law are Koreans, but they are so used to living in marriage life in America. They don't have much expectations of their in-laws. I got married. I don't have to prepare any family dinner for Father's Day or Mother's Day. They just treated us.
> (Hyunji & Joseph couple, 30s, 1st & 2nd generation, professionals, interviewed in English)

As Hyunji, the wife, described, there are many housekeeping things and family events a daughter-in-law is expected to do for her in-laws in Korea. Meanwhile, she described the "American way" in terms of her husband's sharing of household duties like cooking and cleaning, as well as experiencing less pressure and involvement from her in-laws. Apparently, at least in married life, the Korean way implies more responsibilities for a married woman in the imaginations of first generation Korean Americans.

When I was in the sites of their lives, for instance, the birthday party for Joseph, I could make more sense of how these gender dynamics played out within a Korean American immigrant family and how they could negotiate between their agency and a situated position within a community. After several times meeting this couple at local Korean community events they were involved in, Joseph sent me a text to attend his birthday party in his place. Since offering an invitation to one's home implies a closer relationship in Korean culture, I was excited that I could establish a rapport with this

young couple. When I arrived at their home, a nice single house in the residential area of North Philadelphia, I was surprised at the variety of Korean cuisine HyunJi prepared on the table. More than ten dishes, including Korean style beef ribs and bulgogi, a cold jellyfish salad, and diverse Korean pancakes which usually require more time to prepare than American dishes, are fully displayed on the table in the living room. The wife was too busy to even say hello to me. She was the one who made sure of the temperature of the foods and served the foods to almost twenty guests who were already there. The majority of the guests, in fact, were Korean American male seniors, friends of the husband's parents and family-in-law. Besides them, there were three Korean American friends, 1.5 or first generation in their 30s from their Korean church, and an international student whom I had previously met. Since Korean dishes usually include rice, side dishes, and soups, we were all using real dishes and bowls, not disposable ones, which meant numerous dishes to be washed after the party.

The atmosphere and practice of the party made me almost forget what the purpose of the gathering was. The dining room was occupied by the seniors and family members according to the Korean 'seniors first' custom. I could barely see there was a Happy Birthday garland, which is not that common in Korea, hung on the wall in the dining room. The younger generation including myself sat around the kitchen table while the wife quickly washed dishes, cleaned up the kitchen, and chatted with us. Whenever I gave a compliment on the foods, the wife humbly said she could prepare them "with the help of the Korean restaurant" around there. Although she could buy them almost as cooked from the Korean restaurant, it was quite a different party than Americans usually expect, especially that she should manage it alone.

Unlike our conversation about gender roles in their marriage life, both of them perfectly performed the gender roles in the standard of traditional Korean society when they needed to. In general, Korean seniors rarely celebrate friends' children because age matters in performing Korean relationships. For instance, except for the sister's family and Joseph's father, none of the seniors were introduced to or interacted with me or other younger guests. The party seemed more like an introduction of the new family member, their daughter-in-law, who was a newlywed of about one year from Korea "with a higher education, many talents with firm religious background" based on the father-in-law's description, to the local Korean American community. However, this introduction and joining the community were not accomplished through conversations between the seniors and the wife. Rather, it was played out in how the daughter-in-law prepared the banquet nicely, preferably with Korean foods and manners. Individuals of the Korean community should actively modify their gender role depending on the contexts in which they are situated.

Shaping gender roles would be the most interesting site to explore how these different ideologies are constantly struggling and recreating different subjectivities. How do they embrace, detest, and value certain aspects of the different gender roles and attractiveness standards displayed in Korean media content while their imaginations about the national/regional/transnational places are being rearranged? This chapter illustrates how divergent emotions on gender, such as pleasure, irony, anxiety, or aspiration, stemmed from their imagined worlds' impact on shaping their ideas and performance of gender roles, attractiveness, and future plans across different generations. These emotions might not be necessarily attached to the normative gender roles of a

certain local, nation, or region. Rather their work of global imagination allows individuals to freely move back and forth across imagined worlds and more actively negotiate their gender roles and attractiveness into their situated places.

Young Second Generation Korean Americans

As seen above in the vignette of the birthday party, gender roles are flexibly performed within the Korean American community depending on the circumstances. Most young second generation Korean Americans are growing up socialized both by ethnic gender roles and American gender roles. Furthermore, most of the college students interviewed for this study were experiencing or had just passed their coming of age era and were actively shaping their gender roles. Particularly, most of the youth group were from their late teens to their 30s and were engaging in or looking for a romantic relationship. With this transnational cultural flow, their perceptions of gender roles were flexibly shaped and adjusted into their peer groups within this age range. Thus, it seems fair to say that the culture and identity of the youth is a critical dimension of culture because it can be "a site of cultural innovation" (McRobbie, 1994, p. 174). This section specifically examines how their active engagements with Korean media and culture prompted them to create meaning and offered a cultural enclave in which they negotiated their gender identity.

All of Their Personalities are Really Cool

How do young Korean Americans perceive gender roles based on their experiences with Korean media? Young Korean Americans have complicated feelings about Korean culture. They have recently become more interested in Korean culture due to phenomena like the Korean Wave, but the ways of U.S. culture are embedded in their

lives, at least in their public spaces. For example, when female informants described their perception of gender roles in Korean media, they strongly voiced disagreement with them. Nevertheless, they enjoyed the dramas. Since television dramas mostly include family stories or romantic sentiments between couples, the patriarchal practices of Korea, which are unlike those of the U.S., evoked uncomfortable feelings and distanced them from the text.

> How to express 애교 (aegyo)? It is a cultural thing, even you tried to express the things. For example, why is she whining? Actually, I hated to say about Korean people, (when someone asked) "why this girl is so whining?" That made me baffled. "They expected that girls should be whining?"
>
> (Helen, 30s, 2nd generation, professional, interviewed in English)

> Cindy: My mom raised me by herself. So I have very big womanly pride. So when I see, I don't only like it in dramas. When a man grabbed the arm of a woman and forced her to come with him (in Korean dramas).
>
> HL: But... you know Korean mother is strong too.
>
> Cindy: Yes exactly, but I feel like that Korean mother comes only after the child bearing and raising. I want that to be every woman, yeah!
>
> (Cindy, 19, 2nd generation, college student, interviewed in English)

The different family dynamics might remind these female informants of their conflicts and struggles with their parents' perspectives which imposed on them different rules and customs from those of American society. These values and practices seemed old fashioned or traditional to these young, highly educated professionals.

> They (Koreans) seem like enmeshed in their family. Like family dynamics. Whole men who have authority of the household. His mother is like matriarchy. He obeyed her. You know she has the power. Even the kids are grown men.
>
> (Emma, 30s, 2nd generation, professional, interviewed in English)

> Korean Americans, they are the one who employ a lot of gender roles. Because parents who came here in 80s, stuck in the Korean culture, that's very specific like "my grandma will kill me if I work in the kitchen." For

> me, it is like you need to get over it because I'm not going to be only working in the kitchen.
>
> (Helen, 30s, 2nd generation, professional, interviewed in English)

Not only female informants, but also male informants suggested some skeptical perspectives on the gender roles represented in Korean dramas.

> I do understand where they're coming from, because a lot of the values that they hold are also very traditional. One thing that I noticed was in Korean culture, when they think about romance, they think of this guy that comes into a woman's life and rescues her or whatever. He's this tall handsome guy that happened to be rich and super buff. While in America, it's like oh, this guy and this girl just happen to meet and look what happened.
>
> (Joon, 19, 1.5 generation, college student, interviewed in English)

On the other hand, they also expressed uncomfortable emotions since they could not identify with the romantic interactions, drug usage, or violence in the American shows. These are not normative within their community. For example, sexual liberalism and pursuing individual happiness in a romantic relationship were conceptualized by them as American, non-Korean culture.

> HL: You don't watch American TV?
>
> Cindy: I do sometimes, but sometimes it is too much. I don't know how to describe. But like sometimes American show is very like sexual and like much like…. They have a lot of negative, more negative concept than Korean. And that is not as much as interesting.
>
> HL: Could you explain little bit more?
>
> Cindy: There was a really famous show like *Breaking Bad* and it is all about drugs. So I thought "no thank you." And some shows are like too fantasy, so I don't like that either. I do not like a lot of shows like American shows. Oh, he slept her and her and her, and that just did not legitimate well with me. ⋯ I am sure Korean dramas did the same. but still lesser than that.
>
> (Cindy, 19, 2nd generation, college student, interviewed in English)

Although these young informants did not overtly express it in these terms, it seems to be undeniable that their cultural tastes are hugely interrelated with their religious values of Christianity. Except for a few, the majority of my informants belong to a church

community since it has replaced their ethnic community around the Philadelphia metropolitan area. Within this community, they can meet and interact with their Korean American peer group. Cindy's explanation about her thoughts on American popular culture and her uncomfortable feelings about drugs and a sexually liberal lifestyle resonated with the Christian faith and discipline within their community.

Next, I explored with them the characteristics and values of the opposite sexes in Korean media that are appealing to this young group. Certain qualities in romantic narratives that made the female audiences feel fascinated. Young female informants told me how they tried hard to join their favorite male actor's fan group online after enjoying his acting as a captain of a Korean Special Forces unit in the Korean drama *Descendants of the Sun.* I also observed how these transnational fans constantly consumed and expressed their excitement about Korean culture by displaying media images on their online messengers. For instance, Amelia, in particular, constantly changed her profile using images and lines from the trendy drama on her mobile phone messenger, Kakao Talk.

> Amelia: So I'm in a fan club, Song, JoongGi fan club in Korea.
> HL: How could you join?
> Amelia: It was really hard to, because you have to have a Korean identification number, you have to write and a lot of the fan clubs in Daum (Korean portal site) you have to have register. I don't have it, so I can't, but in Song, JoongGi's website, you don't need one, so I was able to go on.
> HL: So what do you do there?
> Amelia: I just look at photos, and they want you to post something, I'm too scared. I was like what if I say something wrong?
> HL: You can say something like there is a fan in the U.S.? (laughter)
> Amelia: I did a little bit, but I don't think they care too much.
> HL: What do they do usually? What kind of information do they share?
> Amelia: How he is doing or stuff like that, but I don't go on it too often, I just maybe once in a while see pictures of him and stuff like that.
> (Amelia, 22, 2nd generation, college student, interviewed in English)

However, more than just appealing to their different ideas of masculinity, my female informants also enjoyed how the romantic stories are different from their parents' generation with modernized scenery. They reflected on how Korean female actresses could play different versions of femininity than actresses of their parents' generation. Thus, their imagination of gender roles as Korean Americans was discursively broadened and actively reshaped while they consumed Korean media.

> In regard Korean romantic things, I feel like they really changed in *a modern drama*. They are 멋있다 (so charming)! Even though they might not be true (in reality).
>
> (Jenna, 40s, 2nd generation, professional, interviewed in English)

The discovery of the charm and attractiveness of Asia is one of the major influences on their consuming Korean media. Jenna implied this change in their awareness by using the term "a modern drama". Similarly, young second generation Korean Americans emphasized or engaged in the romantic scenes in Korea dramas less in the past. Quotes and stories of celebrities often impact the thoughts, attitudes, and behaviors among fans. In the case of my young Korean American informants, following Korean stars caused them to rethink or appreciate different attitudes and values which were cherished mainly within the Korean American community, as distinctive to mainstream U.S. society. As my informants described below, Korean celebrities were different from the celebrities they knew before, showing their "down to earth" attitude, emphasizing a moral benefit like "work hard for one's dream," or representing a new kind of femininity like the "ugly but still lovely" heroine.

> Andy: (I like) Twice (a Korean idol girl group), because I think I like their music first, and then I think all of their personalities are really cool. In Korean idol, I really like their personality more than anything and I think-

HL: Of what? For example, like cute? What's their personality you think?
Andy: Well yeah, cuteness is one, but just friendly and nice, I want to say. Basic humanly traits. They are not like… They know they're idols but they don't act like it, kind of thing.
HL: What do you mean?
Andy: They're famous, but they don't act famous. Do you know the phrase down to earth? They're very down to earth.
HL: From what?
Andy: From what I've seen in videos and stuff like that. Obviously I don't know them in real life, so I can't tell, but from what I've seen, that's what I like of them.
(Andy, 19, 2nd generation, college students, interviewed in English)

I don't like their appearance (laughing). I just for the most part, specifically Bangtan Boys (a Korean idol boy group), ··· I like YoonKi (aka Sugar, stage name). I like his music. He always talks about "should work hard for what you want, follow your dream," that's the main reason why I like them cause I haven't think that as much as.
(Hannah, 20, 2nd generation, college student, interviewed in English)

I really like Gong, HyoJin (a Korean actress). I think she is really cool. Very unique in a lot of senses.
(Cindy, 19, 2nd generation, college student, interviewed in English)

When they described why they preferred Korean celebrities to American stars, they stressed their appreciation of these celebrities' human characteristics. Unlike American celebrities with whom they were not able to closely identify, they could closely understand and sympathize with the human characteristics of these transnational celebrities, in addition to enjoying their good-looking Asian appearances. Values mentioned by my informants — such as modesty, humbleness, or earnestness for their dreams — have been circulated within their community but not highlighted as common values in U.S. society. This cultural gap has always existed within their minds, causing them to say things like, "I am like a dipole (since I found negative dimensions from both cultures)" or "Well, I like to think I have a double life kind of." These Korean stars, who look like my informants, encouraged them to believe that if they try hard, they will be

rewarded regardless of their racial/ethnic identity. This global fervor toward them gave my informants approval to express their Asianness. They perceived themselves as juggling or located in-between Korea and America, and they were more leaning toward ideas, attitudes, and behaviors expressed by their favorite Korean celebrities. This also implied that they felt privileged when they collectively enjoyed the Korean popular culture since they could interpret and appreciate the values of Korean popular culture better than others in the U.S. As opposed to the attitude of being proud about America, they had pride in their Korean heritage — employed "Asiantude" more than cherishing "Ameritude."

On the other hand, much as Hannah said that she never thought about her dreams that much, young Korean Americans might feel that their aspirations are limited and subdued in U.S. society in relation to the prejudice against Asian/Korean Americans. However, in Korea, conditions that Korean Americans have — bilingualism, life and educational experiences in the U.S., love for their ethnic/Asian culture — can be conceived of as attractive traits and cultural capital. In reality, there are several Korean American celebrities who were picked out by the Korean entertainment agencies because they needed someone who could convey fascinating global/Western codes to Asian fans. My informants knew and loved a couple of the successful Korean American celebrities. Further, one of my informants, Mila, worked as an English teacher in Korea. She told me that she had hoped to be a singer in Korea at first and looked for the opportunity to move to Korea. My informants imagined they could raise the bar which they could reach through the celebrities. Accordingly, the Korean celebrities' human qualities were deeply appreciated in their imagination and direct experiences. They are exposed to different

gender dynamics and attractiveness standards to which they had not been exposed in their located places. As depicted through their reflections above, my informants continuously negotiated what they will embraced or rejected of Korean and U.S. gender roles and attractiveness standards. The next section explores how their different attitudes towards the Asian gender role and sexuality are articulated as a cultural practice.

My Friends Say I'm Korean Style

Skin color matters more than I ever imagined. When I discussed young Korean Americans' grooming and fashion styles, many of my female informants disclosed that they seriously suffered for their racial differences at some point in their lives. Particularly, many Korean Americans attended suburban, white-dominated schools and only had few or no Asian classmates during their middle or high school years. They also sensed that Caucasian characters were the center of the narratives among other minorities in both mass media and reality. During this coming of age period, they aspired to be similar to the majority group. For instance, these differently aged informants tried to change their hair color to blonde in the 1980s to 2000s when they were teenagers. Although this is a styling trend among many women, my informants all recognized that it was also an effort among ethnic minorities to assimilate to American society.

> Jenna: When I was in elementary school in my neighborhood, no one knew about Korea. Chinese all over the country it was edge of Baltimore. It was 70s, it was an emerging country, but people rarely talked about Korea. They only knew Japan, more China. No one knew when you went to high school. And then also in middle school and high school, do you remember that everyone from Korea they dyed their hair as blonde?
>
> HL: You mean bleach?
>
> Jenna: Right, like 백인 ("white person" in Korean). Now, everyone knows how Koreans. I dye my hair as black (darker color than natural color of her hair). No one knows my Korean ethnicity, but no one knows is not a big deal, you know.

(Jenna, 40s, 2nd generation, professional, interviewed in English)

I did not like that trend. (people dyed their hair like blonde). I would say it was pretty common in 80s. It was in elementary school, but even in high school it was common to dye your hair. I think I was the only one who didn't. ⋯ I personally I didn't like that people would dye their hair blonde. Why are you dying in blonde? Do you want to be a white? What are you trying to say about that? If you try to dye your hair blonde, it could be say simply, I try to dye my hair trying to have fun. But, if you want to dye, why you don't try purple? Even in young age, I didn't want to pretend I'm white. I'm Korean. I never dyed my hair. Even now, with my kids in terms of media, not necessarily Korean media, you see the all the characters and books, and in movie, the main characters have blond hair, especially their hair wise, people who get the prince.

(Emily, 30s, 2nd generation, professional, interviewed in English)

Hannah: I feel like I went through phases. When I was younger, I want to try like be white. I tried. I would like to dye my hair, something like that (at) 13, 14. Then I wouldn't like to endorse any Korean culture. Entertainment, anything like that. I complained why I couldn't be white. I feel like now most minority groups in America are coming to terms of their own culture more than ever. When I was a kid, everyone liked to be a white person rather than an Asian or something else. Most of the people I came across. They just were very *Americanized* ever think they did it.

HL: Even African American people? They want to be *Americanized*?

Hannah: Pretty much. That was the environment I grew up.

HL: What way?

Hannah: What they wear. How do they do with their hair. How they do with their makeup. Something like that.

(Hannah, 20, 2nd generation, college student, interviewed in English)

While they suffered and tried to look "American," which explicitly meant assimilation to white culture, there were precautions against looking too much like fresh Korean immigrants, FOB (fresh off the boat). They consciously distinguished themselves from these new immigrants.

Amelia: That's why I think I don't like too Korean because you look so Korean if that make sense, like FOB.

HL: How can you describe FOB?

Amelia: That's a good question. I look Korean, right? But when I speak English I speak English. So I think just by the way I dress. I don't

know why, when you are on the bus or something, you can tell that this person is Korean by the way they dress. I don't know why.

HL: Do they makeup really well?

Amelia: Maybe or like, so let's say I was on the bus. And I say like, "Hi Monica, the way she is dressed is so Korean, not Chinese but Korean." Something about it you just know. I don't know why, me and my friends were saying that, we are like, "Oh, that's definitely a Korean grandma." I never thought about it why, but something about how they dressed you just know they are Korean. So whatever that is I like to avoid it. Because we are in America, I don't want to be like, "Oh, I'm Korean," You know that I live in my culture, but I don't like to dress like Korean.

HL: But you want to look a little bit different from them, American, as a Korean, so that is …

Amelia: Too much. But when I go to work I wear, I'm going to be a teacher in education, so I wear long skirts and collar shirts. So it's not too different anyways.

(Amelia, 22, 2nd generation, college student, interviewed in English)

Cindy: Sometimes people ask me more if it (my clothes) is from Korea. But sometimes, I purposely, in Korea, stopped myself (from) buying some clothes. Because I know if I wear it in America, it is just like "what the hack are you wearing" like that.

HL: That different?

Cindy: Yes. I think this must be my personal, but there is a part of me that doesn't want to look FOB.

HL: I heard that. Like Korean Americans say on the bus or something, "Look at her. How that woman dresses up." and "She just came from Korea."

Cindy: Yeah, right! I think makeup actually. The way Korean people wear a lot of makeup is very like "oh, you are Korean!" But yes, it is really strange.

HL: But you don't like the way they do.

Cindy: Not even that. I think even though they are really cute. But I think it is just pride. I think. I want to be seen as an American within this American culture because I know I look Korean. But I don't know the difference well, between American and Korean.

HL: So you have some balance between not looking too American, and not looking too Korean.

Cindy: Yeah, Yeah! Right. But I think it is a struggle for me. Because I know I like Korean things but I want to be American. It is like a dipole. ··But nowadays, Korean fashion trends are pretty like American fashion trend. American fashion trends are very same, just basic t-shirts and jeans. I think Korean fashion is cute.

(Cindy, 19, 2nd generation, college student, interviewed in English)

As my informants described, it is hard to tell exactly how they recognize fresh immigrants because it is a subtle “at first sight” experience within their age group. The distinctive element is whether or not they speak English with the peculiar Korean accent. It is natural that these young second generations gravitate toward the American culture in which they have grown up. More profoundly, that they are American citizens who were born and raised locally becomes the basis for their pride compared to newcomers from Korea. Thus, they paid attention to how the FOB Koreans preserve their way of life from Korea in the U.S. and habitually draw a line between themselves and the FOB Koreans within their peer group. They are excited about the Korean Wave, but also try not to look too Korean as what Cindy termed a “dipole”.

> I think my clothes is very unique from either, not American, not Korean. I wear something, I guess I like more 청순한 look (innocent look like a girl). I like more maybe conservative? Cuter than like sexy, so I guess it’s more Korean, but I don't buy like Korean clothing products or anything. It’s maybe my own idea of what Korean people wear. I match it to my style if that makes sense. Covert it to fit me better.
> (Amelia, 22, 2nd generation, college student, interviewed in English)

> One thing I appreciate Korean dress is that it is more modest. It is little more tasteful. I did have some Korean clothes. That’s very ladylike, dainty because it has ruffles and it is cute. … I think American culture can sometimes be a little too racy. Not modest. I don’t like that. I try to think how could be different. I think Korean people little bit more elegant. Maybe more feminine.
> (Emily, 30s, 2nd generation, professional, interviewed in English)

As Amelia described above, it is hard to identify a certain fashion trend in connection to the local/nation. The national identity of the youth’s appearance, such as makeup and a certain style of clothes, became blurrier and hybridized. It seems to be more about individual taste. Emily stayed in Korea for one year as a professional around 2000 and tried to figure out how the fashion style is different in Korea. Yet, the styles

were categorized by discursive comparisons. The fashion industry offers diverse transnational/global styles to bring about new trends and the global shipping service to facilitate them. The Korean fashion industry developed during modernization under huge influences from the U.S. and Western culture. Moreover, if anyone in the U.S. or Korea is interested in fashion, she/he can easily buy clothes or fashion commodities across national borders.

Different from those informants who were careful not to look like Korean Koreans, there were also informants who actively embraced and discovered the Korean style with great interest. They consumed mostly Korean media and shared its images through social networking sites. Whenever they visited Korea, they were busy shopping for clothes and accessories. The youth group even used the Korean online market site. They preferred Korean styles and regarded them as fun or in sync with their personal tastes.

> HyunJi: Oh yes. When we go to Korea, we buy like clothes and stuff.
> Joseph: When we go to Korea, I am going to buy huge amount of clothes. I love Korean style. In Sinchon or other young college students. Yonsei, Ewha, and Seogang University. There are a lot of shops. I want to buy their young contemporary fashion. I want to stay young.
> HL: But do you think that the Korean style is more trendy compared to the American?
> Joseph: Oh, definitely. Because Korea is such an amazing country.
> (Hyunji & Joseph couple, 30s, 1st & 2nd generation, professionals, interviewed in English)
>
> Rachel: People told me that my clothing style is like a Korean. ⋯ Even I wore the American clothes, people said that it looks from Korea. I wear the sweater with the collar of the shirt shown. Then my friends told me, your styling looks Korean. I even do not know what the difference is, but they said like that.
> HL: Do you think Korean clothes are prettier?
> Rachel: Yes, I think Korean clothes are stylish.
> HL: Did you receive Korean clothes from someone?

Rachel: Yes, I ordered through online, like G-market (Korean online shopping site). My aunt in Korea sent some. It was not that many. But when I went to there, I shopped a lot. I like the Korean style.
HL: Little bit cute?
Rachel: Not too cute (laughter). I like a style, which is very trendy in Korea now, that wearing clothes bigger than the size and jeans. I also like to put the shirt inside of the pant.
HL: Where did you get the idea? Dramas?
Rachel: Well. Maybe. Just wearing what I want. I might look at them at SNS and dramas too.
HL: Do you think your favorite style can be related to a certain ethnicity?
Rachel: Well, I think a certain style does. Anybody can tell that. But in case of Korea, if the person can digest it well, and if it fits well. I think it is not matter with the clothes itself. If it is odd, if it fits well to the person.
(Rachel, 21, 2nd generation, college student, interviewed in Korean)

Rachel and Jenna, both very stylish single women, enjoyed Korean products and were up to date exploring the trends in Korea through the media. Due to the development of digitalized media and the Internet, they were exposed to another fashion world which they could explore and try on every day. Contrary to the previous discussion on the Western/US influences on the others, these informants discovered that the fashion trends in Korea are more advanced than in the U.S., or at least in Philadelphia.

Rachel: I talked with my friends on this. My friends from my middle school visited Korea recently. We talked that the trend in Korea is earlier than in here. If any style was popular in Korea, then it becomes trendy here later. Off-shoulder was popular in Korea last year, then it is popular in here now.
HL: Then the popular items in Korea will become trendy here?
Rachel: I think so. I think the Korean clothes is really pretty. I would like to buy them but the shipping cost is too much. But I think the style of Korea fits better to me. I would like to try more Korean products.
(Rachel, 21, 2nd generation, college student, interviewed in Korean)

HL: If you want to look like an innocent, girlish style (her favorite style), what do you wear?
Amelia: Oh, that's a good question. Maybe I do on Instagram you follow celebrities. I guess I'll just look at that and think "oh, this is the kind of look, feel, that I get, and I try to make it my own.

HL: Who is your celebrity? I know someone following Song, Hye-Kyo.
Amelia: Oh yeah. I do, I follow everyone, but I can't say, maybe the trend in 20s, maybe any girl group.
HL: But they look really like too much.
Amelia: Oh yeah. But there are also everyday outfits, like 공항 (airport) fashion, some like that. That's like not too, because I don't like things that …
HL: Like bling-bling.
Amelia: Yeah! I don't like that. So I like something calm but cute.
(Amelia, 22, 2nd generation, college student, interviewed in English)

People always make fun of K-dramas because it is too cheesy. It is also absurdly dramatic. Someone is always dying. It is like really sad. There is a certain formula. People are always rich. But I also watch it for the fashion I think. Because it is always different.
(Emma, 30s, 2nd generation, professional, interviewed in English)

I see the difference in terms of region. Americans and Asian. But I think Korean became modernized. A lot of the American stylists, I follow, bloggers are following Korean styles? There are some Korean American styles. They are talking about K beauty. And a lot of their followers are Americans, not Asians. So a lot of Americans are catching on their style.
(Jenna, 40s, 2nd generation, professional, interviewed in English)

As illustrated in their descriptions, fashion styling is now hybridized between the U.S. and Korea. This seems to offer a more flexible sphere where people can deploy their own identities through their styling. As Rachel said, she enjoys the notion that she can "just wearing (sic) what I want." Beauty standards have been explored and criticized by cultural scholars since they are a plainly observable apparatus of Western hegemony via commodities, mediated images, and social practices (Cohen, etc. 1996, Jha, 2015, Parameswaran, 2011). Similarly, the globalized media environment and the Korean Wave constantly supply my informants with transnational discourses, commodities, and mediated images of fashion and attractiveness. They came upon hints and ideas for cultivating and refining their tastes through the transnational media. Jenna noted that

Asian styling is not second rate anymore. The fashion community, as well as local and global peer groups, approve of the quality of their choices.

In terms of cosmetics and makeup, young female informants had great pride and excitement as the so-called "K-beauty" became one of the visible trends in America. All of my young female informants used Korean cosmetics and watched YouTube video clips by Koreans or Korean beauty programs such as *Get It Beauty* to learn how to tune their own way of grooming. They knew that their mothers used to buy Korean cosmetics at the Korean grocery store. Now they visited the local store, but also explored beauty products, techniques, and makeup trends online.

> Cindy: I don't wear lots of cosmetics yet, but I know I buy a lot of skin care from Korea. Like toner? I don't know if you heard about but QUALS X? (laughter)
> HL: Where did you find it? (laughed because I had never heard about it in Korea or in the U.S.)
> Cindy: Amazon.
> HL: You just searched Korean cosmetics?
> Cindy: Uhm. There was a YouTube video and this person recommended it. So I thought I must look for it and found it in Amazon.
> HL: And you like it?
> Cindy: Yes, I really like it.
> HL: Aha.
> (Cindy, 19, 2nd generation, college student, interviewed in English)
>
> Amelia: I prefer Korean, so let's say I'm buying toner, or I always go to H-mart, The Face Shop or order online. I like Korean products because *I feel it fits better*. Let's say I'm buying beauty cream, but the color fits better with Korean products than American products because my complexion I got dark over the summer but is a lot lighter. So it fits better if I use Korean products.
> HL: When did you find out it's better for you?
> Amelia: Usually I really don't wear makeup, but my mom was like, "Oh, like now you are older, you have to take care of your skin, wear like eye cream," and stuff like that. She gives me a lot of products and then through that, my friends. I have a bunch of Korean friends and they are into makeup. So they helped me. They are like, "Oh, this is good with this," or like. "This is good with this."
> HL: They all use Korean?

Amelia: Yeah.
HL: It's not just from your mother? You peer group already uses it?
Amelia: Yeah.
HL: When did it start? How many years ago?
Amelia: I don't know. I haven't started using skin products until college. So that was only like four or five years ago (17-18 years old), and then my mom was, "Oh, here is like lotion and toner, just start with that. ⋯ So I started with that and then my friends were like, "Oh, they use Laneige (a Korean cosmetic brand mainly for 20s)." Like other products, so that's how that came up.
HL: Sometimes the Korean dramas show a lot of cosmetic products for promotion.
Amelia: Yeah, little bit. Sometimes I'll watch the *Get It Beauty* (a Korean beauty program of a cable network). So I'll watch, then sometimes and there'd be like, "Oh, yeah, they put some block on always." So I try, but my interest is in skin care, so I am not too much in it.
(Amelia, 22, 2nd generation, college student, interviewed in English)

Hannah: Cosmetic wise, I just want to buy something cheap what if like I really like the brands.
HL: What did you buy?
Hannah: I like the cushion, like the BB cushion. Cause it is a huge thing. I have a Laneige.
HL: Oh, how could you know that?
Hannah: I just looked it up through the websites.
HL: Your friends use that too?
Hannah: Um, some of them do.
HL: And sharing the information?
Hannah: Yeah, "I like your eye makeup, where did you buy that?" "Oh, I got it from here." I usually get it from online, eBay or amazon.
(Hannah, 20, 2nd generation, college student, interviewed in English)

Everyone says Koreans know something about skin care. A lot of us understand Korean skin care is more developed. They are now entrepreneurs. ⋯ They curated some Korean makeup at Sephora. You can buy some Korean makeup at Sephora. ⋯ Cleansing water or you know the essence. You know Amore Pacific, IOPE (famous Korean brand). I went to the Gwang Korean sikpoom, the grocery store. So Korean media and advertising, their skin care, everyone now fascinated by it. That's why you are prefer the Korean beauty. I think Koreans are known by the beauty parlor. Even my Chinese friends looked for that. ⋯ People have all of the questions (to me), lots of information on Korean products.
(Jenna, 40s, 2nd generation, professional, interviewed in English)

Rachel: My makeup is a Korean style. In terms of makeup, I can tell. I do like Koreans.

HL: When did you start makeup?
Rachel: Makeup? Hm. When I have to start being interested in it and did it hardly and constantly was after I came to college. Two or three years?
HL: How and with what? Any brand you like?
Rachel: I use various stuff. I use Korean cosmetics a lot. American things too. ⋯ Korean cushion compact or BB cream (use them for the skin tone enhancement) fit better to me than the U.S products.
HL: For your skin tone?
Rachel: Well not only the skin tone, I think the U.S. people wear the makeup too thick. I feel stuffy in that way. My skin is so sensitive. So I use Korean products a lot. BB creams, cushions compacts, or tints from Korea.
HL: Where do you get them?
Rachel: I ordered them via the Internet. Well, eBay or Amazon. Or if I go to Hanareum (Korean grocery market), I looked at a cosmetic shop. The Face Shop store and Amore are there too. Well. I mainly order through the Internet.
HL: How did you learn about makeup?
Rachel: YouTube, but I do not learn easily (laughter). So I tried to find my own way.
HL: How about your hair color?
Rachel: I personally enjoy coloring my hair. I like to change the color of it.
HL: You tried many colors?
Rachel: Not many. I like to make my hair as light color. Several months ago, May and April. I made my hair as two tones with pink. Now, I made it lighter like blonde (laughter).
(Rachel, 21, 2nd generation, college student, interviewed in Korean)

Most of these young females' decisions to try Korean cosmetics are closely related to their experiences of Korean media. It is widely discussed that the Korean Wave has a positive impact on the exportation of Korean products (Choi, 2012). Fashion and beauty are the third most popular contents, next to Korean foods and information technology, by which foreign people are reminded of images of Korea. Further, Korean fashion and beauty items are increasingly gaining good reputations for their quality and price faster than other products (Korean Foundation for International Cultural Exchange, 2017, pp. 10-17). When I met with my informants, sometimes they shared information

about beauty products websites such as Soko Glam/Missha USA and discount coupons for these sites, as well as their reviews of certain products. They spoke not only of specialized beauty websites, but also of Amazon and major department store franchises like Nordstrom, Target, Bed Bath Beyond, or Sephora that also promoted K-beauty or K-fashion (Korean clothes) as shown in the captured images below.

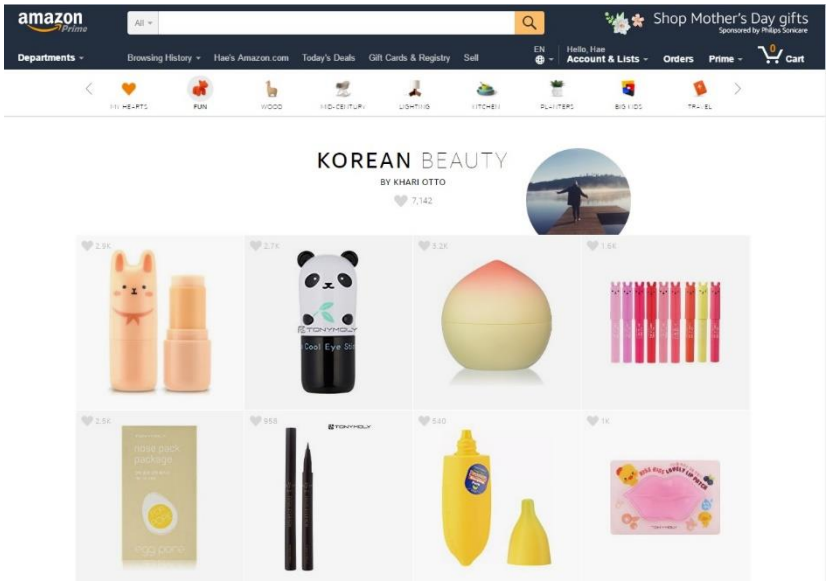

Figure 3. K-beauty at Amazon.com. May 5, 2017.

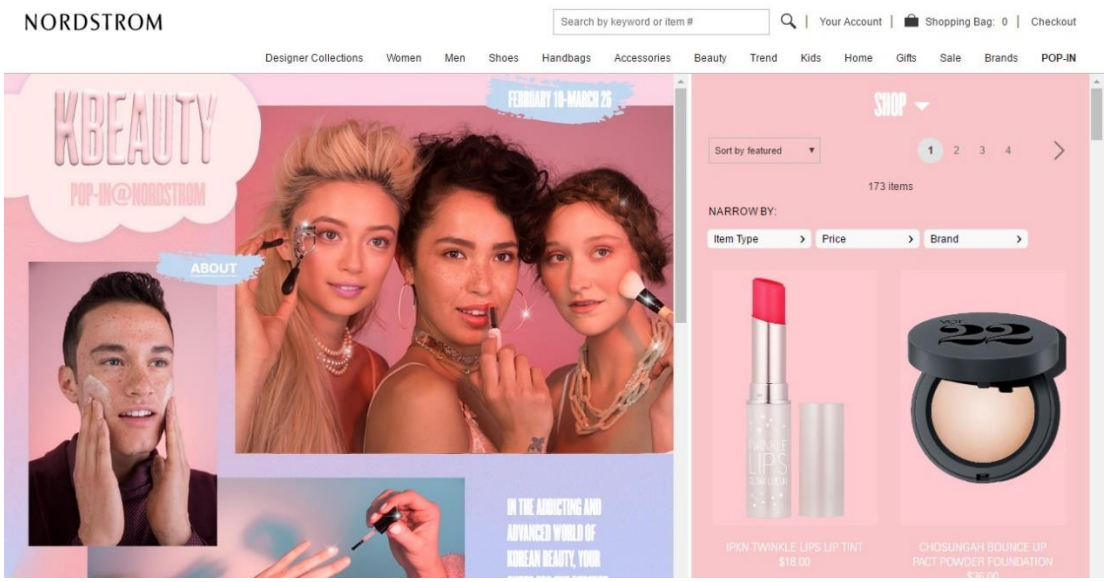

Figure 4. K-beauty at Nordstrom department store website. March 15, 2017.

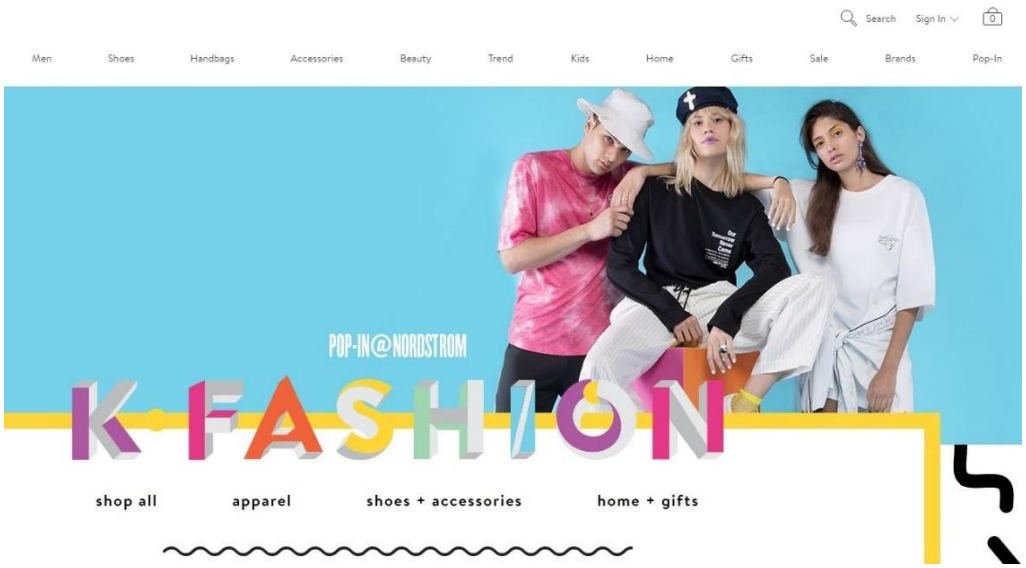

Figure 5. K-fashion at Nordstrom department store website. March 24, 2017.

Interestingly, my informants explained that skin care is stressed a lot as the reason why they choose Korean products. Different skin color and hair texture were the primary

sources that gave a hard time to my informants to accept their Asian identity in the past. Meanwhile, when my informants were exposed to the actresses or other female celebrities in Korea, they noticed their skin is unrealistically flawless, as light as pure white in color, and wrinkle-free. For instance, Jenna was excited that she could check out the style and makeup of Song, Hye-Kyo's Instagram. Song, Hey-Kyo has been a famous Korean Wave star in many popular dramas including the *Descendants of the Sun* (2016). Despite the fact that she is in her middle 30s, her skin is famous because it looks "like a baby" even without makeup. Korean celebrities' Asian beauty stressing skin care provides a possibility that Asian females can know more about it and show off their own beauty standards, which have been rarely highlighted in the American culture.

Figure 6. Song, Hye-Kyo's Instagram with a Korean cosmetic product, Laneige. August 2, 2017.

Figure 7. Song, Hye-Kyo's Instagram with a French makeup artist. September 2, 2016.

Jenna: I think everyone impressed. Because I'm an Asian, we want to follow Asians. Just because we are living in America, we don't want to follow American beauty. It does not look good on Asian face. I know thinking about the hair. We only have an Asian one, Korean hair.

Emma: For example, you have eyes which are different from American eyes. How to do your own makeup? … So American stylists come on it and think "what do I do? You have the different texture." We have an Asian hair because our hair is thick. American stylists never cut Asian hair well. 당황해 ("They are perplexed") So you have to speak out what do you want.

HL: So when you change your hair, you look at what is trendy among the Asian celebrities?

Jenna: Not necessarily. But because there is a lot of pictures of them, I think I am just trying to look like Korean.

Emma: A lot of time, I also feel like the coding force here. So I have to look like the peer. That's another limiting factor. Like our petit size.

(Jenna & Emma, 30-40s, professionals, 2nd generation, interviewed in English)

Amelia: I think is because I think Korean products are more advanced than American products because American products they are more makeup oriented, but skin care is new because even Laneige (Korean cosmetic brand) they are in Target now. They are selling,

there is face mask and all that. It's popular in America because of Asia. So I feel like Korea is always ahead with skin care, so it's coming now to the U.S. if that makes sense.

HL: So Asian women now have a good reputation for their skin care?

Amelia: Yeah, I think so. They always say Korean skin care. So I have a Thai friend and she uses Korean products because she is like, "Oh, Korean products has the best products."

(Amelia, 20, college student, 2nd generation, interviewed in English)

The rise of the Korean Wave offered many exciting and awakening moments to my young Korean American informants. Certainly, the popularity of Korean cosmetics and styles in the U.S. evokes my female informants' ethnic/racial pride in themselves and their Korean/Asian beauty. Instead of aspiring to be a blonde beauty, they discovered Asian beauties and heroines who do not have to coexist or compete with the white princess. In their daily lives, they also feel empowered since they can access more information about the tastes of Korean celebrities and their favorite products that their American friends wonder about and seek out.

However, embracing K-beauty also forced my informants to deal with the drudgery and external standards of beauty produced by the Korean beauty industry. A distinctive characteristic of Korean cosmetic products is in their variety. Global fans of K-beauty clarified that the reasonable price of the K-beauty products is one of the elements with which they were impressed (Korean Foundation for International Cultural Exchange, 2017, pp. 10-17). Yet, there are endless beauty lines in every price range. Korean cosmetics highlight the unique functions of the oriental medicinal herbs and natural ingredients such as butter, fruits, green tea, snails, horse oil, or pearls. Nevertheless the actual content and effects reported should sometimes be viewed skeptically. By adding these different ingredients, cosmetic brands can self-replicate to create endless series of products which guarantee peculiar improvements of the skin (in

general, young looking). They also emphasize that many parts of our bodies, for both women and men, should be managed to be attractive. For example, Korean cosmetics emphasize skin care as a "basic," but critical part of beauty and youthfulness. Series of mask packs are ready to be used to make your skin "moisturized, resilient, whitening, sparkling, or calm down" due to the function of their natural ingredients. To manage your beauty perfectly, you need to purchase a variety of beauty items such as pore brushes/oil/foam, cleansing balms, sleeping pack, peeling puff, foot peeling liquid, nail stickers, hair fragrance mist, all of which had not been introduced, sold, or used in America before.

Maintaining pure and young skin is an everyday practice with the Korean cosmetic products. New lines of cosmetics and items with reviews and social network sites constantly encourage people to try them. Korean Americans can now easily explore online different brands and commodities that remind them of their favorite Korean stars, buying them for themselves and introducing them to others. My 22-year-old informant, for example, already started using an eye cream since her mother recommended it because "she got aged." There is a saying that goes, "one day, one mask pack." Various mask packs are the most popular beauty products. They are not that expensive but impress non-Korean females. All informants used a "cushion powder," a new form of portable cushion compact for skin cover, introduced by a Korean brand. It requires a lot of care, as well as money and time. Using skincare products is just a first step to reaching Korean beauty.

HL: So, American women look more natural and they less care about spots.

> Jenna: Their attitude is changed. Also I think these days Korean American women know that "oh! that's also important." So, both Americans and Korean do their chemical peelings.
> (Rachel, 21, 2nd generation, college student, interviewed in Korean)

Indeed, the Korean beauty industry in the U.S. has sharply grown. In terms of revenues, the U.S. is the third largest market next to China and Hong Kong. The Korean beauty industry has expanded its market to the West/U.S. where an Asian population of potential customers resides. Its emphasis on functional oriental herbal medicine and various natural ingredients successfully appeals to female customers in the U.S. who want to improve their skin. In 2012, Korean beauty companies gained 79 million dollars from the U.S. market, 47 times the revenue from the U.S. market in 2011. The importation of K-beauty products to the U.S. has continuously increased reaching 350 million dollars in 2016 (Kim, J. E., 2017). Considering that the whole revenue of the U.S. cosmetic industry was about 62.46 billion dollars in 2016 (Statista, 2018), K-beauty's growth potential here is huge.

The mass media and entertainment industries have been criticized for spreading a beauty myth in terms of mass produced images designed to serve the ends of patriarchy. These images imply that objective and universal qualities of beauty exist. Industrialized society allowed women to work in the public sphere and own their own consumer power (Wolf, 2002, pp. 14-17). Naomi Wolf (2002) argued that the second wave of the women's movement in Western society was successful in releasing women from homemaking duties. However, the power structure, economy, and culture still counterattack women by censoring their facial and body images and encourage them as a permanent consumer of beauty/fashion/diet products and services (Wolf, 2002, pp. 13-17). Consequently, women were drawn into endless efforts to become beautiful by

consuming cosmetic commodities. Transnational mediated images of Korean celebrities and their popularity feed this distorted perception making it look sensible and natural.

> Rachel: I believe the beauty standard is universal across the culture. They need to find what really fits their own face. Koreans appraise a certain American because she is so pretty. Americans also comments on the appearance of a Korean, if she is pretty, they knew that too, right?..... (Chinese students) tried too many things at once? I talked about that with many others. Too much. They are rich, especially these international students. They wear lots of expensive stuff. I felt that they showed them all at one time.
> HL: Koreans are different from them?
> Rachel: Yes. I do not know how they behave. But I understand why people like Korean clothes and makeup style. I also watched Korean women and also often thought "wow, they are so pretty."
> HL: How could you recognize they are Koreans?
> Rachel: Well, I watched Korean TV programs a lot. Of course, I paid attention to the Korean makeup styles. That's why I guess.
> (Rachel, 21, 2nd generation, college student, interviewed in Korean)

Despite the fact that Korean Americans are proud of the success of the K-beauty, there is a cultural gap in how Korean American women comply with beauty practices in their daily lives. My female informants, who have directly experienced social pressure with respect to women's appearance either within the Korean American community or in Korea, remembered it as a frustration and cultural shock. The beauty standard on women in Korea is an inflexible and high standard. Koreans share and give their opinions on everyone's body image, grooming, or fashion style in a straightforward manner in daily chats and gossip between colleagues, friends, or family. It is not meant to offend someone's feelings. Rather, it seems to be the focused subject of society in relation to its rigid gender role socialization.

> When I go to Korea, and I met the people there. They are not FOBs but they are Korean Koreans. I think I was very saddened. They are like obsessed to become more beautiful, and more beautiful, and more beautiful.
> (Cindy, 19, 2nd generation, college student, interviewed in English)

HyunJi: What's the attractive part of Korean culture is the fashion and beauty. If you watch American show, I thought, before I came to America, everybody would look like Tom Cruise. Then I knew that, "ok that's a reason why Tom cruise makes in Hollywood" and he made tons of movies. Still, people even in the Hollywood movies, they are tall and short and ugly and big and beautiful. All these things are mixed it. But in Korean TV, you really don't see the old people. Even old people with very tight skin, or no ugly people, unless their characters are being very ugly. When I was in Korea or even before the marriage, I think I made sure all of my makeup. Once I got marriage (in the U.S.), I gain tons of weight, and I don't wear makeup.

HL: You think you don't need be attractive?

HyunJi: No no. I think that's just my (Korean) culture. You are adult. You are really not going out looking like that (without makeup and dress up). "누가보면 어떻게 하니?" ("What would do you if you meet someone?") That's kind of culture down there. … Somebody will look and take a nudge. "시집 갈 때 다 됐는데" ("You should look good since you are aged to get married"). Even in the Korean church here, a young Korean female friend told me "언니 눈에 화장은 왜 안 했어요? 언니 왜 살쪘어요?" ("Why you did not do your eye makeup?" "Why did you gain weight?"). All of those. You know. It is everybody's business. You keep kinds of guarding up.

Joseph: I saw it one time (how Korean people involve in each other's appearance).

HyunJi: I know some Korean ladies who have been married over thirty years and still put the makeup as soon as they wake up. So they think that's the etiquette even for the husband to go out for the street. But here, we have different sets of etiquette. So many people put the plastic surgery (in Korea) and some people kinds of celebrities put plastic surgery. That's very common. That's what I see.

(Hyunji & Joseph couple, 30s, 1st & 2nd generation, professionals, interviewed in English)

I do (makeup) sometimes. But I do not do always like Korean people do. When I went Korea, I was with my (Korean) cousin. When we were going to out, just to the corner store, when I walked out, she just asked about "aren't you going to be ready?" And I just said "No, we are going out like five steps for chips. We are not going make up or do my hair." She is like thought me like a snob, that's what I think was cultural things. What culturally, you might find me snob, but we are going to the store. One random person will see me. Like appearance is not that important for me. … She thought like I was not ready, but I do not understand why you are not getting ready (without makeup). That's why I knew I'm not 100

> percent Koreans. There are the small details people really don't think about.
>
> (Helen, 30s, 2nd generation, professional, interviewed in English)

As described above, skin care is a critical and basic everyday practice for Korean women. Yet, makeup is another daily practice among young Korean women with the goal of becoming attractive and beautiful "objects" even to anonymous others. While Hyunji, who moved to the U.S. after her twenties and still mainly stays within the Korean American community flexibly reflected the peculiar patriarchal pressures, Helen, a second generation, simply rejected the beauty practices thrust upon women in Korean society. Helen dared to be a snob in Korea.

How do these women manage and negotiate beauty standards between two distinct cultures that operate under two different powers that are oppressive to women? The legacy of racism in the U.S. is bluntly experienced every day by my second generation of Korean American informants. Most of them recognized the differences between their marginalized body images and the dominant group in both real life and media. They were clearly aware of, upset about, and held critical perspectives toward it. However, they all understood that they should adjust to the culture anyway at a certain point to accept their identity. The cultural dimension of globalization provided young female Korean Americans with different imagined worlds where their ethnic identity could be empowered in terms of fashion and beauty trends. They have more choices now to manage their appearances, especially knowing that their Korean taste does not look shabby. Different from the norms of Korean society, the second generation of Korean Americans did not necessarily follow the beauty practice of Korea that says they should always wear makeup.

Hannah: I feel like I would like to get inspiration quote unquote from both American and Korean culture. Those things go and style.
HL: But your eye makeup is like…
Hannah: It's very American. When I think of Korean, it seems like natural. I feel, now, most minority groups in America are coming to terms of their own culture more than ever. What they wear. How do they do with their hair? How they do with their makeup ... I can see black people accepting their hair certain way. Their skin has certain color. Like Asian people accept eyes certain way. They are like more accepting the way they are already. Not trying to be like white people.
HL: You feel more comfortable about this direction?
Hannah: Yeah. I think it is important to accept yourself.
(Hannah, 20, 2nd generation, college student, interviewed in English)

The broadened choice and hybridized beauty practices gave them room to negotiate between the two oppressive powers that pressure them to be in certain ways. Economically, this shift is merely another instance of the global capitalist system's attempt to sell more commodities in all nations. At the consumers' end, however, it is an expression of their identity in relation to their favorite cultures. Most of my informants described the pleasure derived from consuming fashion commodities and beauty products.

HL: So, when you watch this Korean media, you feel like you are closer to Korea? Or do you feel like you are more Korean?
Amelia: I think, yeah, I do feel more Korean. Yeah, I guess so.
HL: But do you talk about this Korean media really with friends or…?
Amelia: Because a lot of my friends are like me.
HL: Korean-American?
Amelia: They are second-generation that watch a lot of Korean shows. They do more Korean beauty products.
(Amelia, 22, 2nd generation, college student, interviewed in English)

Amelia's remark above illustrates where their pleasure lies in this new cultural trend. The ethnic pride of my Korean American informants is sparked by the national brand appeal of Korean products. This pride is both conceptualized and experienced through consuming cultural products. Further, the pleasure of buying commodities is an

essential category of mass culture. My informants willingly indulged into this pleasure as both audience and consumer.

For example, with reference to our earlier discussion, coloring one's hair was commonly remembered by my informants as part of their struggle for racial identity in the past. Yet, we can express our appreciation of ethnicity by dying our hair diverse colors. One of my informants in her late 30s critically asked about the trend of hair coloring in her school days, "What would be the meaning of coloring your hair as blonde? Why not purple?" But an informant in her early 20s answered that she changed her hair color very often for fun, from pink to blonde. Consumer culture and fashion trends have broadened the range of options from which we can choose. The political meaning of hair color has, so to speak, faded.

However, it is doubtful that the alternative norms of beauty give them an opportunity to boost their self-confidence about their body image and attractiveness. The beauty images refined and spread by digital technology stimulate more illusions about the perfect beauty image. Instead of defying socially constructed beauty standards on either side, my informants constantly explored the "ideal body" across cultures. They actually did their best to fit into both cultures' ideals. What was daunting when we discussed beauty trend and makeup was their obsession and almost lamentation about not having double eyelids regardless of their critical perspectives.

> Helen: Everyone looks Westerner. Try to get double eyelids, the noses, and now the boobs. If we are embracing how we were naturally looked, they would grant these things. Now my eyes are coming back I see it from actresses. I hated my eyes. I always looked awkward with makeup on it. All the guys everyone praised big eyes. All the Korean Americans. ⋯ Even the guys around me always, girls with big eyes. There were certain laws.
> HL: They are Korean Americans?

Helen: Even the Americans. For the most part, they adore girls with big eyes. I sensed that African Americans were interested in the Asian Americans. The most Korean culture and American culture, I did not fit it,

HL: How about Lucy Liu, that kind of Asian actress?

Helen: That was way later, 90s… things like big eyes. My mom always wanted me to do the double eyelid surgery.

HL: She told you that you need that?

Helen: Yes. She did. She has double eyelids. My eyes get smaller when I'm chubbier. She tries to be the best, that's why she thought the surgery would make me better.

HL: You wanted it too?

Helen: Yes, honestly, eye makeup is hard when you do not have big eyes. I looked at Asian makeup, but even there is an Asian makeup there is still ssang-gguh-ple eyes (double eyelid eyes). I think it is really frustrating. ··I do not watch dramas to follow the makeup stuff. But I do personally put the makeup as the way American do. Because my face, they will look really weird if I put on my face. The way they do on my face. It looks very Asian. I do not makeup for that reason.

(Helen, 30s, 2nd generation, professional, interviewed in English)

HL: Do you watch a beauty program from Korea?

Rachel: Yes, I know *Get It Beauty*. I do not always watch it but I look at the short highlight clips on *YouTube*. Well, I do not have double eyelids, so cannot try their makeup tip anyway. I do not have double eyelid eyes.

(Rachel, 21, 2nd generation, college student, interviewed in Korean)

As illustrated above, Helen recognized and criticized the Korean American community that employed the myth of Western beauty saying big eyed girls are beautiful. She has faced Western hegemony in her everyday life because she is different from her many white friends and colleagues. However, even in her own ethnic community, she sensed white hegemony in terms of big, rounded eyes. According to this standard, the majority of Korean American women do not have beautiful eyes because that is not the eye shape the majority of Asians have. At the same time, Helen recognized that her eyes are neither beautiful nor appropriate for doing the kind of eye makeup emphasized in both the American and Korean media. More generally, my informants noticed that

Korean beauty programs did not teach how to make your non-double eyelid eyes beautiful. Eyes without double eyelids are invisible in Korean media just as Asian American women are rarely represented in the American media. Helen sensed that the demand for and worship of Western beauty is stronger within the Korean American community than the non-Korean community. Doing surgery is a common resolution that Koreans can choose, as Helen's mother recognized. As she described, Korean women's eyes, noses, and breasts are the most common body parts to be "fixed" through surgery in Korea. Thus, besides their criticism toward oppressive ideologies of beauty, the agency of my informants could not defy, but rather negotiated their subjectivity in relation to Western centered hegemony in terms of a beauty myth.

The impact of Western media on the beauty standards of "the others" has been discussed by media and cultural studies scholars. About twenty years ago, Darling-Wolf (2004) discovered that Japanese female informants living in an ethnically homogeneous rural community in the 1990s were very critical of the mass mediated body images of Western women in Japanese magazines, However, in relation to their personal body images, they were not very confident in their own attractiveness. Compared to these Japanese women, my informants are excited about the Korean based media influx. However, Korean media has highlighted and been hybridized with westernized norms which have been cherished in Korea as a cultural influence from U.S./Western society.

Differently from the young female informants, young male Korean American informants were rarely interested in or paid attention to fashion or grooming styles of males in Korea. Andy realized that a certain part of their appearance looked different from the majority in Korea. It is not clear which details of his family's appearance made

Koreans feel different than them. Korea is quite a homogeneous and small society compared to the U.S. People have more solid clothing and fashion codes than in the U.S.

> When I went to Korea last year, I wore khaki shorts and a t-shirt and sunglasses and had my hair like this, and all the Korean girls and guys were looking at me and my sister because we were dressed differently. They were always looking at us. The first night we went out in Korea, like when we got off the airplane, when we went to go to get dinner, people were definitely looking at my family because we were dressed differently. (laughter). We have more American style of wearing our clothes and our hair and stuff. My dad was in a polo shirt and khaki shorts and flip flops and people were looking because in Korea isn't it normal to wear pants all the time? ⋯ People were looking at us kind of strange. Also, whenever I wore basketball shorts, because in America it's common to wear basketball shorts everywhere, I would wear basketball shorts to a convenience store somewhere, just a short walk in Korea, and people would always look at me because I dress differently. That did not bother me too much. ⋯Obviously, they have their differences, but I think for the most part they're pretty similar. Because Korean culture now and American culture now, they're so modernized that you can relate them in a lot of ways. But obviously Korean food, the way people act, the dress, and all that kind of stuff is different, but for the most part I kind of see them as equal.
> (Andy, 19, 2nd generation, college students, interviewed in English)

As Andy illustrated above, he did not take the attitude of Koreans as offensive or uncomfortable. Instead, he reflected on it as an interesting and curious experience. He also stressed that there are many commonalities between the two cultures in terms of "modernization" in addition to the differences. His experiences and reflections after several trips to Korea contrasted greatly with those of my female informants. Emily has visited Korea more than ten times since she really loves Korean food. She was also frustrated by the cultural norms that direct how women should look in public spaces in Korea. Emily was well aware that cultural norms regarding the appearance of women were oppressive to varying degrees in many societies. Yet, when she realized they were more invasive and blunt in Korea, she refused to abide by them identifying for that purpose and in that moment as an American. While Andy felt the differences between

him and the Koreans, no one asked him to change his fashion or advised him on how to assimilate into the Korean way. On the other hand, regardless of whether my female informants embraced or rejected beauty practices of both cultures, they studied intently about how to execute makeup in their own way — fitting into their Asian faces while not looking too Asian or FOB.

My female informants were much more critical of the dress code and fashion of daily life in Korea stressing the values of freedom, individualism, and practicality. They appreciated that they are able to wear "whatever you want," depending on "how comfortable you are" in the U.S. Most of my young male informants thought Koreans wear more formal attire than Americans. Wearing uniforms for middle school and high school was the most distinctive difference they noticed while watching television programs. They questioned why educational institutions force the youth to wear uniforms. To them, wearing a buttoned-down shirt, blazer, and a tie as a school uniform seems too traditional and impractical. It limits their freedom. On the contrary, in the U.S., they can feel they can be themselves.

> In America, I feel like me, personally, I have more of an American style of dressing than I do a Korean style. I feel like what I'm wearing today is actually kind of more Korean. A sweater and long pants.
> (Andy, 19, 2nd generation, college students, interviewed in English)

> Alex: I think maybe reality shows are a little bit better. Korean drama I don't think is good for seeing actual culture things. The only thing, I could remember us watching a reality show and seeing there was a high school, and they were all in some kind of uniform. That's the way they would dress up.
> Joon: It's very traditional.
> Alex: Yeah, very traditional type of things. At least for our school, we could just dress up however we wanted.
> HL: You like that way better?
> Alex: I definitely like the way in the U.S. much better. People can dress more comfortably. I hate ties. Collars just have never fit around my

neck well for some reason. I can dress more comfortably, and this isn't really a thing for me, but a lot of people like being more unique through their clothing.

Joon: I think it's more about the choice that you have, because you know that you can wear whatever you want.

Alex: For some people it shows a little bit more of your personality. For me, I just like dressing comfortably. This is what I'm just comfortable in. For other people they just like going all out. My roommate in college always dresses really nicely because he loves doing it. I don't know why. It looks really uncomfortable sometimes.

Joon: Day to day, I like dressing up comfortably, a t-shirt, jeans, and a jacket. When I go to certain classes, I have to dress up business casual, so like khakis, a belt, and a collared shirt, or a button up shirt. I don't really mind that. If I had the option to go to class either in jeans or in a dress up, I would definitely go with jeans.

HL: So in your mind, Korean people really dress up.

Alex: *Yeah, I think for the most part it's really based on how you look rather than how comfortable you are, I guess in your clothes.* At least from my limited knowledge that's what it looks like to me.

HL: You just say that you are similar to other American people.

Alex: Pretty much, yeah. In the US, clothes really depend on the person. It's really just, they can for the most part dress however they want to.

Joon: It's nothing about the fashion that they're into, it's just if they force it too much, and if it shows that they're forcing it, I feel like that has a deterring kind of effect.

(Alex & Joon, 19, 3rd &1.5st generation, college students, interviewed in English)

Their rejection of the Korean style resulted in their having little interest in buying commodities from Korea. Sometimes they bought accessories such as shoes or backpacks. However, it was just their according to their personal tastes or stemming from the desire to buy something from outside of America. Thus, they did not necessarily share information on the products.

HL: You don't have any preference between the U.S. and Korea?

Andy: No, I like both aspects. Dressing both aspects.

HL: Did you buy any stuff from Korea?

Andy: Well I did buy shoes and stuff, but I didn't buy a lot of stuff I want to say. I don't think I bought any clothes in Korea, I think it was just shoes.

(Andy, 19, 2nd generation, college students, interviewed in English)

HL: Don't you want to buy any clothes or something from Korea, or are you interested in what they look like?
Joon: Actually, I like most fashion things from Korea. I actually bought my school backpack from Korea.
HL: Any famous brand?
Joon: I forgot. My mom asked me if I wanted one while she was away in Korea last year to visit our grandmother. I'm like yeah, that one looks good. I actually kind of like it, so it'd be cool if you could get it, and she did get it.
HL: Did people recognize it's different?
Joon: I think they just see that it's a brand that they're not used to seeing.
(Joon, 19, 1.5 generation, college student, interviewed in English)

If they were not interested in fashion for themselves, how did my male informants perceive women's grooming and fashion styles as depicted in the Korean media? Like my female informants, male informants commented the differences they found between Korean and American styles. However, they also sensed that most second generation of Korean Americans were more familiar with American culture since that is the majority culture where they reside to which they adjust and to whom their sexuality appeals.

> Definitely different, because in Korean culture, obviously showing your shoulders and your chest is not allowed and it's not good. But in America obviously it's completely different. I feel like there are big similarities and differences. I think whatever culture you're in, for Korean-American girls, depends on whether they want to embrace the Korean side more or the American side more, if they're equal. I feel like the Korean-American girls I've met personally in my high school and stuff, they are more towards the American side. Generally speaking, I want to say Korean-Americans tend more towards American style. Because obviously that's where they are and that's what the opposite gender wants to see when they're in America.
> (Andy, 19, 2nd generation, college students, interviewed in English)

My male informants had a different perception of the attractiveness of the K-pop stars. As Andy described above, sexual appeal in Korea is different from the U.S. Three of my male informants were very close and from the same high school in their suburban hometown. They consumed and texted about K-pop and Korean dramas all the time.

Particularly, my informants were excited about the Korean popular culture. A major part of their "fanship" is focused on their favorite girl group, Twice. Their perception of the attractiveness of K-pop celebrities was not clearly expressed. They just smiled or briefly said, "pretty" and "good-looking."

This idol group is comprised of nine young girls and debuted in 2015 when they were between the ages of 15 and 19. Their styles and characters are distinctive to appeal to different popular tastes. Girl groups in Korea have been at the center of a dispute over sexual objectification and the commercialization of sexuality in Korea. Business wise, entertainment companies market these young women as having the attractiveness of both youth and adulthood: cute, but still sexy. The group members were recruited for their appearances and talent, training intensely for many years. Thus, idol groups are often criticized by the industry as cookie-cutter creations lacking real musical talent or creativity. For this reason, other informants, such as young international students, were not happy that idol groups were introduced and highlighted to foreign nations as representative of Korea.

The conceptualization of sexuality was different for my young male informants. K-pop groups cultivate a distinct kind of sexuality compared to the U.S. pop stars, for example, cuteness and innocence. Their costumes are relatively cute and colorful, and the choreography is cute and implies sexuality. Thus, the popularity of K-pop and the girl group they liked provided these young men with a more culturally fitting figure of femininity. In the Korean Americans' perspectives, teenagers should be cute and pure rather than sexy. Yet, it is a different type of sexual objectification of women's bodies than that of American girl groups. Asian girl groups look like young girls compared to

U.S. celebrities. However, that is another source of pleasure for fans: to share the sensation of how their favorite celebrities work hard to grow up to be better entertainers as time goes by. As the female informants felt uncomfortable feelings about the mediated images of bluntly sexualized romantic relationships in the U.S. media, my male informants enjoyed the different attractiveness and subtler expression of sexuality from the K-pop girl groups compared to the American media.

> HL: Don’t you think the idol groups are too sexualized or commercialized?
> Andy: I think some groups are but some groups aren't. I think JYP (an entertainment company) does a good job of not doing that. I don't think Twice is that much.
> (Andy, 19, 2nd generation, college students, interviewed in English)

> HL: When you see these Korean actors and actresses in the media, do you like the Korean way of grooming or styling?
> Joon: Most of the time, but when you can tell that it's just caked on, I don't.
> HL: What's that mean? Caked on?
> Joon: A lot of makeup. When you feel like if you touch their face stuff will get on your hand, that I think-
> HL: You think the Asian woman does that?
> Joon: Not a lot, no. Well every woman does that.
> (Joon, 19, 1.5 generation, college student, interviewed in English)

Figure 8. K-pop girl group Twice.
Image from JYP entertainment website. March 12, 2018.

The transnational cultural sphere at their fingertips complicates the beauty standards and sexuality of my informants, which usually intersects with race, culture, and ethnic identity. The genders work differently in deciding how to respond to these transnational cultural trends. My young female informants, for example, were excited that they could explore beauty that "fits better" on them. They had pride and interest in Korean makeup products that were supposed to highlight forms of Asian beauty. Their way of embracing the Korean Wave is actualized by consuming clothes and beauty supplies used to approach idealized and refined beauty images from both cultures. As a result, young female Korean Americans work harder to satisfy or negotiate idealized beauty images from the U.S. and Korea. On the other hand, male informants stayed with American values such as liberalism and practicality. They were not interested in Korean fashion or styles for men. Meanwhile, they embraced the hybridized sexuality of Asian femininity promoted by the Korean popular culture.

Culture is Better, Chance is Higher

How do my informants' imagined worlds influence their plans, especially their expectations of romance and marriage? My discussions with informants frequently turned to actors and actresses from Korean trendy dramas. However, when I asked whether they imagined romance as it is depicted in Korean dramas, most of them said that it is just fantasized drama and they do not expect anything like that in their lives. In fact, their ethnic identity implies certain limitations on their romantic relationships and marriage both imposed by themselves and by others.

Most of my young female informants were fully aware of the limited pool of Koreans or Asians in the U.S. Many of them said that they had an open mind in terms of the race/ethnicity of potential partners. Only the informants who are in 30s or 40s had dated to this point. They generally preferred inter-ethnic relationships.

> Amelia: I guess I prefer Korean, but I actually don't have a preference for dating. I know that sounds weird.
> HL: It's just a fantasy?
> Amelia: Yeah. It's just like I think story is story and like my life is my life. I think, oh yeah, I do like 화제드라마 (the trendy popular drama) but I think for me when it comes to relationships, I think that's separate from (reality). Because drama is just a drama, and nothing that happens in a drama what happen in real-life. So for me it's just whoever, I don't really look at.
> (Amelia, 22, 2nd generation, college student, interviewed in English)

Mediated images of romance in the American media became a source of my informants' imagination and understanding of romantic relationships with other races. They observed that interracial couples are rarely portrayed and romantic relationships are depicted in a very sexualized way by the American media. This uncomfortable feeling towards the sexualization of women's bodies was rooted in both their gender and their Christian religious faith. Thus, female informants could not identify with the romantic

narratives of the U.S. media. Similarly, they also assumed that interracial romance would not probably happen to them.

> Cindy: First of all, I definitely, based on how I look, more Korean, right? And then, American women in (American) media, are treated us more like sexy almost?
> HL: Asian women?
> Cindy: No, no. American women in general. So, I would like "No, that's not me! (laughter)" I think the Korean love story is not realistic. But I think it is more realistic than American love story. I think as a Korean American in America, I don't feel like an American man looks at me and feel attract to me. As much as you would toward American looks like more westernized women.
> HL: Like Caucasian or African American women?
> Cindy: Right. I don' know why I think that. But I am less attracted to white and because of that, I think American celebrity is very very attractive, very very good looking. But nothing more than that.
> HL: So in reality, you think you are going date with Asian men?
> Cindy: Not that it, only have to be that way. But I think just like "culture is better and chances are higher."
> (Cindy, 19, 2nd generation, college student, interviewed in English)

Cindy concluded that though she valued their ethnic culture, Korean culture is better for her in terms of romantic relationships. My Korean American informants' engagement with Korean popular culture assured them that cultural empathy based on Korean, or at least Asian, culture is a very important element when they consider a partner and spouse. The Korean dimension of their identity became more important in this sphere of life. It was not just the fact that they look Asian. Speaking Korean, appreciating Korean foods, perspectives and attitudes toward sexuality were also contributing factors to this preference.

> Rachel: Well I would like to marry to a Korean.
> HL: Including Korean Koreans?
> Rachel: Yes, yes. Korean Korea or Korean Americans. I hope he can speak Korean anyway. Both Korean and English. First of all, I hope he is able to communicate with my family. In my case, I like Korean culture. I'm hybridized. So I hope the person would be like me. Well, if he can only speak Korean, I can teach him English or

vice versa. But I hope he can speak Korean definitely, rather than just speaking English only. If he can speak Korean, not English, that would be better.
(Rachel, 21, 2nd generation, college student, interviewed in Korean)

I think I would want to be with like a Korean, or like a Korean American. I feel like it's important that they speak English because that way, that's my preferred, I guess, mostly form of communication, but also Korean so that they can also communicate with my parents and our family could learn Korean.
(Hannah, 20, 2nd generation, college student, interviewed in English)

HL: You think Asian countries can share some common ground?
Cindy: Yes, I actually talked about this too with my mom when I was younger, like "Oh! What if just about meeting with a random person from a country you never heard of?" Then she asked "would you be OK being able to communicate with him like any cultural backgrounds? We cannot eat like 된장국 (Korean soybean paste soup) together. We cannot watch the drama together." Something like that.
HL: You think someone from Asia is OK? Didn't need to have grown up here?
Cindy: Yes. Even now like seeing many multi-ethnic couples, like my spouse might little be changing but he would have to be familiar with Korean culture.
(Cindy, 19, 2nd generation, college student, interviewed in English)

As discussed above, Korean American females thought that Korean ethnicity was more important than citizenship or speaking English. Furthermore, this transnational cultural flow of narratives and images led my female informants to be intrigued about and want to understand the characteristics of masculinity in contemporary Korea. This resulted not only from the flows of mediated images, but also from opportunities they had to date "Korean Koreans." Their dating experiences with Korean males were eye-opening to them since they made their imaginations about Korea more concrete. They perceived that young Koreans were more flexible regarding rigid gender roles than second generation Korean American men. They could discern the virtues and values of Korea, like being modest and warmhearted, consideration to others, or politeness, which were

not considered as important in the U.S. My informants appreciated these attitudes and qualities since their essential relationships were built within their ethnic community. They started reflecting on both the negative and positive sides of varied Asian masculinities which they had not considered thoroughly before.

> Siwon: I love Yoo, Jae-Seok more than other actors. He is just my ideal type of man.
> HL: Could you explain the reason?
> Siwon: First of all, I like him that he always took care of others first.
> HL: You look at the personality.
> Heena: That's the most important one!
> Siwon: I am not that interested in the appearance of man.
> Heena: (It is important) what kinds of quality he has.
> Siwon: Frankly, people can manage their appearance. But personality really needs to be cultivated with efforts. That's why I like him.
> HL: You always watch his shows?
> Siwon: Yes, I watch *Running Man*, *Infinite Challenge*, and sometimes *Happy Together*. ⋯ I also felt attractiveness of Kang, Ha-Neul, but he is younger than me. He is really awesome. I can sense that he is really a good person when he is smiling. I can see that he is a nice human being. He is good-hearted and very modest. I watched the *꽃보다 청춘* (*Youth over Flower*) and (in the show) he went to Iceland with other older actors. I could sense that how he is unpretentious. I really like him, really.
> (SiWon & Heena, 30s, 1.5 and 1st generation, professionals, interviewed in Korean)

> I dated with a man from Korea. There is a certain expectation among Korean Americans too. So at least the guy I dated, there was no gender role kinds of thing. He was open-minded. He did not mind cooking meals. He was better than me. I think. Korean Americans, they are the one who employ a lot of gender roles. Because parents who came here in 80s, stuck in the Korean culture, that's very specific like, "my grandma will kill me if I work in the kitchen." For me, it is like "you need to get over it." Because I'm not going to be only working in the kitchen. If anything I can find, it does not matter if you are Korean or not Korean American. It depends on how you grow up.
> (Helen, 30s, 2nd generation, professional, interviewed in English)

> Jenna: I mean Korean drama is just fantasy. But this is makes me more interesting to the man. I think it is mainly in the drama, but they are too much.
> HL: Self-esteem?

Jenna: Yes. But one thing I realize about Korean man, once I dated with Korean boyfriend, there was no visible wall. I think they have some kinds of courtesy in the Korean culture. Politeness. There were some kinds of politeness. I like it and I love all that aspects and I think. I thought about my culture. I feel American culture. Besides the language barrier, I think maybe Korean Koreans think Korean Americans are not Korean? They don't understand. You are just 교포 (Koreans in foreign countries). You don't understand Korean culture. I don't think it is not true. I See it through our parents. Immigration in 1970s and stuck in that ages and for example, my parents. They hardly went back to Korea. …… But I think because you grow up in that household somehow even you don't know you have to be but somewhere in your head. I feel like there is some connections for you. Yes. I felt like home very like a home. He was very thoughtful and considerate. I think that why I liked.

(Jenna, 40s, 2nd generation, professional, interviewed in English)

My young male informants were sophomores in college who attended different universities around the city of Philadelphia. However, they have spent time together in their hometown and church. Given this dynamic among them, they started to chat about their ideas on dating and romantic relationships like in their everyday conversations. They complained about the Korean American girls at the church and how they could not understand them, how their friendships were unnecessarily complicated, and why the day of prom became so troubled. Young Korean Americans naturally grew up around each other based on their small ethnic community and church. Most of these informants attended a Korean church, but they explained that this is mostly because of its central role in the Korean community. Contrary to these male informants, a couple of my female informants told me that they spent most of their weekends in the church as Sunday school teachers or other doing other activities.

The only Korean American girls that I'm exposed to is at church, and they were either very religious, which I didn't really like. I'm not very religious. I'm just kind of hanging.

(Joon, 19, 1.5 generation, college student, interviewed in English)

Regardless of whether they had faith or were discontented about their church family, they belonged to the church. A couple of my informants' fathers were pastors or retired pastors of the Korean church, or their families were closely involved in the church activities. Like these second generation informants, they met a Korean American peer group in the church and built friendships there. Korean Americans mostly know each other in this community. If they date a Korean American, it will likely be one of their friends from church or someone one of their family members knows.

Thus, my male informants usually looked for their girlfriends outside of the ethnic community. Unlike my female informants, the male informants, who more often initiate romantic relationships, found it relatively easier to build a romantic relationship. Race and ethnicity did not completely confine their approach to the opposite gender. Since they had grown up in a white dominant area, some of them revealed that "I've only dated with white women" or "Actually, all three of my past girlfriends have been white. Well, it wasn't that my values or anything changed, it's just that we happened to like each other, so we just started dating."

As my informants illustrated, romantic feelings just happen; but romance is different from marriage. Their concept of marriage was deeply rooted in the Korean value system because marriage there has traditionally been a family matter compared to the American society. All of these young second generation males asserted that they would get married to a Korean American. As Andy stated below, my male informants saw marriage as "bring(ing) home a girl" as a new member of one's family. Second generation Korean Americans have observed how their parents have struggled as first generation immigrants with limited resources and language barriers, in order to settle in

American society. The difficulties they have faced together gave them a feeling that they owed so much to their parents and they should reward them for what they have been given. Also, family is the only dependable resource in their newly settled country, though it comprises the Korean side of their identity. Therefore, it was almost impossible for them to choose something against all these values.

> I owe a lot to my parents because they did so much for me and my sister when they moved here. They went through a lot, so I really want to. ⋯ I never had any thoughts of disconnecting myself from the Korean side. I always wanted to get to know more and be a part of my Korean side, even though it was kind of hard.
> (Andy, 19, 2nd generation, college students, interviewed in English)

In particular, the Korean Wave drew my informants into the Korean culture. They hoped that their future spouses would be able to help them acculturate their children within Korean values. Therefore, there were no interracial/interethnic couples among my male informants, except one second generation Korean American female. All second or 1.5 generation of Korean American male informants married Korean women.

> HL: In your case, is your relationship with people influenced a lot by Korean culture?
> Joseph: Well, I met my wife because planning a K-pop festival and Korean BBQ. That's the place when I met her first. She became my Korean teacher.
> HL: Did you plan to meet a Korean woman as a spouse?
> Joseph: I wanted to date with a Korean woman. Because when I was in Korea, I was transformed by Korean culture and I thought about it.
> (Joseph, 30s, 2nd generation, professional, interviewed in English)

> Andy: Well, I like to think of I have a double life kind of. I have an American life and I have a Korean life. I like to balance both of them.
> HL: Could you give me some examples?
> Andy: For example, when I talk to my friends about something and then when I talk to my family about something, it might be completely different. Because in order to appeal to my American friends, I have to explain it one way, but in order to appeal to my Korean

friends or family, I have to say it in another way for them to understand.

HL: For example, for what? Approaching woman? Dating? (laughter)

Andy: Yeah, I guess dating would be an example.

HL: You sometimes talk to your parents about dating?

Andy: Yeah. Whenever I jokingly ask my parents if is it okay if I bring home a white girl? They'd be like, "Oh yeah we're okay with it as long as you're happy." My parents said that. I know secretly that they want me to bring home a Korean girl. If I were to explain that to my American friends, they'd be like, "Oh dude, you can go out with whoever you want. It doesn't matter."

HL: Personally, what's your preference?

Andy: My preference is Korean women.

HL: Why?

Andy: Because I don't know actually. I think of the future and I would like to have Korean children and teach them culture that I've learned throughout my life about the Korean aspect and I feel like with another Korean partner, that'd be easier.

HL: What do you think there's a difference like? Because just a Korean woman knows your culture, that's it?

Andy: Right. Yeah, we have more to relate to each other. So.. Like I said, I tend to think of my life as a double life. I have an American side and a Korean side, so if my potential partner has that same idea, then we can relate to both sides because we have more stuff to relate about.

HL: Supposed to be Korean-American girl. Not Korean-Korean.

Andy: Right. Yeah, yeah. Korean-American.

HL: That's kind of difficult actually, right?

Andy: Yeah, it's very difficult.

(Andy, 19, 2nd generation, college students, interviewed in English)

While these young Korean Americans were juggling between American values and their ethnic cultural values, the highlighted romantic relationships in Korea dramas reinforced my informants' appreciation of the Korean style and approach to the marriage relationship. For instance, the Western value of individual happiness has spread as a modern value globally. However, my informants recognized that the way of pursuing individual happiness could threaten the values of their family. As an alternative, they saw how Korean dramas conceptualized the commitment of romantic relationship as a serious

investment for both spouses. Thus, they should sometimes sacrifice their own happiness to maintain that investment and the wellness of their whole family.

> HL: What did you like, their kind of approach in Korean media?
> Andy: Yeah. I liked the romance in that. How they approached it, I really liked it. It's different from anything, it's different from American culture's romance, so it was really nice and refreshing to see.
> HL: You like the kind of values they present? For example, my other informants said that people usually hesitate to commit to one person in this culture, and that is quite different in Korean. They really value that kind of-
> Andy: Commitment.
> HL: Yeah.
> Andy: I like the Korean values more than I like American values. The commitment, I value commitment a lot. Korean, for example, the two relationships in the *Descendants of the Sun* (a Korean trendy drama) was a huge thing. American culture does not. It's more about personal happiness than status. I think the Korean way is better.
> HL: You mean, in American society, the romance is more…
> Alex: Personal happiness. Yes, very much. It's more like if you're not happy in the relationship then they'll just get a divorce, or they'll fix it in some way. American culture in general just seems like very quick fixes to personal happiness. Whereas Korea is more like…
> Joon: Like an investment.
> Alex: Yeah, an investment, exactly. Things like that, I think the Korean way for those type of things, much better than let's say, personal happiness. Everything ends badly I think, because of that.
> (Andy, Alex, & Joon, 19, 2nd, 3rd, 1.5st generation, college students, interviewed in English)

Although one of my female informants said that "(Korean) culture is better and the chance is higher," within Asian/Korean community, it was still burdensome for my informants to find a spouse or romantic partner who shares their ethnic identity. Marriage was an especially important cultural norm for them. Under social pressure in the Korean cultural context, their chance of finding someone who could adjust and assimilate to their ethnic culture was rare, considering the Korean ethnic community in Philadelphia is not large.

Consuming Korean media incited different values regarding human qualities and cultural values among young Korean Americans. Their gendered identities became more complicated and reshaped both by local customs and transnational media contents. Meanwhile they recognized what distinguishes them as Koreans as well as Americans. They were actively reconstructing a new ethnic identity as second generation Korean Americans as Hall (1996) described. Through the mediated narratives and images in Korean media, both genders of my informants explored new possibilities for building relationships with the opposite gender. Young female informants discovered different forms of masculinities through both the media and their actual dating experiences with Korean men. Some of them valued the cultural empathy of Korea as a critical element in their romantic partner. On the other hand, the ethnicity of a spouse was more important for my male informants since they understood marriage as an expansion of their family. Through the Korean media, they found a refreshing perspective and support for the purpose of marriage as an expansion of family or a serious investment. Therefore, they employed the value of commitment to their spouse instead of stressing pursuit of individual happiness.

International Students/Young Professional Immigrants

> Hyuk: They are definitely different. I think American women are very independent. Very strong. They do not ask men to do something. They treat men in an egalitarian manner. Korea women usually do not like that. They expect men do something for them. I sensed that way.
> HL: Your interaction was changed when you dated an American woman?
> Hyuk: It was same at the beginning and eventually changed. I felt that I should not act same as Korean women. For example, when I walked with a Korean woman, if we saw something cute, she said "wow, that is pretty nice" and that is an implicit expression to ask me to buy it for her. I felt that way. But American girls are not like that. If I buy something for her since it is pretty, she refused and

> asked me to refund. It happened really. We went to the store together and refunded. I think they expect a gift on a special day. Otherwise, they even want to pay equally when we have a meal together.
>
> (Hyuk, 30s, international student, interviewed in Korean)

In his dating relationships, this informant found that American women were more financially independent than Korean women seeking an equal partnership. Similarly, most of my informants who were international students or professional immigrants sensed differences in gender roles and power dynamics through experiencing both cultures. This section explores the impact of Korean media consumption on negotiating and performing gender roles, as well as planning for dating and marriage, among Korean Americans who moved to the U.S. for academic or employment purposes. My informants initially constructed and performed their gender roles under the influences of Korean culture, but also made an effort to adapt to American culture once they were situated there.

Coping with Gender Roles in Immigrant Communities

Since gender roles are actualized through relationships with others, most of my informants reflected on their gender roles in the context of multiple relationships within the Korean American community, including their families in the U.S. or Korea. Rather than struggling to fit into American norms, they often reflected on and practiced their gender roles in the context of Korean American culture. Korean dramas always depict family and/or romantic relationships, women's diverse roles as mothers, daughters, and professionals, as well as romantic partners. These were often contemplated by my informants as they spent time with Korean media.

As Hyuk described above, most Korean Americans recognize the differences in gender roles between the Korean and American cultures. However, my informants experienced most of their challenges with other Korean Americans who had settled in the U.S. earlier than them. Their struggles seem inevitable due to the characteristics of the immigrant community which is comprised of a very diverse background of cultural capital. My informants often decided to attend the local Korean American churches because the Korean churches in the U.S. serve the role of a pseudo family role in immigrant society. However, each individual also needs to adjust their attitudes and behaviors because the elders of Korean American churches hold to more rigid and traditional norms on gender and age roles than do people in contemporary Korean culture.

> I sensed that the Korean church is a kind of caring my family. Church people believed that they should serve each other as performing their belief. I do the same as others. ⋯ In fact, in the church, I sensed many conflicts with other Korean women. In my church, women rarely make their voice within the church. They don't, even though they can. Thus, people think I have very strong personality. Korean American women voluntarily stay silent like a maid in the kitchen. Then people tended to treat me as one of them. But I'm a head of household, so I do not want to be silent as other women.
>
> (Minseo, 30s, 1st generation, professional, interviewed in Korean)

At the same time, this informant needs to play within the stereotype of "a typical Asian mom" when she interacts with her second generation, more Americanized son. Minseo's son used the American stereotypes of "a helicopter mom" or "tiger mom" to describe her, with their accompanying negative connotations. Minseo, however, accepted this "typical Asian mom" stereotype as a way of persuading her son to work harder. Unlike the senior first generation Korean Americans who experienced struggles and tension with their Americanized children, younger professional immigrants are in better

positions since they speak English fluently and understand both cultures. Thus, they perceived the strengths and weakness of both cultures and empowered themselves based on their ethnicity.

> My son teases me like "you are a typical Asian." I asked him, "Seriously you think I'm a typical Asian mom?" Then he said later that I'm not. I teased him "you are an Asian and I'm a typical Asian mom. If you do not get a good grade, it does not make sense. You should do better. Getting B in math and science does not make sense"
> (Minseo, 30s, 1st generation, professional, interviewed in Korean)

With this mind set, watching Korean media with their transnational family constantly reminded my informants of how to act as a Korean in their families. The convenience of digitalized media made it easy for my informants to connect with their families and Korean friends across the Pacific Ocean almost every day. Free Internet-based audio-video calls are always available via the Smartphone. Therefore, their performance of gender roles tended to retain the influence of Korean culture and practices regardless of their far-away location.

> HyunJung: I get to know the characteristics of the specific age group in Korea. ... When I watched the drama 또 오해영 (*Another Miss Oh*), I felt "wow, people have that kinds of feeling when they are at age 30s in Korea." ⋯ Since I have been busy once I arrived in the U.S., I realized that I had not thought about those kinds of feelings since I was not in there (Korea) at that age. I struggled to survive here. I haven't been through that painful romantic feelings like the character in the drama. I had to work hard and adjust to the different culture in the hospital. Thus, I have not had that kinds of emotional experiences.
> HL: Is that enjoyable when you watch the dramas?
> HyunJung: Well. I think I am learning little by little what I have not experienced.
> HL: Why is that so meaningful to you?
> HyunJung: Well, the major character Miss Oh was 32. She involved in the swirl of all kinds of emotions and a deadly romantic relation. I imagined that kinds of thing can happen at 32 in Korea. Since I'm already in 38.⋯I tried to employ if there is anything good (in Korean drama). I felt that I'm not mature enough for my age.

> American is a good country since it makes me forget about my age. ⋯ Anyone told me you should behave like this because you are 38. Age matters all the time in Korea. I could not learn that since I'm here. So I sensed that through the media. Miss Oh is a very mature woman. She treated her parents in that mature manner. ⋯ When she hung up the phone call with her mother, she sincerely told her mother that, "if you hang up like this, I would not be happy." That kind of very considerate mention. ⋯ I never thought that way. When I call my mother in Korea, I try not to say anything bad. But I also often frustrated with her too. I realized that I should not do that to my mother again. I cannot see her everyday. These kinds of thoughts. I never thought that way before.
> (HyunJung, 30s, 1st generation, professional, interviewed in Korean)

Since most of my international student and professional informants only watched Korean media, their ideals of attractiveness were referred to what they enjoyed in their everyday lives. They did not have much interest in American celebrities since most Korean celebrities dominated or replaced their ideal gender types. Meanwhile, they always had enough information about different Korean stars. They could understand the characteristics of all the actresses and actors. Their life stories, family backgrounds, interactions with fans, and all kinds of information were accessed easily by my informants — as readily as fans in Korea — through online websites.

> Jenna (second generation Korean American friend) is the one who is the most interested in the Korean dramas around me. If I mentioned any Korean drama to her, she is suddenly so excited and really enjoys the conversation. "Right, he is really fabulous!" like that. Thus, I spoke with her more often about the actors in Korean drama. ⋯ Christine (second generation Korean American friend) sometimes asked me "who is your type among the male characters in *응답하라 1988* (*Reply 1988*)?" When we started to talk about it, she asked, "why do you like that gloomy character? What aspects of your character made you feel attractiveness about him?" We expand our topic something we share beyond the dramas. That makes the connections between Christine and my life.
> (Mina, 40, 1st generation, professional, interviewed in Korean)

> I think I like Kim, Rae-Won and Park, Shin-Hye. They are cute couple in the drama. I also like the Korean medical dramas genre since I have

> worked in that field. I loved Im, Si-Wan and then that fervor disappeared soon. I also liked Jo, Jin-Woong. ⋯ I am into Park, Shin-Hye these days. She is so beautiful, her acting is so good. I also heard that she is good natured. ⋯ I think she is more beautiful since she never got the plastic surgery.
> (HyunJung, 30s, 1st generation, professional, interviewed in Korean)
>
> HL: Do you have any favorite American celebrities, like actors?
> Younhee: I do not watch American content. Well, I loved Keanu Reeves. I really liked his free spirit. I do not have anyone these days⋯.
>
> I like Kim, HyeSoo, she always tries different roles. As a middle age actress with that careers, she is really my wannabe.
> (YounHee, 40s, 1st generation, professional, interviewed in Korean)

Although most of the international students and professional immigrants stayed in intra-ethnic relationships, they also tried to cope with both cultures wherever they resided. They struggled to adjust to local culture to minimize possible miscommunications. Most interactions within close relationships are highly contextualized and culturally coded. The informants in international students or professional immigrants, eventually learned to flexibly react when they needed to deal with their gender roles for based on cultural difference. For example, the cliché romantic scene in a Korean drama that Mina, a professional immigrant, expected from her partner was exactly the opposite of Cindy, a young second generation. Whereas Cindy felt uncomfortable "when a man grabbed the arm of a woman and forced her to come with him (in Korean dramas)" against her will, Mina sensed the emotional gap that inevitably arose from innate cultural differences when she went out with a non-Korean partner.

> I guess I have some expectations regarding the interaction between a couple. For example, in Korean dramas, when a woman upset about something and is about to leave. Then a man holds her while apologizes or persuades her. That's familiar patterns for me. But he (American partner) did not act like that. Or when a man asks a woman if she wanted something, then in Korea, usually a woman is supposed to decline three times as politeness and consideration to the other. Then a man insisted that

> "I can do it for you." So I expected that kinds of interactions. But in real situation with him, when I said "that's fine," and then he said "oh, OK then." He couldn't understand the Korean way and I also felt disappointed why he just regarded my word "no" means "no" as it is. I realized that I always expected the cultural patterns I watched in the TV from him. I need to adjust to this culture; otherwise, there could be a disappointment or struggle between us.
>
> (Mina, 40, 1st generation, professional, interviewed in Korean)

Their shifted contexts of lives in the U.S. for digitalized communication technologies and their limited relationships within Korean American immigrant communities drove Korean Americans to repetitively accept and cherish their Korean identities rather than the normative gender roles in American society. Further, their daily consumption of Korean media content gave my informants a cue with which to situate themselves into a role in Korea, and to reaffirm their identities as a Korean or Korean in American society rather than assimilating into the U.S. society.

Not Fobby, but Global Fashionista!

Contrary to second generation Korean Americans, international students and first generation Korean Americans were sensitive to and aware of the presence of U.S. power in Korean media. As SeongJin explained, they were aware that culture has been hybridized on many occasions, between the East Asian culture of Korea and that of the U.S. However, they were also aware of U.S. hegemony in a global context. Thus, they acknowledged the twist made by the Korean media culture in addition to U.S. hegemony.

> SeongJin: K-pop is Western music with Korean female bodies. I think their bodies are also westernized too. K-pop is not that significant music. I enjoy the melody of the music, but K-pop does not have it. It is like a B-rated music. Its genre is like only for a club dance. All the bounce. Like JiHye said, she likes the music from 90s, I do too. I like ballades music. So I rarely listen to the contemporary Korean music.
>
> HL: Do you think the K-pop is for foreign markets?

SeongJin: Hmm.. I rarely thought about it, whether it is for the foreign or domestic market. I thought, they were made in Korea but, for somehow, they were recognized as its market power and became famous in foreign market. There is the Western power, definitely. It sounds like white supremacy. But, even the appearance, we always try to follow that. As I told before, English is a standard at global market. People try to adjust themselves to it. I think the U.S. has power now, so the appearance or values are centered on the U.S. I think music or literature all are under influences of the U.S. power. I do not even think about whether there is an impact or not. No doubt. We influence on them too. For example, I know an emerging Korean artist for his murals here. What he does is a drawing portrait of African American women wearing the Korean traditional dress, HanBok. Next to the image, he wrote "a flower blossoms" in Korean. Like that way. We are influenced from the U.S. but we also give some to them. I think that's the Korean Wave and K-pop. We are all under influences of the America but it is mediated by Korean culture. That makes differences. We often talked Chinese culture spread to Korea and Japan, but three of them are all different. Like that. We can recognize well the differences now. K-pop is something like that I believe. Anyway, it is a pop music, K-pop.

(SeongJin, 20s, international student, interviewed in Korean)

Nevertheless, in my informants' articulation of the hybridized global culture, the Western beauty standards were dominant among both genders of my informants. Black or white masculinity in particular was acknowledged and compared to Asian masculinity based on body images, whereas femininity was described as different or not superior to that of other cultures.

I think the body shape is innate. We (Asians) are born different to the African or the Caucasians. We cannot ignore the gap. The average heights of different races have huge gaps already.

(Hyuk, 30s, international student, interviewed in Korean)

SeongJin: In terms of appearance, the white is superior.
JiHye: I think that idea is pervasive among us. But I do not think I should assimilate into that culture. I do not think I should learn from the white culture.

(JiHye and SeongJin, 20s, international students, interviewed in Korean)

> I think the Korean cosmetic fits Asians well. But, I do not think Asians are particularly gorgeous or better than other races.
> (Heena, 30s, 1st generation, professional, interviewed in Korean)

Besides their awareness of the global beauty myth, international students and professional immigrants were aware of the exaggerated emphasis placed on appearance in Korea. The second generation female Korean Americans expressed uncomfortable feelings when they experienced discernible discriminatory treatment depending on the physical attractiveness of individuals in any situation in Korea. My international student and professional immigrant informants discovered that this so called "lookism" operates pervasively in Korea through the denaturalization of Korean culture by their experiences of the U.S. culture. Thus, they negotiated their attitudes, such as continuing their manner in the U.S. as part of their identity or flexibly adapting to the different cultural norms.

> Korea is the country that everyone cares about how they look and how others think about my appearance. I should be fit to the dress code. I should fit into the dressing culture. If you underdress, you can be isolated. The dress code is very specific and normative. For example, how could you wear that for the church, or for the office? Here (in the U.S.), that spectrum is very wide. If you want, you can be just comfortable. I might have that Korean mentality still. My mother told me "where do you go with that cloth? You should wear this and present like this." It might be my personal thing. I do not want to be very different like fob. I do not want to present "I wear like Korean since I just came from Korea." I just want to be fashionable here but I never want to be Korean fashion fob. That seems to me, very insensitive, sometimes. I do not want to be too different, not appropriate, or not belong in the local context. I tried not to be too different, but look care myself well. I do not want to underdress.
> (Mina, 40, 1st generation, professional, interviewed in Korean)

> JiHye: People in here do not care what people wear. So, I do not bring any clothes from Korea even it is really pretty. While I'm in Korea, I do the best makeup and dress up. I really concern about my appearance in Korea, because people judge based on how you look. They look at it and talk about it. But in the U.S., no one cares. I am not satisfied with my look, but wear anything roughly.
> SeongJin: I heard that too. I know a senior Korean American lady who is an elder in a Korean church. When she came here first, she really

dressed well to attend the church service. Then people were so impressed how she wore and thought she must be a noblewoman. When Korean people came to the U.S. first, they really concern about their fashion and how others look at them. But they eventually became free from that idea.…It is interesting that even for myself, when I visited Korea, I became more care about my appearance. People treat others based on how they look. … I really feel uncomfortable about that atmosphere in Korea. I need to do that too in Korea. In here, like today, I can wear the laboratory coat and no one says about that. But if I go Korea like this, people might think me as a homeless.

JiHye: They will look at you and wonder "who is this beggar?" So, I really dressed up in Korea. People look at me and that makes me happy.

(JiHye and SeongJin, 20s, international students, interviewed in Korean)

Representing oneself with a refined appearance and makeup is very important in Korea. As JiHye asserted, "people judge based on how you look," implying a judgment of your class. You need time, and more importantly capital, to make yourself look nice with special beauty items. Most international students are middle or upper middle class in Korea. Hyuk shared how he started to care about appearance by buying some luxury brands as part of a peer culture in Korea.

HL: Are there any celebrities you want to follow?

Hyuk: No. Well, I was different from my high school. When I was in high school, we were so interested in the trend just within our peers. If one of us buy something, we should all buy it.

HL: Like the North Face padding?

Hyuk: Well, the North Face padding coat was not that trendy at that time. My situation was somewhat different. I graduated KyungBock high school, the famous one. There are many friends from rich families. People jokingly said "it is GangNam in GangBook (a wealthy neighborhood in a poor neighborhood in Seoul). The fashion trend spread so fast among us. When we were in the middle school, we usually wore the limited edition of Nike. Then at some point, when we were a freshmen or sophomore, my peers all wore Italian luxury brands, such as Prada or Ferragamo.

HL: Those brands have clothes for those age groups?

Hyuk: Sure, clothes and shoes were very common. At one point, it became popular and then all of us started to wear that. I was so interested in that from the middle school. I spent thirty thousand dollars to buy shoes when I was a middle school student.

HL: Like there was news that elementary school students use the Ferragamo pencil cases.
Hyuk: Not that much. We were not that crazy. But the shoes were not like fifty dollars. It starts from three hundred dollars. Sometimes one thousand dollars. Those are limited one. They will not make any more, thus a premium goes with it.
HL: Are there shops for these items?
Hyuk: Yes, there are so called multi-shops in Apgujeong (a town in GangNam). They mainly sold these items for middle school or high school students. There are no reasons they do not sell for these young students. It is not that popular now, it was around end of the 90s and early 2000s.
(Hyuk, 30s, international student, interviewed in Korean)

Hyuk's experience sounds rather extreme, but it shows in what kind of culture the upper-class teenagers evolved and engaged in Korea. The GangNam area in Seoul, which became famous for the globally renowned song of the Korean singer Psy, *GangNam Style* (2012), has become symbolic of a heterogeneous, but extremely materialistic life style. However, through the distinctive culture in GangNam, people also imagine Korea as a place where very advanced and fast fashion trends are alive.

Consuming Korean media simultaneously with communities to which they felt they belonged in both the U.S. and Korea was important for my informants to be trendy wherever they were located. What they felt and followed was often synced with trends in Korea and portrayed through Korean media. My informants imagined that Korea was a more fashionable and trendy place where they got many ideas for their personal styling.

HL: Is there any person you talk about Korean dramas?
Minseo: It is hard to specify, but when I say words, and the person use the similar words, then I assume that "oh, you watch that too." I sense that. When I talk with my church family, someone said "you watch the drama I watch! I would like to do my hair like her too!" Like this way. I just want to cut my hair, then someone says that your look like her. She thought I wanted to look like her.
(Minseo, 30s, 1st generation, professional, interviewed in Korean)

> I like Jeon, DoYeon's style in the Korean drama 밀회 (*Secret Affair*). Those kinds of dresses, that I can wear now. Watched the show and then I thought "maybe I try her style today."
> (Mina, 40, 1st generation, professional, interviewed in Korean)

Similar to second generation Korean Americans, my informants agreed that the style and quality from Korea is unique. They felt that it was different from the American style, but that did not bother them because people here appreciated their style and gave compliments. The aesthetic of Korea worked in America.

> Heena: When my sister wore Korean clothes, then people gave huge compliments and asked where she got it. The design is so unique, so charming, and cute. I heard that a lot.
> Siwon: I think everyone knows, the clothes are somewhat unique.
> Heena: The texture is so good….
> Siwon: If you go to the department store, you know the store Forever 21. That's Korean (owned by Korean Americans). White youth are really like it.
> Heena: White people love it very much.
> Siwon: That has little twist of fashion in the U.S. and that make is unique and pretty.
> HL: Different from the U.S. brands?
> Heena: It is not completely American style, like Abercrombie. But there are some
> things that Asians like. Little bit cute and charming.
> (SiWon & Heena, 30s, 1.5 and 1st generation, professionals, interviewed in Korean)

> YounHee: I explore websites a lot, American and also Korean websites. I think I did a lot of online shopping earlier than others.
> HL: You mean, the American brands?
> YounHee: Nope, from Korea.
> HL: You order clothes from Korea?
> YounHee: Yes, I did it when I was very young, when people rarely did but I bought a lot in Korea too.
> HL: You still do that here?
> YounHee: Yes, I do still. I wear one today. I bought pants and other clothes. I look at them often and purchase them if I like.
> HL: You think Korean clothes are prettier?
> YounHee: Yes, definitely. Koreans are cute. Everyone says like that. If I brought something from Korea, everyone gives me compliments.
> HL: What is the difference?

YounHee: I think it is more feminine and show my femininity well. The quality is better.
HL: You shop for most of the stuff from Korea?
YounHee: No, I have more American stuff. Delivery fee is expensive. But I like Korean stuff. So I looked at the Korean shopping mall at online and got the ideas about dresses, then I bought similar style in the U.S. I mainly use the online website. Korean or Americans. The U.S. style is very simple and practical. But I looked at something charming. Something feminine.
(YounHee, 40s, 1st generation, professional, interviewed in Korean)

HL: Do you order some clothes from Korea too?
Mina: I buy all stuff here. My sister-in-law bought some when I visited Korea last time. I like it. If I wore these items, that day, people gave me compliments a lot. "You always wear the cutest dress."
(Mina, 40, 1st generation, professional, interviewed in Korean)

However, this does not simply mean that anything from Korea looks great in the U.S. Like my second generation Korean American informants, these informants were also afraid to look "fobby" in the American context. They did not want to simply imitate what Korean celebrities do in Korea, as they look too different and would "stick out" here.

HL: What do you mean, dress like fobs?
Mina: For example, very bold accessories? Americans do that too when they go to the party or going out. But they do not at the working place. But some people wear the exactly same accessories that the Korean actress wore in the Korean dramas like star shaped something, or like K-pop girl group style. One of my assistant does that. That is not the style here. I do not mean it is ugly. It is just too much Korean style, too stick out here. No one wears like that but she does. That's not great. So I wear Zara that anyone can do here, but they do not because it is not just comfy. But any American can buy that too. These Fobs wear what they bought in the department store in Korea. It is too stick out here. I personally do not want that. I also look at the display of the store in the U.S. or catalogues.
(Mina, 40, 1st generation, professional, interviewed in Korean)

Since my informants mostly got their ideas from the Korean media, they checked the trendy styles in Korea and then looked at the American stores to see whether they

could get similar items in the U.S. Most of my informants knew well where they could browse for their favorite fashion items in Korea and purchase them in the U.S. My informants bought most of their fashion items in the U.S. since it is expensive and complicated to order items from Korea. This fact drove their own fashion styles to be somewhat different. They explained that they mixed both styles, but that looked different from how American people look.

> HL: So you follow the fashion and manners from Korea?
> Minseo: I mixed both styles since I watched both culture. As you see, my styling is different to the American people usually do.
> HL: You do not mind that you look different from others here?
> Minseo: I do not care at all. People asked me where I bought them. Ah, there is a change. If I wore something from Korea in 2004 or 2005, people asked me where I bought them then I said I got it from Korea. But these days, even I bought something from here, people still asked me where it is from. Then, still I wear something, that I wore or trendy in Korea, or shown in the dramas, anyway the trend of fashion goes and comes again. But here, people dressed all unsophisticated.
> (Minseo, 30s, 1st generation, professional, interviewed in Korean)

> HL: You think that's different from the style in the U.S.?
> Mina: Yes, people in here wanted to be comfortable. People in my office. I always try to dress up, then my boss gave some comments like "I think you always wear a modern, city look." Since I wear black tone clothes. Then I just said "I try." But that is not American style and I guess I inspired it from Korea. I bought Jeon, DoYeon's style and then I looked them at Zara in here.
> HL: You think that's Korean style?
> Mina: Korean style. I think here, not everyone wears that style, but some might. That dress up style. But at least in my office, not many people wear that style. But I do what I saw in the Korean dramas. It might be different style to people wear here.
> HL: Why do you prefer it?
> Mina: I do not want to be just comfortable here. Like whatever I got. Wearing baggy pants and sitting in the office all the time. I am afraid that I became accustomed to the culture here and lose my sense of self care. Being aesthetic is what I enjoy and I do not want to be out of fashion.
> (Mina, 40, 1st generation, professional, interviewed in Korean)

HL: How would you define your style, if you say?

Hyuk: I am not American style. Well, Americans around me rarely have interested in the brands. Koreans do. It is not comparable. Some Americans do care. Some African Americans do I realized. I never met Americans who concern about the brand that much. But Koreans always do that. I got along with Koreans mostly when I came here first.

HL: Where did you meet Koreans?

Hyuk: I attended to ESL first. I couldn't speak English, so I had to hang out only with Koreans. If I think about that time, Koreans were all sensitive about the fashion brands, men or women. Any brands became popular, usually they bought that too. For instance, the jean True Religion became popular. Every Korean has one. ⋯ I think American men are half and half. Some of them wear skinny jean and the other half wear just ordinary jeans. In Korea, if the skinny jean became trendy, then all should wear the skinny jean. In the U.S., people do not follow the trendy fashion altogether as Korean people usually do. Like Koreans are all short tempered into a certain fashion then forget about it quickly?

HL: So you think Koreans are more fashionable?

Hyuk: I think so. People mind a lot.

(Hyuk, 30s, international student, interviewed in Korean)

What does "fashionable" Korea mean to my informants? As Mina discussed above based on her thoughts and observations of the culture here, being fashionable in the U.S. is more about being sensitive to the trends and actually trying on these items as opposed to just being comfortable or practical as many other Americans prefer. Therefore, being fashionable is more about being apt to follow the trends. Gender wise, contrary to the second generation of Korean Americans, male international students were also concerned with their appearance and discuss about fashion brands.

Still, if they can buy most of their items in the U.S., where does the Korean style, or GangNam style, come from for my informants? It was actually tricky to define. As Hyuk said "It is hard to say. I do not know where it is from." It is not solely from Korea. Being a fashionable Korean does not necessarily mean wearing items from Korea or managing one's fashion style as Korean people do. It is more essential to follow the

trends that are represented and spread out from the center of fashion. My informants stressed that they could find the most updated, faster fashion trends in the global cities like New York, and through fashion catalogues and fashion magazines as well as Korean dramas.

As Hyuk illustrated when he described how he followed the hip brands with his friends in Korea, the global fashion brands had become ubiquitous through global media, and its globality actually became the basis of its authenticity as a cool trend for my informants. Since the mediated images of actresses from Korean dramas show the Asian version of this global trend, Korea media provide an example of and reinforces the global fashion trend. This also means that nationality, whether Korean or American, is not significant in terms of fashion. Instead, local places such as GangNam in Seoul or Manhattan in New York City are stressed as fashion districts in fashion capitals under conditions of globalization.

> HL: How can you know then if it is a trend? If your friend wears it, then you need to buy one?
> Hyuk: It is funny. If you do not contact Koreans, you do not watch Korean media, then you can know when you meet someone who just came from Korea what she/he wears. I realized that.
> HL: They wear the American brand?
> Hyuk: Yes.
> HL: Americans are not interested in that brand?
> Hyuk: Well, not necessarily. I think the popular brands are similar and simultaneous both in the U.S. and Korea. There are some brands which were popular in the U.S. then became a trend in Korea later.
> (Hyuk, 30s, international student, interviewed in Korean)

> Mina: I think people around here do not care about it. Downtown in Philadelphia is better. I can see many stylish people in Manhattan. I really want to follow. Many gorgeous people there.
> HL: Could you describe little bit more?
> Mina: Look good, neat. Oh, she has matched these items well. Her style is very nice.
> (Mina, 40, 1st generation, professional, interviewed in Korean)

HL: You think the trend in Korea moves faster than here?

Minseo: Of course! New York is faster, and Korea is faster. Philadelphia is really out of fashion. I rarely go shopping to buy stuff in Philadelphia. I buy something very rare in New York. Something hard to get in anywhere else. In Korea, everything should be in fashion. Only trendy items are in sale there. In general, the U.S. is really out of fashion, but I felt sometimes New York is more advanced than the fashion in Korea.

HL: Where do you get the sense of out-of-fashion?

Minseo: I think they never change their style. Jeans are not the same. People in here wear their old jean, this year, next year, and the year after next year. They just decide red or blue tea shirt to wear. They do not care off-shoulder or sleeveless. I watch the fashion through television program. I also subscribe lots of magazines.

HL: Fashion magazine in the U.S.?

MinSeo: Yes. Korean people wear what is shown there. But people do not in here. It takes two years to be popular here.

HL: You wear something globally trendy and you like it.

Minseo: I watched the Korean dramas and then thought "all were that style in Korea" and if I like it, I look at them in here. "Where I can get these stuff?" Since it is hard to order from Korea. I search them in here. Not all trendy stuff is pretty to me. Sometimes, I thought "what the…!" Then I drop it resolutely.

(Minseo, 30s, 1st generation, professional, interviewed in Korean)

Regardless of gender, my informants all wanted to be fashionable. That was, in fact, possible when they held purchasing power. According to them, being out-of-style referred to someone who never bought the new trendy style items. Under the globalized fashion industries, and due to accessibility of online websites, it has become important to show which brands you can buy. There is an attractiveness based on class; thus, the capacity to use high-priced brands has some meaning.

Heena: Fashion items the Korean celebrities use is too much expensive. ⋯ Koreans wear different to the U.S. International students, they wear very expensive and trendy clothes.

HL: Something trendy in Korea?

Heena: Right. Those things are cheaper in here. The prices are cheaper. They wear very luxurious brands. Rich international students are very fashionable. Very stylish.

(Heena, 30s, 1st generation, professional, interviewed in Korean)

Hyuk: There are some brands which were popular in the U.S. then became a trend in Korea later. Usually fashion brand, like Nudie Jean or Robin's? Nudie Jean does not have a store in Philadelphia.
HL: Is it from Italy?
Hyuk: No, I do not know exactly. American? But it has no brand store around here. I found the small section for the brand in Saks (Fifth Avenue) or Nieman Markus, but I never saw a store.
HL: You bought them then?
Hyuk: I did not buy Nudie Jean but looked them. I think Koreans are funny, frankly, I am too. Even the trend of Jeans keeps changing. There is a new trend all the time. Someone says that some brands have really great fits, something like that. Well, it depends on their body shapes. But that is how things go. Seven Jean, and then True Religion, and now for what.
(Hyuk, 30s, international student, interviewed in Korean)

K-Beauty items are also popular among my informants. Like the second generation, international students and first generation Korean Americans also used cosmetic products from Korea, which they felt that were more optimized for Asian skin. They also deemed their prices more competitive. They noted how Korean celebrities who are globally famous attach their names to items to promote them, such as Jeon JiHyun lipstick or Suzy lipstick.

Heena: I bought just Chanel or Lancôme in the past, but I only use IOPE (a Korean brand), cushion powder. I buy them at Hanareum (a Korean grocery market). I also look at the Internet, like Amazon.
HL: You think it is better?
Heena: It is great. I think Korean products are fit for the Korean skin. It soaks into my skin well. Cushion is huge thing everywhere. It was invented in Korea. Lancôme started to produce it. Every brand started to make it. I think Lancôme copied the Korean brand. Korea made it first.
HL: So you never buy the foreign brands anymore?
Heena: Not all of them, but most of them.
HL: Is there a trend how to do makeup?
Heena: I do not know well, but my sister is really into it. She looks at YouTube, then there are many videos explain how to do the Korean style make up.
HL: It might be different than people do makeup here.
Heena: Yes! It is different.

HL: Is that fine?
Heena: If it looks good, it does not matter I think. It fits well to Koreans.
(Heena, 30s, 1st generation, professional, interviewed in Korean)

I use only Korean cosmetics. It fits well to my skin. American brands is too oily. I guess their skin is different to us. Korean mask pack is the best. ⋯ My church friend wore a lipstick and that was so pretty. She told me that's Suzy (Korean actress/singer)'s lipstick. So I got it at FaceShop at H mart in Philadelphia. I bought the same one at Amazon, that was cheaper. I love Korean cosmetics.
(YounHee, 40s, 1st generation, professional, interviewed in Korean)

Transnational connectivities are helpful to explore and update beauty news across national borders. Korean Americans have become early adopters of beauty practices in both Korean and American cultures.

I learn about the coconut oil in the U.S., through the Internet, even before the coconut oil boom in Korea. I do not look at them all the time. Sometimes, my Korean church friends here gave me about the Aloe diet food. They watched the Korean documentary for couple of years ago. They recognized that many Koreans do that. Mask pack is not common here. So I brought it from Korea. Now we can find it here too. For many years ago, I always bought the mask pack a lot. My friends sent it too from Korea.
(Mina, 40, 1st generation, professional, interviewed in Korean)

In addition to the Korean television programs or K-pop stars' daily look, the digitalized media environment has increased the conversation about commodities. Since the development of globalized fashion trends, my informants have constantly exchanged their information in Korea and sought items in the U.S. for a cheaper price.

Hyuk: I just buy whatever I want.
HL: You just go to the shopping mall?
Hyuk: Well, I look at the brand name.
HL: Where do you get the information?
Hyuk: There are brands I knew when I was in Korea. That's one thing I looked at here. There are luxurious brands we know. Also I knew like Abercrombie, like people all knew. I got to know Zara here first, via my friends. There are some trendy brands, I even do not remember how I got to know them, anyhow I got some information. Maybe I heard them when I talked with my friends in Korea.

HL: They asked you whether you've heard about that brand?
Hyuk: Well, no. They just said the pants from a certain brand look nice, or cute. Some of them asked me whether the price of a certain brand is cheaper than Korea. Usually the prices are different in Korea and the U.S. If they asked about it and I never heard about the brand, then I looked at and visited the store. Then I got to know about the brand.
HL: You usually get the information from friends in Korea?
Hyuk: Yes, or I look at the Internet.
HL: How could you know what is popular from the Internet?
Hyuk: Well, at Google, there are many ranking sites. If you search "the popular jean" like that, they show the list from top to the tenth. I knew that, so I look at them sometimes. So I search that often.
HL: Whenever you buy a fashion item?
Hyuk: Yes.
HL: How about Naver (Korean search website)?
Hyuk: I do not use Naver, it does not find a good result. Google is much better.
HL: Who creates that kinds of list? Fashion community?
Hyuk: Yes. Or bloggers. I do not know if they survey or something. Well bloggers advertise a lot too. I need to screen these kinds of information.
HL: How could you know?
Hyuk: If I look at it thoroughly, then I know.
(Hyuk, 30s, international student, interviewed in Korean)

Imagining Korea helped my informants to continually update their grooming and fashion styles since they have become interested in global trends. Their practices of following global fashion trends through Korean media ironically prove that Western hegemony is still concrete in terms of fashion in my informants' imagined worlds. As Hyuk concluded, "I think Korean women follow the style of the white here. Clothes, brands they like. Korean women like the popular brands here." Similarly, most of my informants looked at the global trend of the Western fashion industry simultaneously through Korean dramas which depict an Asian version of Western aesthetics. The hegemony in the global fashion industry is as ever Western centered, since the brands my informants desired are mostly from European nations like Spain, Sweden, and Italy, or

from the U.S. Accordingly, they also took the information gathered from English lnaugage sources more seriously than opinions from Korea. The capitalist ideology penetrates thoroughly. Transnational Korean media facilitated the aspiration for expensive brands or rare items among my informants.

Korean Americans Are Not Attractive Anymore

International students temporarily stay in the U.S. Thus, my international student informants constantly felt both the limitations and the benefits of being a Korean in America.

> If I have a child, there are reasons I hope to raise them in the U.S. The U.S. has some benefits for that. It gives some time to explore one's identity, compare to Korea. I hope Korean people learn that. People can find their own color here. ⋯ On the other hand, Koreans have warm affections among people. I miss that as a Korean. I hope the U.S. also appreciate it. Here is too much individualism.
> (SeongJin, 20s, international student, interviewed in Korean)

Different from their lives in Korea, my informants in the U.S. experienced dating with persons of other ethnicities or citizenships and that drove them to reflect on interethnic relationships. Even if they had explored this new kind of relationship, most of them hoped to get married to a Korean American or a Korean.

> I prefer Korean to others. I met a Taiwanese one time. There were language barriers of course. I haven't thought about marriage. I think he is a nice person. Korean man is blunt, and sometimes, curt to a woman. But he was really nice to me. However, I do not even think about marriage with non-Korean, even he was an Asian. It was just a new experience. Anyway, I can communicate with Koreans in many ways.
> (Heena, 30s, 1st generation, professional, interviewed in Korean)

In terms of marriage, as they experienced the cultural differences in the U.S., my informants said they rarely considered or accepted interethnic or interracial relationships.

Many cultural differences, for example, language barriers and foods culture, were discussed at length during their lives in the U.S.

> I think New York would be too complex to live. LA would be good place to live. I realized that everyday meal is very important. I am living with my aunt and she prepares the meal for me and the uncle. Just for the dinner. I got to know that I can cook better than her. The restaurants here are awful. After that, I am very sensitive about the food. Korean foods in LA restaurants are awesome. It is like a real Korea. I realized that foods are big part of the life. I ate lots of American foods before. I do not eat the American foods anymore and the Korean foods here are terrible. That is so stressful. More than I thought.
>
> (Hyuk, 30s, international student, interviewed in Korean)

Whereas the male informants rarely shared their excitement or fervor about Korean celebrities, female informants actively discussed how they often chatted about the male characters with other Korean American females. Similar to the second generation Korean Americans, female Korean Americans imagined and frequently discussed the important qualities of an ideal man in terms of the attractiveness of Korean actors. Their positive imaginations about life in Korea might have resulted from their loneliness as minority immigrants in the U.S. It is also true that since the mid-90s, Koreans who have grown up in foreign countries, mainly the U.S., have been portrayed in Korean dramas as good-mannered and less patriarchal elitists. My informants who have lived in both cultures do not hold to that fantasy anymore.

> Mina: Well, in the past, I had a kind of fantasy for Korean American male. They look fabulous even in the Korean television dramas. Now, I would like to go back to Korea more. You know the elders really hope to go back Korea. I would like to meet someone who can enjoy the songs I like. ⋯ For example, I like Korean actors who show the sophisticate roles, and I like it a lot. Like Yoon, KyeSang in Good Wife. He is so gentle, very delicate in feelings. We do not have to say something, but they sense the very subtle contexts. They can emphasize what a woman wants. In the Western culture, they do not know the subtlety. They never understand the layered meanings in my words. If they catch the implication, then we sense

he is so romantic. For example, I have a fatal illness, so I have to say good bye to him nevertheless I love him. But I still want he stays with me. Like that. I say, "I'm fine, you can leave me" but in Korean drama, a man even approaches the women and gives a back hug. American men rarely have that that kinds of sentiment. I think Koreans have sixth sense culture.

HL: Korean men have?

Mina: In the drama! Korean dramas are written by female writers and they know how to make women feel happy.

(Mina, 40, 1st generation, professional, interviewed in Korean)

Their media practices were related to their daily imaginations about the future. Most of them spent hours every day enjoying Korean media as a major source of entertainment while they stayed in the U.S. The different qualities of Korean men in dramas were described as a "sixth sense." It implied qualities that are very deeply rooted in the culture. Thus, they were hard to catch easily and could be a cultural barrier to other ethnicities/races. In other words, the cultural differences were more distinctive, but undeniable limitations when they interacted with persons in their ethnicities as potential partners. Cultural capacity itself was a more important and essential criterion of the quality of attractiveness for my informants.

Mina: I think more about it than before. I hope to find someone who can emphasize about the Korean culture with me. When I met a Korean who grown up in America, I almost gave up about it. I'm getting aged and hope to meet someone who can share with me those kinds of feelings. Who knows about my culture and emotions, and popular culture too. I wish I could meet someone who can listen the 광화문 연가 (The KwangHwaMoon love song) and appreciate the song together. It would be better.

HL: How about Christine?

Mina: She hopes to meet a Korean too. She met other races, white and African American, but now she really hopes to meet a Korean, who can speak Korean and eat Korean foods.

(Mina, 40, 1st generation, professional, interviewed in Korean)

Senior First Generation Korean Americans

Immigrants are often described as in-between subjects. A generation of Korean American immigrants is roughly categorized by "with whom they live around." Each of them is keenly aware of the differences that exist along that border. The lives of senior Korean Americans are particularly limited within their small, local immigrant communities mainly due to the language barrier. The senior Korean American group in this study was defined as my informants over fifty, and mostly first generation immigrants who have lived in the U.S. for several decades. This group always faced cultural and generational gaps with their children, as well as with other new immigrants from Korea. This section discusses the lives of senior Korean Americans, their consumption of contemporary Korean media, and its influence on their perspectives on gender roles, grooming/styling, and their plans for the future.

Traditional Gender Roles from the Past in Korea

Age and gender worked closely together to define my senior Korean American informants' roles within their community. Besides the values and discipline derived from Confucianism in Korea, these communities are the central clusters for their lives in the U.S. based on common ethnicity and culture. From family as the basic unit of social life to local communities like churches and ethnic social meetings, the role and position of my informants within the Korean American community were determined by gender and age. Thus, it is natural that second generation Korean Americans, especially females over 30, expressed how they negotiated with their parents who imposed rigid female gender roles on them.

SuJin: I have to talk about the church community within the Korean American community. There is nothing I have involved in anything else, and I haven't owned any business. I have attended the Korean church since I came to the U.S.

HL: The Korean church is not the center of the Korean American community?

SuJin: Well, still Korean American community is divided by the character of the business. If they run their own business, they have a meeting together often. I am different to them. You know the Korean goose mother (a mother who came to the U.S. for the children's education). So, I'm different to them. In the church, it does not matter. Anyway, my answers are mostly about my interactivities at the church.

(SuJin, 50s, 1st generation, senior, interviewed in Korean)

Their occupations were also quite gendered since they worked mostly within the ethnic community. For instance, females worked at dry cleaning facilities or hair salons, and males worked at a hardware stores, as engineers, or in public office. As MyungSoo described, "I am selling the hardware, all the stuff for the housekeeping. Men usually manage that stuff."

For my female informants, watching Korean media more often and together within their belonged community enriched their daily conversations and gave some rest from their immigrant lives. It was not common for seniors to individually interact with opposite genders for seniors. As a result, media practices were very much gendered. SuJin was excited when she talked about her favorite shows and actors. Like the professional immigrant informants, watching favorite shows was the major source of entertainment for seniors. However, their activities focused on their ethnic community were strengthened by group cohesiveness. They shared their excitement about their media consumption more often than the professional immigrants. SuJin also met her peer group from church regularly, and this was a big part of her leisure activity. Thanks to her access

to a peer group of the same gender and age, her life in the U.S. was not that different from that of senior women in Korea.

> SuJin: They are mostly church friends. We talk everything. If I found a good program, then recommend them. "You should watch this!" If my favorite celebrity appears on the show, like Cha, SeungWon, I talked to the friends. Especially on Sunday after the service, we have a cup of tea and talk about it. Or whenever I think about it.
> HL: How about Korean dramas?
> SuJin: I only watched the *육룡이 나르샤*(*Six Flying Dragons*). I have favorite actors. If they are in the drama, I definitely watch it. No matter with the genres, not limited the historic dramas. But I do not enjoy that much the trendy drama. *태양의 후예*(*Descendants of the Sun*)? Song, JoongKi? People talked about it a lot but I'm not in it. Maybe I'm too old (laughter). I guess I am too old to think about that childish story. … I like Yoo, A-In and Yoo, HaeJin. I like the actors who have characters. That's my taste. … Oh! I also like Hah, JungWoo. So I went to the theater to watch this movie.
> HL: Your favorite program, *삼시세끼* (*Three Meals a Day*) is about rural life?
> SuJin: Yes, but it is also about Korean cuisine. I'm a housewife, so that is very interesting to me. It is very healthy setting and I do not feel any pressure and do not have to think about any issue. … The producer of the program always does the great job.
> HL: Could you explain more why do you think it is so great?
> SuJin: Well, nothing. It is fun to watch. Fun and useful. It helps to stress relief. When I felt bad, I watch it then it makes me feel relaxed. It shows the natural scenery, the sea side. There is no burden to see it. If there is a story, then I engaged in it too much and stressful. … …They eat something, eat a lot. I can make it as they did. Cha, SeungWon cooks really well. So fun. I recommend you too. Do you get married?
> (SuJin, 50s, 1st generation, senior, interviewed in Korean)

Different from SuJin's excitement about Korean shows and male actors, male senior informants told me that they mainly watch news programs or current event programs to check up on current affairs or international issues.

> HL: So you rarely watch television?
> MyungSoo: News, I watch the news program. I do not spend many hours to watch television. I rarely watch it. My eye sights are not good. Too tired to use the Internet.
> HL: Then you watch TV only for the news.

MyungSoo: I watch TV, I sometimes borrow video tapes of television dramas.
HL: Is there a store to rent video tapes still?
MyungSoo: Yes. That kinds of stuff.
HL: How many hours per a day?
MyungSoo: Couple of hours? We mainly watch the program of current affairs. I watch the news shortly. If there is anything I need. I do not watch the news from the beginning to the end.
HL: You lived here about 27 years, but you understand Korea well including the political issues?
MyungSoo: Yes, I do. It is not matter of bad or good. I think it is important to think that we can keep the values of democracy and develop the nation. It is not about the person who will lead the nation as I told. I always talk about it.
(MyungSoo, 70s, 1st generation, senior, interviewed in Korean)

JeongWon: I watch only two Korean programs. One is about the North Korean issue. *이제 만나러갑니다* (*Now On My Way to Meet You*) and *애정통일 남남북녀* (*Love Reunification of South and North*). It is a variety show like a talk show. It is interesting. My parents-in-law are involved in the missionary of North Korea. There are people who visited the North Korea here. So I'm interested in the life in North Korea. The differences in there. I like it although my wife does not like it. I also watch *무한도전* (*Infinite Challenge*) these days. Briefly. So interesting (laughter).
HL: How could you obtain the information about these programs?
JeongWon: People in church or at work. Korean colleagues at work. Then I share the information with them. The entertainment shows are just for time-killing. I share the contents about the North Korea. The world is different there. "We should approach the North Korea in this way" like that.
(JeongWon, 50, 1.5 generation, senior, interviewed in Korean)

Both genders shared their media consumption with their peer groups in their community, but the focuses were different depending on their expected gender roles. Instead of assimilating to American gender roles, the circumstances of my senior informants ensured that they would live within the binary gender roles similar to those of their homeland. They also continuously engage with Korean media based on their convenient access to Korean content. This causes them to participate in discourses about transnational Korean culture and issues instead of the local ones.

Practicality is Better

Like the first generation professionals, senior first generation informants sensed that Philadelphia is not fashionable compared to Korea and New York or the larger West Coast cities. They described life in Philadelphia as more laidback compared to other big cities in the U.S. as well as their imagined Korea.

> SuJin: When I arrived in Philadelphia in 1998, the first image was really out of fashion. The first impression I have gotten. ⋯ It is about the material development. Styling and fashion too. It is not about the humanity but what I can sense at first. It represents the phases of the times here. Philadelphia is really kinds of behind.
> HL: People in California are really fashionable.
> SuJin: Right. LA and San Francisco are there. Here is close to New York, but it is also different to New Jersey. San Francisco is very modern city. Here is very like country side. But I like here now. It is very quiet, slow, and lots of trees. The fashion in San Francisco is in sync with the fashion in Korea. It is not that advanced like LA, but Philadelphia is rather out of fashion.
> (SuJin, 50s, 1st generation, senior, interviewed in Korean)

> Philadelphia is a mild and calm city. It is like a ripple. New York is the best city in the world. Philadelphia is less than that.
> (MyungSoo, 70s, 1st generation, senior, interviewed in Korean)

The advance of the Internet made it possible for senior Korean Americans to access the contemporary styles in Korea easily and they sensed the power of this technology. Within the Korean American immigrant community, the majority of Korean Americans tended to follow the Korean styles.

> HL: Because of your job (a hair designer), do you particularly have interest in the Korean style and do your customers want that?
> YoonKyung: Of course.
> HL: I heard the Korean Americans want to manage their style as Americans, like coloring their hair.
> YoonKyung: That's probably about 10 percent only? Korean Americans who were born here and work at the American company. But Korean American immigrants are different.
> HL: They want to do their hair like the popular styles in Korea? Like an actress in the Korean dramas?

YoonKyung: Right. The good thing is that they brought the images on their mobile. They showed the image by their phone and asked me to make a similar style of them. That is great.
(YoonKyung, 60, 1st generation, senior, interviewed in Korean)

HL: How about the hair styles or fashion items? You are not looking at Korean styles?
SuJin: I do when I find something just for looking. Sometimes I asked my daughter-in law to buy something when she visited Korea. My mother-in-law in Korea sent clothes sometimes.
(SuJin, 50s, 1st generation, senior, interviewed in Korean)

However, after living several decades in the U.S., senior Korean Americans adjusted to the local culture and appreciated its practicality. In their real life, senior informants rarely followed the trendy styles. They saw the need to follow these styles as applying mainly in the Korean cultural context, which they saw as promoting stricter and more standardized beauty standard than in the U.S. Particularly, aging was seen as an antonym of beautiful, and the Korean media was deemed culpable in generating this perspective. As my other informants described, in the Korean media, "everyone looks young."

HL: You want to buy some brands from Korea?
SuJin: Yes, sometimes. But I got weights and do not have much interests in clothes. So mainly clothes and sometimes shoes. Korea has similar styles in different price ranges depending on the places where it is sold. There is an apparent trend. I did it a lot when I was young but not anymore. My body is not looking good anymore. The size 55 or 66 looks good. So I just look at them and wear whatever comfortable.
HL: Here people do not care much about weight. Still people give some compliments, right?
SuJin: Well, if you are fat, wear the bigger size than 66, it is not pretty. If you get old, it is not pretty anymore. You should give up and wear whatever it is comfortable. You will know if you get old. Youth is beautiful. ⋯ Now I just buy books from Korea. I read a lot while I'm travelling. I asked books.
(SuJin, 50s, 1st generation, senior, interviewed in Korean)

The lifestyle of these seniors in the U.S. was as simple as working and attending church or social meetings. They did not feel social pressure to dress up within the Korean American community. Thus they did not buy or explore fashionable items from Korea or the U.S. Strong religious faith, ethnic pride, and practicality were more appreciated in their current life circumstances. The local culture in the U.S. has provided less formality for the dress code in terms of appearance.

> HL: What do you buy from Korea?
> YoonKyung: Usually beauty supplies via ships (for the business). What I need and something nice.
> HL: Like clothes?
> YoonKyung: I did it during the first five years I came here. I brought clothes from Korea. But now, I can buy cheaper clothes in the U.S. when it is in sale. I do not feel the necessities to bring something from Korea. Because I live in the U.S., I do not need to be fashionable. I hope to live healthy and comfortably. We do not need to dress up to go somewhere. I just want to wear clothes comfortable and clean. It is more important not to borrow money from others than to look sleek. I work hard for the life after the retirement.
> (YoonKyung, 60, 1st generation, senior, interviewed in Korean)

> HL: How about the Korean church culture?
> SuJin: People wear something formal. It is for the service. They do not wear t-shirts or short pants. Still they are more localized, Americanized. ··· I do not have any preference (in terms of fashion). I do not want to follow any style. I just want to be comfortable. I like that. My hairstyles are always like this (short permanent hair). Nothing special anymore. When I was young, I looked at the fashion and tried. But I sense that my own personality is more represented in my appearance now. ····· I do not have any taste regarding fashion or styling. I do not feel that something is prettier. Comfortable and simple. I am more interested in my religious aspect. Huge changes, right?
> (SuJin, 50s, 1st generation, senior, interviewed in Korean)

> As you see, I do not care my appearance. I just live like this. But I have a strong pride as a Korean. We have our own civilized national culture. We are more privileged than you Americans. We have a long historic civilized culture. I personally know well about Korean history, so I have a strong pride regarding that.

(MyungSoo, 70s, 1st generation, senior, interviewed in Korean)

At the same time, the indifference of Korean American seniors toward fashion and styling implies their positionality as a working class, ethnic minority in the U.S. One of my young informants, Amelia, a second generation Korean American, described how "a Korean grandma," the first generation Korean American senior, might be more distinctive in their styles in the U.S. It is hard to find fashionable clothes in the U.S. for the shapes and petite size of their bodies. It was similar for the male seniors when I encountered them at public events or on election day in North Philadelphia. They dressed up in formal suits popular in Korea in the 80s or 90s. Yet, through these discourses, senior informants expressed how they are satisfied with their lives in the U.S. compared to lives in imagined Korea. The next section illustrates this perspective in terms of their imagined life in the future.

I am 'Almost' Americanized

Contrary to the young generation's pride and excitement about the highlighted aesthetic aspects of Korean society, the emphasis on appearance in Korea was one of the reasons my senior informants felt uncomfortable about their homeland. They perceived social pressure about individual appearance and the importance of representation through their daily consumption of Korean media. That reinforced their positive feelings toward their lives in the U.S. My senior informants stressed how they have enjoyed the lifestyle in the U.S. compared to their imagined life in Korea. Although they felt pride about the development of Korea, this pride had more to do with economic prosperity, which helped to empower their Korean ethnic identity in the U.S.

> I have no problem in living in the U.S. If I work as a hair designer in the Korea, it would be very competitive, and the working hours would be

longer than here. In here, I can have a break whenever I want and every Sunday. Compared to working hours, I can make enough money to live. That's what I really appreciate about my life here. If I work in Korea now, I might look not great because I'm old. In the U.S., age does not matter to work. I can work until 70s. People do not think it is improper. Elders work as a cashier at the mart. That's the cultural difference.

(YoonKyung, 60, 1st generation, senior, interviewed in Korean)

I just looked at the trend in Korea and then could compare that here. But I just wear whatever I need now. I do not buy anymore from Korea. I do not want them anymore. I thought about it thoroughly these years. The lookism in Korea and also saving face culture make Koreans intensively care only about their appearance. They should dress up there. But here, people wear just cotton pants and t-shirts. Just wear the running shoes. I do not feel the pressure for the appearance at all. I do not discern any trend or compare my appearance with others. I am more assimilated to the American styles in terms of style.

(SuJin, 50s, 1st generation, senior, interviewed in Korean)

JeongWon: There is a conflict with my (Korean) wife. I want to wear what I like, but my wife asks me to wear what she wants. Wear like this or that. I try to meet her request, but sometimes I do not care.

HL: You think there is a difference?

JeongWon: There are no ordinary Americans, in fact, not like Koreans. … We do not care about the style here. Depending on the person. I would like to buy something I like. I look at the practicality. Maybe because I'm a man? Comfortable, and reasonable price. If it looks worth the price, then I sometimes pay more. But I do not care about the style.

HL: You do not sense the trend?

JeongWon: (laughter) Not that much.

(JeongWon, 50, 1.5 generation, senior, interviewed in Korean)

My senior informants looked at actual life circumstances in Korea as hard compared to their lives as seniors or heads of household in the U.S. They saw the excitement about the Korean Wave more as a cultural bubble. Therefore, they thought Korea was good to visit for tourism, but not ideal for living.

SuJin: I became an "almost American" now. I do not want to live in Korea anymore. I like here. Comfortable. Here are many things better than Korea. I like the natural environment. Air is clean. I will not go back to Korea. Maybe for the tourism or visiting the relatives briefly.

HL: All your friends here are Korean Americans?

SuJin: Yes, they are. Maybe that's why. We mainly talk in Korean. Here is my homeland now. There is nothing that bothers me. …… My son came here around 11 years old. I think he is almost Americanized although he speaks Korean. He never misses Korea. He might want to visit there but does not want to live there. …… I had a hard time to live in Korea even ten years ago. The air was not clean, and life was too complicated. I have lived American since I was a kid. I had a fantasy about the U.S.

(SuJin, 50s, 1st generation, senior, interviewed in Korean)

HL: You never wanted to go back to Korea?

JeongWon: I hope to visit. I hope to visit there for the Korean cuisine. I never went there for the delicious foods. I do not have any other interest except that. If I have a job, my children all graduate the college, there is no problem financially, and if my wife wants to live there, then why not? (laughter) But not possible for now. If I have a choice, then.. I will think about it. Even I have a choice, but still it is not easy.

HL: Food tourism then?

JeongWon: Yes, I would like to be there with my wife and kids. Tour the nation and eat the cuisines. My children here do not have many opportunities to have Korean foods. They can visit the tourist sites. …… All the Korean Americans here always talk about the dishes after their visiting Korea. What we need to eat in where.

(JeongWon, 50, 1.5 generation, senior, interviewed in Korean)

Conclusion

This chapter explored how Korean Americans' perception of their imagined Korea, Asia, and the United States intersect with other identity factors such as gender roles, attractiveness, and life plan. Young Korean Americans, especially female informants, expressed frustration about rigid gender roles and different ways of performing femininity in Korean culture and media. However, both genders of young Korean Americans also endorsed "Asiantude" that they could identify with and cherish as an Asian role model — though it had not been prominent in dominant American culture. By a similar logic, young female informants were excited to present their own Asian beauty in terms of styling and makeup. For female Korean Americans, the rise of K

fashion or K-beauty was an option they could employ to empower themselves and escape from the white-centered racial taxonomy by supporting the differences between the white and Asian beauty standards. On the other hand, male informants enjoyed Asian beauty through the Korean celebrities, but they did not employ styling like the Korean male celebrities. Instead, they valued practicality more than formality or tradition. When considering their life plans, cultural empathy became more significant to both genders. Thus, they preferred to marry someone of the same ethnicity/race.

International students and professional first generation immigrants constantly negotiated their gender roles between their imagined Korea and their situated roles in the Korean American community. However, their idealized gender roles were more linked with the representations of the Korean media. Although there were some irregularities based on class, most female informants constantly explored hybridized styles as their own versions of imagined, advanced global fashion trends. On the other hand, most men addressed the privileged physical conditions of white persons and expressed their uncomfortable feeling about the Korean value of self-management.

Contrary to the younger generations, senior informants valued traditional gender roles and criticized lookism in Korea. They sensed that they were more accustomed to the U.S. culture which values the practical and comfortable rather than the formality and self-consciousness of Korea. Rather, they saw Korea as a place to visit for tourist places or to meet relatives.

Based on the data, the Korean Wave has complicated the identity factors of young Korean Americans in terms of gender roles, attractiveness, and life plans based on their imaginative spaces. However, there is also a limitation to viewing this shift as

emancipation from or resistance against the hegemony of western ideals. Their excitement and pleasure were mainly articulated through consuming activities and expanded at a global level. Furthermore, the major elements of K-beauty, white flawless facial skin, skinny body type, and small framed face, are not exclusive of the Western beauty standard.

CHAPTER 6: THE PRODUCTION OF LOCALITY IN PHILADELPHIA

This chapter explores how a local space, the Philadelphia metropolitan area, has been reshaped by transnational cultural flows, in particular Korean media/cultural flows. Global imagination has been discussed as a vital element for construing the current stage of globalization (i.e., Garcia Canclini, 2013; Appadurai, 1996, 1999). Previous chapters demonstrated how the global interconnectivities driven by consumption of transnational Korean media and culture prompted global imagination among Korean Americans. Global imagination incited my informants to collectively watch trans-local mediated images and understand the different layers of deterritorialized cultural contexts. Since transnational media continuously flow from their ancestral homelands, the various dimensions of my informants' identities were more frequently reflected, compromised, or reinforced than before. This was especially so for the young informants who have actively negotiated their ethnic identities and positively perceived divergent dimensions of those identities.

Appadurai emphasizes the role of global imagination since it evokes grassroots level change, new forms of place-making in the local. Because of transnational cultural flows and global interconnectivities, any local place can become a shared space for members of the community who might participate in building heterogeneous trans-locality. Appadurai views this rearranged locality as a critical feature of globalized culture and examines both the construction of locality and the nature of neighborhood (Appadurai, 1996, p. 179). Similarly, scholarship on place, space, and identity discusses complicated locality in terms of social relationships (Chouinard, 1989; Massey, 1994). For example, ethnographic research has examined certain spaces of social function as

“points of sociality” for specific migrant subjectivities to explore transformed locality, thus changing local space through concrete practices in everyday lives (see, for example, Capobianco, 2018).

By drawing upon the discussion of locality in the global era, my research has explored ways of fashioning locality in Philadelphia through the influx of Korean media and culture. I traced how my informants’ media consumption was actualized within the space of Philadelphia and how these Korean Americans have created their own socio-cultural identities with the rise of the Korean Wave. To answer this question, their physical and mediated engagement with the Korean community and non-Korean communities was examined. Finally, I looked at how they actualized their transnational engagement and belonging with the rise of the Korean Wave and their active Korean media consumption. Understanding the process of reproducing local culture can give us a hint about how to direct our global future toward better progress.

Young Second Generation Korean Americans

Young second generation Korean Americans have endured the complicated experiences of being a minority at school and within their peer groups. In fact, they are the first generation born in the U.S. Thus, their experience is quite different from the hardships the majority of senior Korean Americans went through. They directly experienced even within their own families the differences and barriers that surround life as an ethnic minority. In terms of consuming popular culture, on the other hand, they noted and spread new trends of Korean popular culture. Their passion and excitement about the rise of Korean popular culture in the U.S. allowed me to easily approach them and continue conversation.

The epiphany moment in field work comes in observing how interactions across different socio-cultural groups are changed and generate new forms of local culture among them. In the following section, I discuss how these young second generation informants' excitement about popular culture has impacted their interactivities with both international students and seniors. Their contact with non-Korean Americans also changed through the rise of the Korean Wave. After comparing and contrasting these shifts, I will discuss how their new ethnicity is shaped in a global era.

Embracing Koreanness in the Local

> HL: Why you were interested in that group (Korean Student Association at a college)?
> Andy: I wanted to meet more people. Because at home, well here I just wanted an outlet to speak Korean and meet Korean people. At home I had a couple Korean friends and they don't speak Korean. So even if I wanted to talk Korean with them or anything, they wouldn't understand it. At a college, I heard of this group last year. But I never had the opportunity to join it or anything, so this year I wanted to actually come out and join the group and meet a bunch of people.
> HL: What do you want to do in that group?
> Andy: My main goal was just to meet people. But now that I'm an officer, I want to help people and teach people about the culture and all that stuff. What their goals are. I agree with that.
> (Andy, 19, 2nd generation, college students, interviewed in English)

The consumption of Korean media complicated local practices of engagement for young second generation Korean Americans within the Korean American community. For second generation Korean Americans, 1.5 generation/international students and Korean American seniors share a basic ethnic identity but hold very disparate relationships to that identity. Young Korean Americans were exploring their in-between identity and continuously looking for similarities and differences within their ethnic community. During their adolescent period, it seems natural that they experienced a

transformation of their relationships and perspectives on others and the world. Yet, the upsurge of Korean popular culture in both their physical and mediated contexts situated them in different contexts with other Korean Americans in ways that they had not anticipated.

"He looks so FOB (Fresh Off the Boat, an unassimilated, recent immigrant)," "What is wrong with fobs?" Sitting at the café in the library, I listened to a conversation both in Korean and English within a Korean American student group. They were mainly talking about the other Korean Americans they recently met at college. But what is wrong with fobs really? Through my field work, I came to grasp the nuances of the word 'fob' as defined by young second generation Korean Americans while attempting to understand the complicated dynamics in the young Korean American community.

> Andy: I think that's a tricky term to get around. Because my one friend that I met from Korean Student Association, we went to an ASA meeting, Asian Student Association, so it's everybody. He said, "Wow these guys are all fobs." I'm like, "That's not very nice."
> HL: Oh, that has negative meaning?
> Andy: Yeah, to us Korean Americans, that's a very negative term. You don't want to be called a fob.
> (Andy, 19, 2nd generation, college students, interviewed in English)

Between the second generation and the newly arrived young Koreans, I noticed a barrier. These young Korean Americans sensed and experienced the cultural differences of these newcomers and the felt distance from their own ethnic origins. These 1.5 generation Koreans were less assimilated to American culture since they have just arrived here using a different language. The second generation Korean Americans' perspective on their "fob" peers explains their self-reflected position in American society. Most U.S. born, second generation informants do not get along with or try not to look like fobs since they are different from the majority of their local American friends.

Helen: I think it is depending on the context. When I was in high school, there was a specific generation. There was a Korean culture. It is not okay to scream down the hallway, speaking only Korean. That actually excluded all the people in the hall way. I think that is rude. That kind of thing the Korean American thought about Koreans. There were I think honestly were rude because we were in a big school.

HL: Why did they scream?

Helen: We don't know. That's why we did not like about it. My friends asked me "what they are saying? Why they are screaming?" We don't know. I think that is a cultural difference because we don't know why it was necessary. So, I mean, there was a certain thing Americans couldn't understand.

HL: You understand a little bit?

Helen: To a certain degree. But I'm American more than Korean. There is a lot of things I even did not see in the Korean culture. I could get along with them, but I also understood why people did not like them. You care how people think. My American friends asked why you Korean people always stick together. Not inclusive (to others)? I think that age is sort of (a) social time. But I can see why people did not like them.

Even my college, there were huge Korean population. They did the 인사 (giving a bow) thing. I couldn't see that's sensible. I think personally it is inappropriate. I understand where it is coming from. I understand their culture. But at the same time, within the context of the school, it is not in Korea, so you should not be expecting people to bow down to the people or scream in the hall way. It varied depending on the people's personality too. There were certain groups that you don't need to be that way. For me, I do not want to meet a certain people's expectation, so I just avoided all together.

(Helen, 30s, 2nd generation, professional, interviewed in English)

Hannah: I know couple of fobs in my old church. There used to be English mass youth group and then Korean kids. They wouldn't speak to each other. They are like stuck each their own community. There was like distaste to each other. We were just stick together. That's OK.

HL: Why did they do that? You don't want to get along?

Hannah: Most of the Korean Americans in my church. They are like they are not great at Korean. They are like my level. Some of them are as good. Overall, maybe it was like language barrier, also just like a bit of cultural difference. Like American culture verses Korean culture.

HL: You are more into American culture and they stick to their Korean culture?

Hannah: Yeah. Something like that. But I feel like most of that is language barrier.

I was not really friends with them. We are not like best friend. We talked to them if they were in my class or something because we were only Korean persons. I guess they went to different schools. Still probably fobs, still like talking in Koreans.

HL: I thought if you are both enjoying Korean culture, there is some common ground you can talk about. But you didn't experience that way?

Hannah: Yes, probably but not personally. Just because like in my old church. There were only handful of kids to like K-pop. They are more into the standard American culture. They did not need to feel the diverse culture. They did not like it particularly. So some of them sometimes do you what these people just watch the show. It was like they did not like each other. They just did not hang around that much. But some of them did.

(Hannah, 20, 2nd generation, college student, interviewed in English)

Cindy: I think my culture was fobs are actually very, almost at distance, like white men as a fob. I think I am in the middle. There is a lot of disconnect from fob. There is a lot of disconnect from white.

HL: How could you describe fobs?

Cindy: I guess like little bit of like. There is certain aspect in the culture where I don't agree with. For example, the obsession with beauty? ⋯ They are not familiar with the American culture. They are not in that yet. Probably.

The fob that I've met some in church because as a Korean church, very Korean. A lot of people just came to America, not that good at English yet.

I also don't legitimate with like drinking culture. (laughter)

HL: You are not allowed to drink yet. How could you know the culture? (laughter)

Cindy: College is different.

HL: Who you met?

Cindy: Actually, there is Korean club at my college and I think I wanted to join at the first day. I want to go. Have you ever heard Soop Bin? Right next to the H mart. It's like the bar in Upper Darby. It is very famous among Koreans. At the first meeting, they were like, "OK, we are going to go and sinipsaengdeul (freshmen), you are going to die." OK, never mind then. Obviously, they are like some people over 21, so they buy and then everybody drink.

HL: So you joined?

Cindy: No. I didn't go. It's like "no thank you."

HL: Why don't you like it?

Cindy: Hm. I guess, it is not the American side of me and it's not the Korean side of me. I don't think there is much uses in drinking at

> this age especially. What problem is if I drink in my age and then, for social thing, I would like to be sober when I meet people. Like that kinds of thing because I know American people drink a lot and Korean people drink a lot. but I think it is a little different. Maybe not that different, a little different.
> (Cindy, 19, 2nd generation, college student, interviewed in English)

Young Koreans sometimes mediate the 'weird' attitudes and behaviors of these newcomers to others in their schools since they have some hints about the culture of Korean fobs. They were juggling two different sets of cultural practices as in-between subjects and adjusted themselves to the situation. To the eyes of young second generation Korean Americans, Korean newcomers ignored this rule and made themselves exclusive within their own ethnic clans. Thus, the attitude and activities of these 1.5 generation Korean Americans were even perceived as arrogant sometimes.

> Andy: That [Being a fob] means you want to be more Korean than you want to be American pretty much. I think that's what that word means.
> HL: The person wants to stay as a Korean.
> Andy: Right, but I want to embrace both sides. I've personally never been called a fob before, but I obviously don't consider myself one, but there are probably people who think like that.
> HL: More Korean than American? What does that mean? Can you exemplify any activity or word?
> Andy: I guess they gravitate more towards Korean activities for example. They want to do more Korean-related stuff than they want to do American related stuff. They always want to eat Korean food, or actually I don't know. That's kind of tricky. ⋯ When people use that word, they think that the person that they're calling a fob is very strong-headed about being Korean. They're very almost cocky about it. They think that I guess they're better than you because they are Korean. I guess that kind of ties along with the word fob, but I'm not 100% sure on that. That word's difficult.
> HL: Maybe like arrogance?
> Andy: Yeah, like arrogance, yes. Yes.
> (Andy, 19, 2nd generation, college students, interviewed in English)

> Yeah. I think it's like, it's different now definitely, but even like middle school, high school, if you heard like fob, they are like, "Oh, they are very

to themselves. They only hang out with each other and they don't want to hang out with American culture."

(Amelia, 22, 2nd generation, college student, interviewed in English)

In Helen's case, Koreans were somewhat exclusive in relation to her regardless of her fluent Korean when she attempted to enter the Korean community. Helen shared her bitter experiences when she got along with Koreans or worked in Korea. Partly, these situations intersected with her class and gender identity, but mainly she experienced how Koreans drew borders of exclusivity.

Helen: In college, 언니들 (older female friends) always told me you are Twinkie, banana, because I'm the only one who can speak English perfectly, because I was born here. I tried to so hard to assimilate to them. 'Cause that school, I spent my whole culture stay with them. So it was really weird. ⋯ But I think it was really confusing. Since up until high school I did not hang out with any Koreans, I think they were picking certain cultural things and then posing them on me. So I tried to avoid them all together. When I was in college, I was only hanging out with Korean people and they do not know how to speak English. So I am in kind of both spectrums. There was no answer. The next generation of Korean Americans would not look at the Korean culture as same as I did either. ⋯⋯I spent 4 or 5 years just people from Korea. Then just did work couple of years in Korea. I think these are extreme experiences. ⋯ They (Koreans) always said "oh! she looks Korean, but she is American" they always said like that. I first thought I was kind of offended. But OK. Then one morning, someone implied me to "coffee" they looked like ⋯ "No thank you, remember I'm American." So I thought they called me American in a negative way, but at the moment they expected something from me, they imposed the Korean culture on me. I felt like it was very double edged thought. That I did not like.

HL: So you never plan to work there, again?

Helen: I never went back. No. It is inappropriate. They labeled me Korean when it was convenient for them and they labeled me when they find it to be. There is something I do not like in Korea and also in the U.S. I am able to think I'm mixed from both. It is not clear to me one over the other. Before, I think it is not that comfortable, but when I get older it is OK with me.

(Helen, 30s, 2nd generation, professional, interviewed in English)

Speaking the language of a culture has been regarded as an indicator of comprehending a culture. For second generation Korean Americans, speaking English fluently and attaining American citizenship were the reasons for their privileged feelings compared to new immigrants including Korean international students.

> HL: You think as a citizen. You are more privileged than someone who just came here to study?
> Cindy: Yeah. I don't want to believe that, but something in my heart says that.
> HL: Is there any prejudice about these international students?
> Cindy: Right.
> HL: People cannot speak English well.
> Cindy: Yeah.
> HL: What else?
> Cindy: I don't know. I have something that fighting myself. That I have lived here for so many years like I have only faced little racism but, yes, something that. When I am around in international students, I just feel, not higher, but I just feel differences because I'm an American citizen.
> HL: Do you like American culture and Americans more having grown up here?
> Cindy: I thought something else. I think it is when I am in American culture. I'm so Korean. I'm so Asian. But here, I'm so American.
> HL: Do you want to something to different from them among Korean Koreans.
> Cindy: Right, so even to the Korean students, I don't speak a lot of Korean. Part of it has to do, I want to them to learn English. I don't want to them any bias. When I talk people I can understand Korean, they got really surprise "What!"
> (Cindy, 19, 2nd generation, college student, interviewed in English)

For their Asian appearance, my informants were often asked where they were from regardless of their nationality. People probably wanted to know more about their information since ethnic minorities might have distinct cultural practices and values. However, these daily conversation practices became a reminder of their 'minority' identities and forced my informants to reflect on their ethnic origins regardless of whether they personally appreciated them or not.

> I think the embarrassing part is go with more with like Korean culture. When I am working here at the English Language Program, people asked me “oh! where are you from?” Because everybody is international students and then something about me. When they know that I was American, like “oh, I’m from Seattle” and then they ask me “what is my ethnicity?” was. Then when I answer, “my parents are from Korea” now I would like to say I’m Korean. I don’t know why that it is. It is like something there is definitely something I would say I’m more American but yeah, that has to do with the embarrassment about Korean culture.
> (Cindy, 19, 2nd generation, college student, interviewed in English)

My informants’ direct experiences described above continuously identified their differences from Koreans. However, transnational flows into their local space, including digitalized Korean media and immigrants, encouraged second generation Korean Americans’ involvement with Korean media consumption and cultural activities. Besides their struggles with the Korean culture, they were soaking up a highly contextualized Korean culture through the mediated world.

As a first step into their ethnic culture, they felt that becoming bilingual was cool and useful for them. Since there are many other Korean Americans who speak both languages in their peer group and their ethnic culture is worth exploring, speaking Korean became one of their goals or points of pride.

> HL: Do you sense some common ground with this Korean-Korean student and you?
> Andy: Well the fact that we can communicate with each other in Korean I think is a big factor. When I went to the first Korean Student Association meeting, I met a bunch of transfer students from Korea, and they thought I was a transfer student because of my Korean speaking ability. They were like, "Oh what college did you come from in Korea?" I'm like, "Oh actually I was born here." They were really surprised. Being able to speak the language is a really, really, really big part.
> HL: Otherwise, do you feel closer to Korean-Korean students than non-Korean students, friends?
> Andy: Yeah I feel close to them, but just in the fact that we're Korean and we can relate in the U.S. as Korean. We can relate in America. I

feel like the fact that we're both Korean brings us closer than if I were just to meet a random person on the street.

HL: Do you sometimes talk about this K-pop or that kind of thing with the Korean-Korean friends? What kind of issues do you talk about with your Korean-Korean friends?

Andy: Well if I were to meet Korean-Korean people, I just usually talk about myself and I ask them questions about their selves. Obviously, it takes more time to obviously get into the deeper conversations, but when we just first meet, it's more basic stuff. I feel like with the KSA friends that I've made, I feel like the only thing we've talked about right now is just our basic selves. We haven't really gone into interests or what we like to do or stuff like that yet.

(Andy, 19, 2nd generation, college students, interviewed in English)

Alex: So for example, I've been watching more Korean TV shows. I've been watching Korea drama stuff. Uh, I went online and looked up a bunch of Korean websites that taught you how to speak Korean. Stuff like that. I found that those don't really help too much. It's just like, I'll learn the vocabulary or, like, verb endings and things like that. And then actually applying it is very difficult. So very recently, maybe like a couple days ago, I wanted. Well, since we all don't go to the same college, we talk online, like, uh, Skype type of program.

HL: Three of you

Alex: Yeah.

Joon: And a bunch of other guys.

Alex: All our friends. So basically I've been trying to speak a little more. It's very, very difficult for me, although, I can understand a little bit of what they're saying, but if they're speaking, like, very fast, it's very hard for me to get used to the speed. But things like that. So recently getting into it and having kind of past of being in a school from Korean, for Korean, kind of helps. So I have like basic sentence structure down and things like that. But it's still difficult for me.

HL: Why do you want to learn Korean?

Alex: Couple of things. One, I never really paid attention to my heritage or things like that. And my parents, my grandparents are all Korean, so for my grandparents, it's very hard to communicate with them a lot of the time. And they try their hardest to speak in English to me, but I can see, like, they're struggling. I also think that I should be fair to them and at least attempt to communicate with them in their own language which is still difficult for me cause it's very hard with, like, language barriers. And like communicating my actual thoughts to them is always very difficult. So things like that have made me want to speak Korean. Also, uh, when I went to

Ryan's house one time, (laughter together) his grandparents saw me and they knew I was Korean. So they tried talking to me in Korean, and I didn't know what they said. And I went like 'uh?' and apparently that's very disrespectful, and I had no idea. So, stuff like that made me want to start learning to (laughter). I'm very not into any, I don't understand Korean culture that much. And that kind of made me more interested in it. So especially I think I'm kind of handicapped as a Korean who can't speak Korean or doesn't know.

HL: Oh really?

Alex: Yeah. Well, not in America, per se, but for example, like, talking to other Korean people and things like that.

HL: They ask you if you can speak Korean?

Alex: Yeah, if I can't, it's like I get cut off from the Korean people who can speak Korean. It's kind of hard. It's more difficult…. Korean elders thought it was very weird, so they would say that. They were like oh, your parents are so short [but you are very tall and big], or something like that. That would be the extent of my conversations with more Korean elders. I know a little bit of how to act, per say, just not the language things. For example, "네" ("Neh" means yes) versus "어" ("uh" casual way of saying "yes") to elders that I shouldn't do, which I had no idea about until Ryan pointed it out to me. Then saying and bowing to my elders and things like that. I know very general and basic things. I have been surrounded by Korean culture, it's just I've never taken the time to learn it, or actually paid attention to it and things like that. I think I am connected in at least some way. That kind of also pushes me to want to learn it a bit more.

HL: You want to learn more about Korean culture now? So you are more into the Korean Americans who know about Korean culture, or just like the natural setting is for you, mainly Korean American?

Alex: Honestly right now, I have to go out of my way to learn more about Korean culture. I have to look stuff up on the Internet or asking about language with David and Ryan. Yeah. Once again, I told you, most of my friends are Koreans in college, mainly because a lot of them speak Korean, and then it's hard to converse with them when they're speaking Korean. Basically, I have to go out of my way to learn about Korean culture, but I also think that hopefully it's a good step to take. I still think learning another language is still gonna help me in the future, anyway. It's not that bad, and I still enjoy it.

(Alex & Joon, 19, 3rd &1.5st generation, college students, interviewed in English)

Cindy: I think because of American hip hop, is very like hard but Korean hip hop.

HL: Because of the lyrics?
Cindy: Yes. The lyric is like… yayayayayayay…but Korean hip hop it interprets a lot of like, almost like Jazz or like R&B. So it is easier to me to listen to. Because it is just like (hit the table as beat).
HL: That improved you and your brother's Korean language?
Cindy: Yes, yes that's true.
HL: Is it not hard?
Cindy: Yes, more than lyric, we listen to the beat.
HL: So, your brother can speak Korean well now?
Cindy: Not that. Well, but I remember when he was in middle school too. He couldn't speak any Korean, and then talking to my mom. He only responded in English, and then but now he is got much better. So my mom is shocked. "What? What did you say?"
HL: (laughter together) So your brother likes Korean culture?
Cindy: Yes. It is really strange. I think we went through the almost same as actually like very, very American and then suddenly, Korean Korean Korean.
(Cindy, 19, 2nd generation, college student, interviewed in English)

Watching Korean media, learning the language, and imagining the transnational place and culture gave second generation Korean Americans a deeper understanding of their first generation family members. They initiated conversations across generations about Korean culture. Along with their personal engagement with different cultural contexts, they began to understand other possible ways of life and differences.

Alex: Very age-based hierarchy type thing that really bothered me. There were some cases, like my elder pastor was very nice. He was very kind to everyone. There were definitely examples of people that were better. It was just the majority of the elders there really just got under my skin just based on the way they acted towards people. I think, at least, once again my limited experience with Korean culture now, it seems better, and it has changed, but I've never been to Korea, so I have no idea where my opinion kind of ... I haven't experienced firsthand, so it's really hard for me to give my opinion on that, based on that⋯. Looking at Korean K-dramas, K-pop, more Korean cultural stuff, or watching videos on YouTube and things like that. I do see that there is that age you should respect people who are older, but it's more like the older person is taking care of the younger rather than the older person is superior to the younger person, which was my experience before. I think it's based on the person and the culture that you're around. From what I've seen actually looking into Korean culture, it looks

more like the older takes care of the younger, rather than the older is superior. It's looking better, pretty much, for me.
For the relationships between people, I'd say the American style of, you should respect people with more experience, or more skill than you, and then listen to their values, rather than just age wise. For me, the way I've been raised, it's not age is that gives them the expertise. It's their actual skill in the field. Where I learned that mainly was in football, for me. Out of all the older people that played, I was a lot better than most of them. So because of that, I talked to them more in a friendlier way, or I'd joke around with them. The way I played, I didn't take advice from them, generally because I was a lot better than them. Things like that made me believe it should be your experience, or how actually skilled you are in these fields that should determine how much respect you get rather than your age.

HL: After you were exposed to Korean media, do you have a little bit more of a clue about the behaviors of Korean elders?

Alex: Yeah, I had more of a clue as to why they acted that way, but because I was raised in more of an American way and I had many experiences where I didn't find the older people as good as they were just because of their age ... I like the American way a little bit more. How experience and skill really determine more how much respect you get, rather than how old you are.

(Alex, 19, 3rd generation, college student, interviewed in English)

Why our parents think this way? Why did their behavior this way? And I think second generation Korean including me watch Korean dramas to understand better and I think it is therapeutic sometimes. Therapeutic like, "Oh! This is why. It's not 우리 식구만 아니고 그냥 보통 사람들이 이렇게 생각한다 그렇게 (My family is not peculiarly weird. That's ordinary in Korea)." You understand you learn the culture.

(Jenna, 40s, 2nd generation, professionals, interviewed in English)

HL: Do you watch the dramas and listen to the music and find it online?

Cindy: Recently, I also like really, really old song like MoonSe Lee (a Korean singer since 1978).

HL: (laughter) How did you find him?

Cindy: Him? I found a new artist did remake his songs. And I first saw him and then I love original. I always said that to my friends and they said you are so old. There is a difference. My mom also said that too. There is like a different feel like when older people's original songs.

HL: So, you can share with your mom, right?

Cindy: That is one good thing like my mom and I listen to similar music sometimes.

HL: It's just you or does your peer group also do that with their parents?

Cindy: I'm not sure about my peer group, but sometimes I send them all songs and then they say "what are you doing?" And then they send me the newer version, the remake version. But I like, "no guys, old version is better…." I think like when I talk about older thing, I talked with my mom about them and newer thing like new songs, new dramas, with my friends.
(Cindy, 19, 2nd generation, college student, interviewed in English)

Andy: Since that stuff is more coming to America now, I feel it's easier for me to feel more connected to that culture, with Korean culture. I definitely think with all of the, what's it called, with all the import of Korean culture now, because around here, there's a lot of Korean restaurants. We went to go see a Korean movie at an American theater, so I think definitely it's a lot easier to see. I feel more connected.
HL: You don't feel this physical distance like your parents?
Andy: Oh, no. Now I don't. Obviously, there's a big disconnect because I don't actually live in the country, but I think from the time that my parents moved here to now, I think there's huge, it's much better in terms of trying to relate to that culture in America.
HL: Because you watch media?
Andy: Yeah, there's access to media, and there's Korean restaurants, and a bunch of Korean people that you can meet up with and stuff like that, so I feel like it's a lot easier now.
HL: That encourages your identity as a Korean-American?
Andy: Yes, more positively. Yeah. I definitely think it's positive. The access to the media and stuff is allowing ourselves to explore as Koreans. I definitely think that's a huge positive in learning culture and all that kind of stuff. ⋯ At home we have two DirectTV boxes that have Korean news and Korean channels on it. One in our living room and one in our family room that have Korean channels on it, so my parents and my grandparents are always watching Korean news. Whenever I walk downstairs I always see that. I feel like yeah, it's a lot easier for us to be. Even now for my parents, it's a lot easier for them to relate back to Korea too. Now we have messages and all this stuff. Talking to their friends or talking to their family's really, really easy. It's definitely positive in my opinion.
HL: You talk with friends in Korea?
Andy: I have a lot of cousins that I talk with still in Korea.
HL: Oh. They kind of feel they belong in Korea more than before?
Andy: Mm-hmm (affirmative). They feel like they can be in Korea without being in Korea, if you know what I mean. They feel like they can obviously see all the news and stuff, so they know what's happening in Korea. Yeah, I feel like for Korean-Americans it's a really good way.

(Andy, 19, 2nd generation, college students, interviewed in English)

Besides the changes in their individual or family dynamics, there have been many transnational cultural events in the space of Philadelphia, which my informants easily accessed. Many Korean churches have invited Korean singers for benefit performances. Commercial concerts of Korean singers/idol groups, such as Bing Bang and AOMG, were hosted in Philadelphia, Newark in New Jersey, and New York City. Screening films in local theaters became more popular among Korean Americans in Philadelphia. Korean distribution companies promoted their films through the local community. Korean films were sold out during the weekend. These local activities involving Korean media and culture provided a milieu in which these members of the Korean Americans recognized their community around the Philadelphia area.

Figure 9. Flyers on the entrance door of a local Korean restaurant.
Blue Bell, Pennsylvania. November 24, 2016

I went to the DoHyun Yoon, Rain, and GOD concert (Korean pop singers and an idol group). I went to the New York song festival, different SM groups outs. I went there with Korean American from 80s. I grew up with that. We were keeping up with Korean music. So we knew a lot of things in general.

(Helen, 30s, 2nd generation, professional, interviewed in English)

HL: Do you have any chance to go to concerts or…?
Amelia: I went to Big Bang concert.
HL: Oh really?
Amelia: Yeah, twice. In New Jersey. They came in my freshman year and then not long ago last year.
HL: How much was it?
Amelia: First time it was not bad because nobody, it wasn't too big in America, so I went for not that 80, and then recently I went for 100, but it was not good seats because they are really big. At that it'd be like not too much but it was filled, it was sold out. Yeah, it was really big, yeah. And then whenever so you know the movie, the war movie, *MyungRyang* (명량, *The Admiral: Roaring*

Currents, 2014)? My dad ordered it online and then it was sold out, we went there 309 theater, I thought I was in Korea. It was all Koreans, packed. It was a good movie. Because not long ago when I was in high school, me and my friend watched, there is a movie with Yu, A-in (유아인, a Korean actor), it was not too popular, so it was really small. Not a lot of Korean in the theater, but then when I watched the big Korean movies, it was packed, I was so surprised.

HL: So do you think it influenced their relationship with the Korean community? Before, they just watched VHS tapes alone, but now we can watch movies together.

Amelia: I think not so much my relationships, but I can see it influencing other relationships because it creates especially in Philadelphia I know in the California, there is a big Korean town and there is a lot of Koreans. But in Philadelphia, it wasn't too big the Korean influence. So I think having, it's getting bigger, so I think people have now the opportunity to go and see movies together and pop concerts come here because before you'd have to go all the way to California or somewhere big where the Korean population is bigger. But now that it's here, it's available.

(Amelia, 22, 2nd generation, college student, interviewed in English)

HyunJi: Sometimes there is movie. Our organization was selected by CJ media in America, and then they contacted and gave a free show.

Joseph: The largest movie distributor in Korea. They would give free tickets. They give us thirty three tickets to help people to come out with their family to watch this Korean film in 309 cinema.

HL: I heard that Plymouth meeting theater too.

HyunJi: Yes, they just had *Train to Busan* (aka *부산행*, 2016). I guess not from CJ.

HL: My friend went there and the tickets were sold out.

HyunJi: My parents in law also said same thing.

Joseph: Actually the Plymouth meeting has a lot of K-films, and Korean people come out there. But other theaters do not have Korean movie.

HyunJi: Only 309 and Plymouth meeting theaters. Five different distributors I think. CJ is for the 309 theater.

(Hyunji & Joseph couple, 30s, 1st & 2nd generation, professionals, interviewed in English)

SiWon: There was a GangNam Style, the song. Psy had a concert with MC Hammer in New York. People went to there to enjoy it.

HL: Have you ever attended any Korean cultural event?

SiWon: I went to the theater to watch Korean films. *Train to Busan* (*부산행*, 2016) and *Wailing* (*곡성*, 2016)

HL: With other Koreans?

SiWon: Yes, all of them were church friends. 1.5 generations. One of them was international student. They are close friends of mine and contacted me to join.

HL: These activities are a more recent phenomenon since the Korean population is increasing?

Heena: People have more interests than before. There is a demand.

SiWon: It might be a marketing strategy too. There will be non-Korean audiences too, not only Koreans. I also watched *Veteran* (베테랑, 2015) at the 309 theater. One of my friend asked me to go together, so I went to there early in the morning.

HL: Is that more common than before to see people going to the theater together to watch a Korean film?

SiWon: There were not many opportunities. There was a Korean film, but people were not that interested in it. There was a film poster at the Hanareum market that announced a screening of Korean film at a local theater. Then people went to the theater. There is a religious association Milal Mission which supports disabled children and adults. In last year, Bada (a Korean singer) was invited and this year, Wangyu Park will come.

(SiWon & Heena, 30s, 1.5 and 1st generation, professionals, interviewed in Korean)

Hannah: I've only been to one like Korean like Bangtan concert, in New York. Some of my friends, they knew KCON (an annual Korean Wave convention) annually now, like they go to there and like there's this movie theater near my house, AMC 309, like if a Korean movie comes to America, they like show them sometimes.

HL: You watched *The Age of Shadow*?

Hannah: Oh, I don't know. I think that was like the Busan, like the train…?

HL: *Pusanhaeng* (*Train to Busan*)?

Hannah: Yeah, yeah, yeah! That one. I think that one showed there recently. I think my dad watched it (laughter).

HL: It was very popular, right? People said the tickets were sold out.

Hannah: I don't know (laughter).

HL: Oh… You don't enjoy Korean film?

Hannah: I don't watch enough of them. I want to watch more. I've only watched like three, probably, in my life.

(Hannah, 20, 2nd generation, college student, interviewed in English)

Digitalized media environments are helpful to initiate and facilitate these kinds of local activities. I participated in several local activities including screening Korean films with young Korean Americans. Social network websites such as Facebook, Meetup, or

Eventbrite were actively used to spread information about these cultural events. A Korean student association from a local college announced a K-movie night via social media networks. For the Korean movie night, I drove with other college students to a suburban town to have a Korean dinner and watch the newly released Korean film, *The Age of Shadows* (밀정, 2016). Jenna, a second generation professional, also sent me an email invitation to a Korean film, *Sprits' Homecoming* (귀향, 2016) a free screening with a director's talk at a university building in downtown Philadelphia.

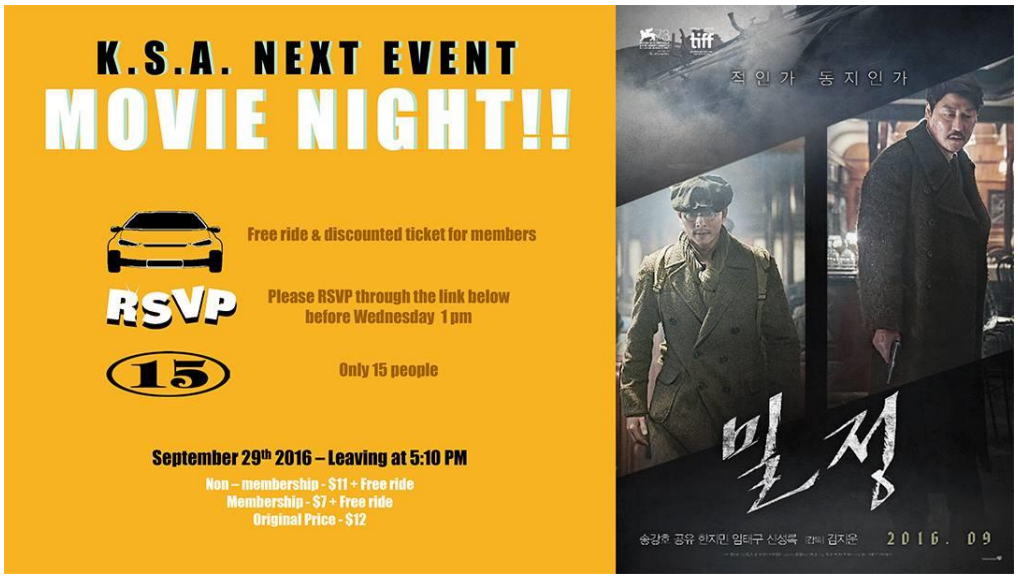

Figure 10. K-movie Night e-flyer by the Korean Student Association.
Image from Temple Korean Student Association website.

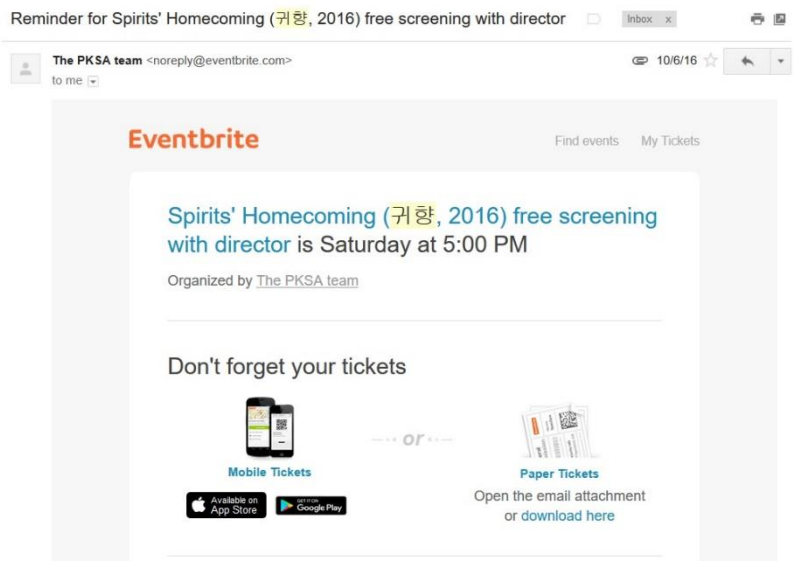

Figure 11. Email invitation for a free Korean movie screening event

Watching Korean films invited the second generation of Korean Americans to explore the complicated and long historical contexts of Korea. At these cultural occasions, both second generation Korean Americans and international students/first generations Korean Americans could collectively feel the atmosphere of the local events and share their perspectives and feelings. While watching the Korean film in a theater, we exchanged a smiley glance when Korean female elders chatted in Korean about how a famous middle-aged Korean actor was handsome in a close up shot on the screen. After the show, the Korean American student group stayed together at the entrance hall of the theater for a while and shared how we enjoyed the film, including the emerging Korean Wave star Gong Yu's acting. He later became more popular for his Korean drama *Guardian: The Lonely and Great God* (*도깨비*, 2016). On another day, after the screening of the *Sprits' Homecoming* (*귀향*, 2016), I could see that Jenna and her second generation friends, who do not speak Korean, cried over the fictional story about Korean sex slavery

during the Japanese colonization. During the discussion, they asked questions to the director who visited from Korea.

They also engaged in diverse activities in mediated spaces including daily consumption of Korean media products, getting information on the web published in Korea or the U.S., communicating in one-on-one situations, writing their own blogs, as well as exploring social network sites and online discussion threads regardless of temporal and spatial distances.

> HL: Are there any friends you can talk to K-pop?
> Andy: Yeah my Korean friends, they actually listen to K pop. I got them into K-pop.
> HL: Oh really?
> Andy: Yeah, they don't really understand anything.
> HL: Oh, but they still like it?
> Andy: Yeah, they still listen to it and like the culture and everything. Yeah.
> (Andy, 19, 2nd generation, college students, interviewed in English)

> Since I can use the Internet in any place, I look for the information more, have more interests, Koreans talk more. If someone talks about GOD concert, I am suddenly intrigued "what! GOD concert?" and looked at it online. If I have a favorite Korean drama, and I wonder how the protagonist is doing in reality. Then I looked at the Internet news. Then I looked at favorite celebrities. Since I have an interest in it, I just keep browsing the information through online.
> (SiWon, 30s, 1.5 generation, professional, interviewed in Korean)

In their daily lives and special occasions like cultural events or social gatherings, using media was deeply embedded in every physical engagement. Mediated images of participants were created and spread online. When a group of young Korean Americans went to the Jersey Shore to surf, the leader of the group broadcasted how people enjoyed the shore and chatted together through Facebook Live. He also conversed with people in Korea and Philadelphia, their relatives in Korea or local people who couldn't join the

events. For these young groups, these activities were one of the exciting moments in their daily lives. This mediated connectivity is one element that makes it global.

> The more I talk with Korean Korean people, the more Korean I feel. I feel that truly living out my 1.5 identity.
> (Joseph, 30s, 2nd generation, professional, interviewed in English)

> I never had any thoughts of disconnecting myself from the Korean side. I always wanted to get to know more and be a part of my Korean side, even though it was kind of hard. That's why I wanted to join Korean Student Association here, so I could reflect on that side of me more than my American side. Because every day, I'm on my American side, right? I want to be more towards the Korean, well not leaning more, but I want to use my Korean side more basically.
> (Andy, 19, 2nd generation, college students, interviewed in English)

As shown in their stories about their perspectives on fobs, second generation Korean Americans had uncomfortable or distant feelings about so-called Korean Koreans or fobs. However, as they more actively participated in local events and led transnational connectivities within their local place, the boundaries between groups of Korean Americans were blurred across generations and places of birth. Instead, the rise of the Korean Wave has provided opportunities to build and share knowledge about their imagined ancestral homeland and to construct memories together in the local place and time.

Spreading Korean Culture to my Neighbors

> Andy: I like to emphasize the fact that I'm Korean, and I love teaching people about the culture and stuff. Even at home, with all my white friends, I always take them out to Korean barbecue and teach them how to eat and how to prepare certain foods. I always like doing that stuff. Explaining what my Korean side is like to them, I really like doing that.
> HL: How come you do that? You know these kind of people, right? They want to be involved in the white culture or dominant culture in US?
> Andy: Yeah.

HL: Then they feel more comfortable within that culture. Why do you want to differentiate yourself?

Andy: I don't know. I just really like the fact that I'm Korean. I think the Korean culture is so neat. To me, it's just something I can have that's different from Americans, right? It's like I have this distinctive feature that these guys don't have. Not to say that in a mean way, but I have this feature that these guys don't have and I can explain what that part of my life is to them and hopefully they'll appreciate it and learn.

(Andy, 19, 2nd generation, college students, interviewed in English)

How does interaction with non-Korean communities impact the construction of the social identities of second generation Korean Americans? Several informants, especially those who could not speak Korean, perceived cultural aspects of Korea as weird or funny when they watched the Asian culture through American media. The American contexts now make more sense to my informants. Unlike the stereotypes that American main stream media typically posed before, transnational Korean media contents are consumed together with the local neighbors or global audiences. The rise of the Korean Wave is not only comprised of transnational media, but also of diverse elements from Korea like foods, commodities, and migrants, placed in their local spaces. Thus, second generation Korean Americans imagined their ethnic culture with their non-Korean neighbors. The second generation Korean American informants were the primary group who interacted with non-Korean individuals and communities. Just like them, they were able to meet fans of Korean culture from a different ethnic group. Contrary to the frustration of living as a minority in the U.S., many of my informants sensed their minority position as a basis of privileged status when other ethnicities were intrigued by and paid attention to their culture. The burden of representation as a small ethnic group was also part of the pride of their ethnic identity. Further, they hoped to actively spread Korean culture in their local place.

Emma, in her late 30s, remembered enjoying Korean popular music and soap operas alone, with Korean church friends, or within her family. In early 2000, she was familiar with Korean popular music and watched lots of dramas. But she did not expect her high school friends to be interested in her ethnic music.

> Emma: When I was high school, I consumed Seotaji and Rulla (a Korean hip hop musician and dancing group since early 90s). Everyone in the Korean church, I have to say Korean people at my church. Most of the people spoke to their parents in Korean. My family travelled almost one hour to the church. I lived in kind of 시골 (rural area). So my church had a lot of Koreans there in New Jersey. Youth group there are still my closest friends. When in high school, I also went to the private school to the high school. So I commuted the school. I did not live in the town where my school is. I think it is difficult to make a friendship.
> HL: You were the only student who listened to Korean pop music at the school?
> Emma: Yes. (laughter) I don't think they knew. I don't think they care.
> HL: You liked it?
> Emma: I did at that time. Yeah. I liked the Korean pop at that time a lot. I think I was draw to it. Because I thought it was part of my culture that I was coming to understand. And also my friends liked it. I think some of this music was in dramas at that time. I thought that was fun. I bought Shinseunghoon (a Korean singer). I had so many CDs. Actually when my parents moved out when I grew up in, threw out so many CDs. I don't have any players, but I had so many there. I have also used a lot of Korean music like cassette tapes.
> HL: How about your college days?
> Emma: I can't listen to Korean music as much. But I watched more dramas then. Not during colleges but during my breaks. With my family, I had more time between breaks. So I feel like that's what I watched most. After I graduate and came back to Korea. They were a lot of fun. My early twenties, I came back to Korea. I felt like I watched whole bunch of Korean dramas too. *내 이름은 김삼순* (*My Lovely Sam Soon*, 2005). There are so many funny one. There were four ladies. *결혼하고 싶은 여자* (*Merry Me!* 2004). Those kinds of themes. There was a *옥탑방 고양이* (*Rooftop Room Cat*, 2003). There was a whole bunch of the dramas I wanted to watch. My grandmother still borrows them from Korean grocery stores. I want to watch. She watched it and passed to me. I would wait until she was done and then I would watch it. Sometimes I watched with

her. But I was working and she needed to do some laundry thing something like that. DVDs and VHSs.
(Emma, 30s, 2nd generation, professional, interviewed in English)

However, Emma and other informants now have quite different experiences of the process of globalization. Many second generation Korean Americans could find places where they could invite their non-Korean friends and introduce their own ethnic culture, especially foods. If the popular culture is more closely related with the cultural tastes and understanding of the culture, introducing an exotic cuisine becomes a cool cultural practice often mediated and circulated through social media networks.

Helen: I like something really like. For example, 미숫가루 (misoogaroo, a Korean cold beverage made with roasted and ground grains). When they open the Cafébene (a Korean franchise bakery café) in West Philly, I was excited. After all the visiting café around here, there is something I can try too.
HL: Is it not good that at least you can offer something from Korea?
Helen: Yes. They are still hesitating, like "oh, what is this?" But I think it is good because they are interested about healthy foods these days. This is like a whole grain. I also think Korean foods are Americanized. Like cheese 떡볶이 (ddukboki, spicy rice cake). I think so many things are like (Americanized). You never thought cheese on ddukboki or ramen (before).
We (Americans) never have thousands of years of history or tradition. So for me, it is more tolerable. Because whatever represents the U.S., it is more melting pot. I think Asia or Europe has very deep roots and very specific cuisine. That like rooted from their culture. I think the U.S. is adopted it from it.
(Helen, 30s, 2nd generation, professional, interviewed in English)

I think that Korean culture is on a rise as to what people want to know. Because lately there's been a huge wave of American people wanting to eat Korean barbecue, right? That's a big thing right now in America. With Asian foods, people always want to get Korean barbecue. Especially in LA, Korean barbecue's a huge thing. I feel like if more American people want to go to Korean barbecue and stuff, I feel like the more they introduce themselves to Korean foods and culture and stuff, the more they want to learn about it. I feel like there's definitely an uptrend for Korean, wanting to know their culture and stuff.
(Andy, 19, 2nd generation, college students, interviewed in English)

I think we are growing in Korean-American community as a community because before there was one Hmart in Cheltenham. There is now another one in Upper Darby. So growing up we used to always have to drive to go to Hmart, but now the new Hmart opened up. So there is like two. I think, yeah, definitely a lot of Korean culture like the restaurants, there is still not too many and they are not that great, but. My mom says that, "Oh, we should eat Jjajangmyun (짜장면, Chinese Korean brown noodle) in Korea!", but my mom cooks Korean foods at home, and I learned to cook Korean food at home. So I can't say I am Korean and I'm cooking Korean food, but generally I know what it's supposed to taste like. And if it doesn't taste like that, I can tell a lot of how good the restaurant is if it's very Korean or not too much, but there are more opening up. Even like in my college, the food trucks there is, when I came in there was maybe two, three Korean food trucks, now there is a lot of Korean food trucks. So I think there is a lot of Korean cultures opening up, and even Americans are now interested in Korean food. It's becoming popular and stuff like that so.

(Amelia, 22, 2nd generation, college student, interviewed in English)

Figure 12. Korean food truck at a university campus in Philadelphia. April 19, 2018.

The popularity of Korean popular culture made them meet non-Koreans who just enjoyed the Korean popular culture as they did in their local place.

HL: When you went to Big Bang concerts, did you see only Korean fans?
Amelia: No, it's very diverse actually, I was surprised.
HL: Were there also different races there?
Amelia: You know how the K-Pop is very popular now, so there is a lot of Americans, there are different types of ethnicities, like Chinese or … Yeah, very, very diverse.
(Amelia, 22, 2nd generation, college student, interviewed in English)

Emma: I can remember my neighbor, she is Taiwanese. She is crazy about Korean dramas. Korean media. Korean actresses and actors. She actually knows ways more than I do. ⋯ She visited Seoul for the last year to meet her ex-girlfriend. She has ten days to stay in Asia and she chose to stay in Seoul she said. In Seoul, she went to all the media 촬영하는 곳 (Korean drama filming locations). The places. Just to go and see. She knows she kept texting me to say, "watch the Descendants of the Sun." I was like, "I can't..!" I was so busy at the time. I couldn't watch it. I know if I watch one, after, I watch another one. I cannot most like crazy about it. I don't' have the time right now. I can't.
HL: You cannot watch it with the kids?
Emma: I think I can. I know that. I am kind of limiting TV with my kids. So, I can maybe with my older daughter but maybe she would be into it. Jenna (her sister in law, second generation of Korean) tells me a lot. She told me a lot. I think she is keeping with that better than I do. My friends tell me. Two of my friends just came from the Korea. Just past summer. I stayed there few weeks. I don't feel like I do not necessarily seek it out. I don't really have the time. I don't have much leisure time. So if the information comes me, that makes me interested in it. If that makes sense.
(Emma, 30s, 2nd generation, professional, interviewed in English)

Beyond meeting people who enjoyed transnational culture, my informants felt that they became cultural ambassadors since they understood more about Korean culture. In their personal relationships, they recommended and shared Korean contents with their close friends.

Alex: Whenever someone, for example, asks me what I listen to, I'd show them Korean songs. Just a couple of my friends from my school. He's half Japanese and half Swedish, I think.
Joon: It's a very weird combination.
Alex: That's my one friend. A couple of my other friends are just white, and then my one friend's Cantonese. Everyone is just like Chinese, things like that. They'd ask, and if it comes up, "sure," I'll tell

them. It's not something that I'll throw in their face, like “oh, I do this. You should do this.” If they're interested then I'll go deeper into it, but if they're not, I'll just show it to them.

HL: What do you say? Can you give some example, like just introduce a group or something like that?

Alex: Yeah, I just introduce them. An example, Roy asks a lot. Our friend who goes on the Skype type thing with us, he asked about it, what music we like to listen to. I showed him songs that I listen to that I thought he would more like because he doesn't really like the high tempo girl songs as much. He more listens to and likes the guy songs from K-pop. At least from what I could tell, so I just showed him those. Examples like that. I would show people songs that I think they would like based on their taste.

(Alex & Joon, 19, 3rd &1.5st generation, college students, interviewed in English)

Andy: All my white friends kind of like K-pop too because I got them into it.

HL: This girl group (Twice)?

Andy: Yeah, all girl groups. Yeah! (laughter)

(Andy, 19, 2nd generation, college students, interviewed in English)

Amelia: So I lived with one white friend, one friend from Thailand and then me and two Koreans. Whenever we’d watch dramas together or sometimes, and I’d use the website because they need subtitles and I’d use that to watch them together.

HL: So they all watched Korean drama together with you?

Amelia: But mostly because my excitement, like, “Oh, this story is like this,” and they watch it. Because they like Korean culture too. They enjoy Korean food, they enjoy Korean culture.

(Amelia, 22, 2nd generation, college student, interviewed in English)

Becoming Korean popular culture fans and being connected to this imagined community were new and significant parts of their daily lives. The digitalized media environment makes it much easier to interact with or build a community of those who are interested in a certain culture. Korean American youths can access and converse online with non-local cultural fans over the world. This does not necessarily mean they are intentionally focused on spreading news or information about the Korean Wave.

Andy: In Reddit, there are these things called sub-Reddit, there's different pages for everything. For K-pop, there's a page for different groups and stuff and what American people do, they just go on that

website and they talk about and they blog about these groups and stuff. I browse that from time to time. I consider that another form of media for Korean, but it's more Americanized. Everything's in English and stuff like that.

HL: What kind of story is going on over there about K-pop?

Andy: It's what the groups are doing and what performances they're in and if there's new music, they post new music. Relevant YouTube links and stuff like that is what they post on the website.

HL: You don't go to Korean websites?

Andy: I sometimes go to Naver. Yeah, search K-pop or something like that.

(Andy, 19, 2nd generation, college students, interviewed in English)

I have this one friend from high school because like she recently contacted me again cause like I posted on my Snapstory or something about like BangTan (BTS), and she is like "What! You like K-pop?" So she kind of like just talked to me about it. There is obviously like a big international fan base community with like any Korean entertainment. I feel like it's an issue in the social media. I see it a lot on Tumbler, a lot of people like specifically white people, appropriating like Asian, Korean culture specifically, cause it's such like a big thing right now. Like K-pop, K-dramas everywhere, even in America, and like Buzzfeed has like a Korean guy. Cause everyone likes Koreans.

(Hannah, 20, 2nd generation, college student, interviewed in English)

Besides these personal interactions, there have been efforts by Korean Americans to facilitate Korean culture and community activities in the local space. It was not easy to draw large numbers of people to any social meeting. Even within the Korean American community, it was hard to find common ground for these groups, as ethnic identity is just one dimension of individuals' socio-cultural identities. Their lifestyles, classes, and generations were all different. There were diverse characters of social gatherings. Besides church gatherings or school alumni meetings, some of them participated in rallies to make their voices heard on the current political/social issues in Korea such as Sewol Ferry disaster or the impeachment of the president. However, these activities were mainly performed by the first generation immigrants who strongly engaged with their homeland and communicated with other Korean immigrants or Koreans all over the world. Since

there was a continuous influx of migrants from Korea, the Korean American community hoped to assemble meetings to help each other and construct political power for the Korean ethnic group in Philadelphia.

The leaders of the Korean community in Philadelphia were involved in facilitating local Korean society, but the events dealt mainly with very specific Korean focused topics such as the meaning of the national flags, the meanings and differences in Korean emotional characteristics, and book talks by the Korean American politicians, scholars, and leaders of the community. However, the population who can give a speech and are interested in these topics was very limited within the Korean American community in Philadelphia. After attending several times, I realized the repetitive and limited participation in these activities. The contents of the talks mostly focused on Korean traditional culture which was not that popular among non-Korean audiences. Language was a barrier too. Seniors were not fluent in English, whereas most of the attendees who were interested in ethnic community activities were seniors. Nevertheless, these ethnic organizations and events played a role in the social cohesion of the immigrant community.

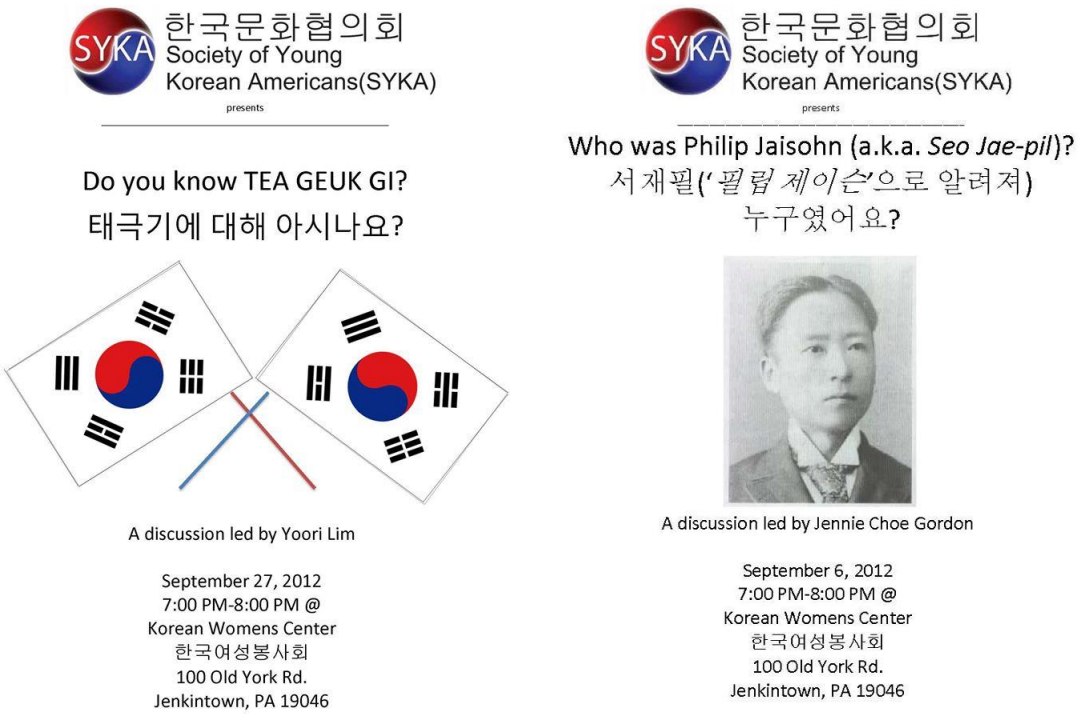

Figure 13. Cultural events e-flyers in 2012, hosted by a local Korean organization

Figure 14. *Story to Success* speaker series in North Philadelphia. March 11, 2017.

The rise of the Korean Wave brought a change to these kinds of meetings. On one hand, there were insiders' meetings like the *Story to Success* speaker series. The speakers were mainly Korean American politicians, business men, and scholars who talked about their work in Philadelphia. On the other hand, Joseph, one of my informants, tried to promote connectivities among people who were just interested in Korean culture or community. Through the social meetings of Joseph's organization, I met many non-Koreans for dinner at a new Korean style fried chicken store, Korean BBQ restaurant, and other local restaurants. While attending several meetings, I met diverse ethnicities as well as new Korean migrants, international students, and second generation Korean Americans. There were more active members who made the team perform dances of Korean idol groups. There were also new members at these meetings and sometimes people just came once out of curiosity. Newcomers who just moved to Philadelphia from Korea looked for a group to hang out with. The meetings did not always have clear purposes or topics, but people enjoyed talking about their Korean related experiences much more than they seemed to at the discussion meetings for Korean culture within the Korean community. As HyunJi described below, the rise of the Korean Wave is not comprised only of the popularity of Korean media. Different transnational fragments interplay with individuals' knowledge and exposure to Korean culture. That makes them engage more in the Korean related activities.

> Joseph: Many of them from different cultures and more interested in Korea. So I met people who are very, very interested in Korean culture and started their own K-pop dance group. Their ethnicity (was) like Cambodian. Korean American, Chinese American. Just my old church was from Southeast Asia. So I met many people from Sri Lanka to Indonesia, Asian communities. ··· Actually non-Korean, they are very interested in. Many non-Koreans are interested Korean foods, making Korean foods, building a

community people who like to make Korean foods, also K-pop dance groups. There are people who want to learn to Korean language and Korean films. They attend Korean schools and want to meet young Korean community. They come out to my organization. Because we have Korean Korean people do come out. So, yes, very interesting.

HyunJi: Actually someone in our organization, he was Jewish and he learn from his Hispanic neighbor about Korean dramas and then really motivated to learn Korean language, and then I know a lot of Korean Americans are interested in K-pop, and but then a lot of Korean Americans are go back to learn about Korean culture, because they don't know, they haven't been to Korea, they just want to learn. When we have an organization, it really brought different generations. We actually have people in their sixties, and who are in their late teens and then each of them has their own favorite things.

HL: So they are all interested in Korean culture?

HyunJi: Yes, but their personal experiences are different. That's not all by K-pop.

Joseph: We have people that they go to Korea as a military. One was a U.S. Air Force as a medical planner. So he went to there every six months. One was part of the U.S. army and he lived in Korea for two years. There are reasons. There are connections. One person he is Caucasian and lived in Korea for more than three years long time ago. So he lived there for three years.

(HyunJi & Joseph couple, 30s, 1st & 2nd generation, professionals, interviewed in English)

Figure 15. Korean BBQ party e-flyer. Images from SYKA website

Figure 16. 2017 K-Global Accelerator in Philadelphia. September 24, 2017.

Coping with this shift within the Korean American community, connectivities to their ancestral homeland became more convenient and significant for second generation Korean Americans. With these connectivities of globalization, my informants who were local had more opportunities to lead transnational corporative events. Joseph felt very proud about his role as a representative and a mediator between two nations. For example, many local, non-Korean keynote speakers were invited to the K-Global Accelerator event and made contact with Korean Americans and Koreans. It is hard to say that these events were successful or well organized all the time, mainly because my informants and other organizers worked for these events only temporarily. However, with

these opportunities, people engaged more with Korean culture and continued to imagine plans to add Korean culture to their local space of Philadelphia.

> HL: Do you have any chance to talk about Korean media contents with someone else?
>
> HyunJi: Like we promoted KCON (an annual Korean Wave convention) in New York. The promoter was actually host the event here in Philadelphia. The cultural events, all the time. We do have the connection with the music director in New York. And he brings a lot of K-pop artists and jazz artists from Korea. Again, he wanted to bring them to Philadelphia and we are connecting with them. There are lots of Korean traditional musicians like you met. One of them we had also the 가야금 (Gayageum, Korean zither) artists.. 피리 (Peeri, Korean flute) artists. They just caught in Philly and they kind of contact us because one person had our contact info and they just are retold us. Many times they go by the Korean American association, or Korean churches. But they want to have an opportunity to be exposed to more non-Koreans too. Or can be part of more main stream. They did integrate some Korean music. They invited Korean dancers. They invited fashion artists and the fashion designers. They are Korean movie artists. All of these things are opening by mass media or one aspects of it. Now that is very integrated it and now it is became more community not only Korean Korean community to come out.
>
> Joseph: Actually, I think the Korean government invested a lot of money to do good for the Korean people. Korean government spent a lot of money to make it happen. But the Korean government what I heard does not make money. They break even. Then why they do that? What I heard is because of Korean businesses surrounding this area. When they do business, they can talk about "oh! This is the K-pop concert and we are very active in the world." We promote emotional bridge in the economy. So it's very active, introductory in the world, trying to showcase.
>
> (HyunJi & Joseph couple, 30s, 1st & 2nd generation, professionals, interviewed in English)

All these activities and feelings among my informants might be one slice or a short phase of their social life. However, in the contexts of daily life among my young informants, the rise of the Korean Wave has made them feel proud of their ethnic dimension of identity. Several second generation Korean Americans in their late 30s or 40s shared frustrations felt in the past when they were regarded as a Chinese, the majority

Asian immigrant nation. Among younger Asian groups, cultural differences became clearer since they recognized and talked more about their own ethnic cultures. Cindy was cautious when she described how she felt while interacting with other Asian fans of the Korean Wave. Contrary to the previous experiences as a minority in Asia and the U.S., she described how a small number of Koreans within the Asian population fostered privileged feelings among Asians.

> HL: Do you have any experiences of being marginalized or discriminated against by others as a minority?
> Cindy: Right. But, not too much. I think that because we are minority especially within my church. It is mostly Chinese American. Because we are little bit like unique, I think that made us like "oh! I'm Korean." I think there is a hanryu (the Korean Wave)? That people really like Korean culture because of that.
> HL: Other Asians?
> Cindy: Yes. The way that they view Korean culture? They are kind of up to it. A lot of people, non-Koreans like Big Bang. They are talking about AIOMG (Korean hip hop groups). Like dramas. Because of the culture that a lot of people know, it makes me almost like little proud. Proud to be Koreans. For the bad thing, I think it can be little push a way others more, right? It is really hard to discuss but there is something like jajonshim (자존심, pride) like that. It is like, oh, I'm Korean. Like, "you know everything about Korean culture. I can tell you everything". Kind of that.
> HL: Oh, so you think you know Korean culture well.
> Cindy: More than Chinese or other Asians.
> (Cindy, 19, 2nd generation, college student, interviewed in English)

> I think there's a difference between being proud of your ethnicity and boasting it. For example, like I said before, if you think that you're better than someone because you are of certain race, it's completely different than being proud. I'm proud to be Korean, but I don't go out of my way to make sure that people feel like I'm better than them because I'm Korean. I don't do that at all. I'm just proud to be Korean, and I like sharing that culture, and I like informing people on what that is, but I don't go around saying, "Hey I'm better than you because I'm Korean." That kind of thing, I think.
> (Andy, 19, 2nd generation, college students, interviewed in English)

Amelia: When I was younger I was kind of me in Korea, so I'd just watch it, but then now there is a bigger online community for Korean-Americans. Do you know Soompi? Or there is a lot of like S-O-O-M-P-I. So there is a lot of different websites that cater to Korean-Americans, Americans that are interested in Korean culture. There is a lot of news updates or different, it's kind of they have different threads of what's popular and it's all in English, but all about Korean culture. And it's like online and that. It's big now, even bigger.

HL: So you are belonging? You are registered as a member or?

Amelia: Not anymore. Because I now just using Naver (a Korean portal website).

HL: It is easy to just find the information through Naver, not Soompi?

Amelia: Both. When I was in middle school, I used a lot of Soompi or there is the website called allkpop.com. These are very Korean news in English. It was just easy to read, but then now I'm not interested in that anymore. Soompi has a lot of, "oh, what dramas are coming up," what they thought about this drama and this episode, they are like, "Ah, this happened or something." But then now it's just easier to access to Naver. I didn't realize that there was how to navigate the website, but now I found out it's so easy to. You just type in the name then information is all there, and what shows they are in. So now that I'm aware of this website. I don't need to use the (English based) website anymore.

HL: In what age group can you put Soompi or All-K-pop users?

Amelia: They are all, they are wide range. There is a lot of foreigners from all over the world. It's really big. Do you know what Viki is? So that got even bigger. When I was younger I didn't know any websites to watch Korean dramas or shows, so I'd use that. It was like, there was like a few shows here and there, but even that got bigger like now that I'm seeing it, there is a lot more shows. They have English subtitles for non-Koreans, and there is a lot of comments and stuff with that too.

(Amelia, 22, 2nd generation, college student, interviewed in English)

Amelia's experiences of using Korean related media plainly illustrate how the second generation Korean Americans' engagement developed in their local, national, and even transnational contexts. Before online communities and websites on Korean popular culture came out, as she described, it was just her and the Korean society. Then she found there are lots of people who speak English and hope to share their experiences and

information on their favorite media content via numerous websites including Soompie, all-K-pop, and Viki. Now, she loves to explore the Korean websites since she realized they provide faster and richer content about her favorite media and celebrities. Since she speaks and writes both English and Korean, it was not difficult to explore the Korean online pages, and she felt more authenticity.

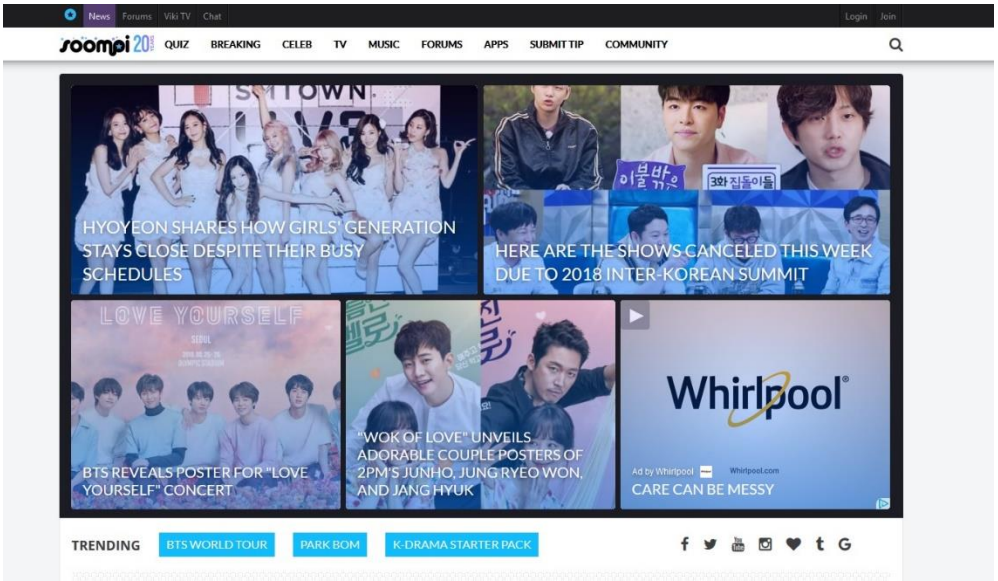

Figure 17. Soompi, an English based Korean entertainment news website. April 27, 2018.

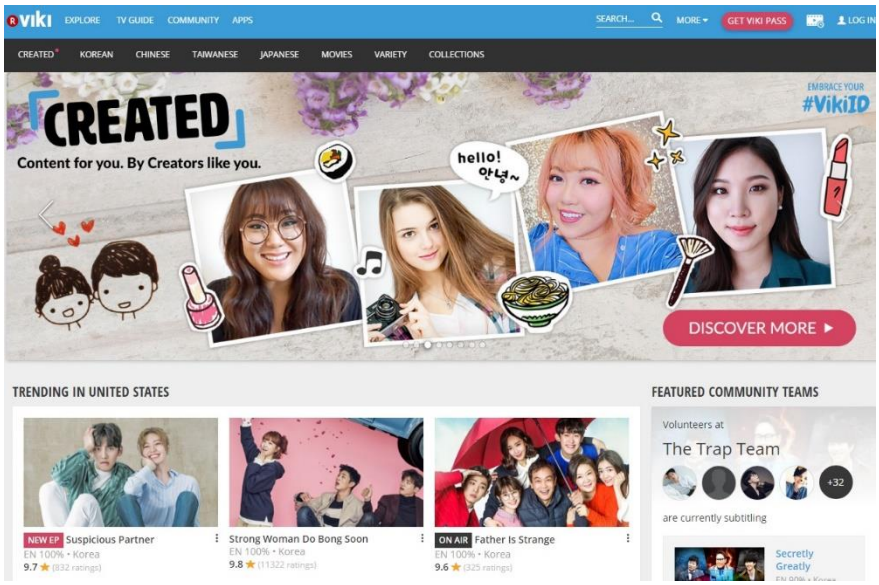

Figure 18. Viki, an English based Korean drama online streaming site. April 27, 2018.

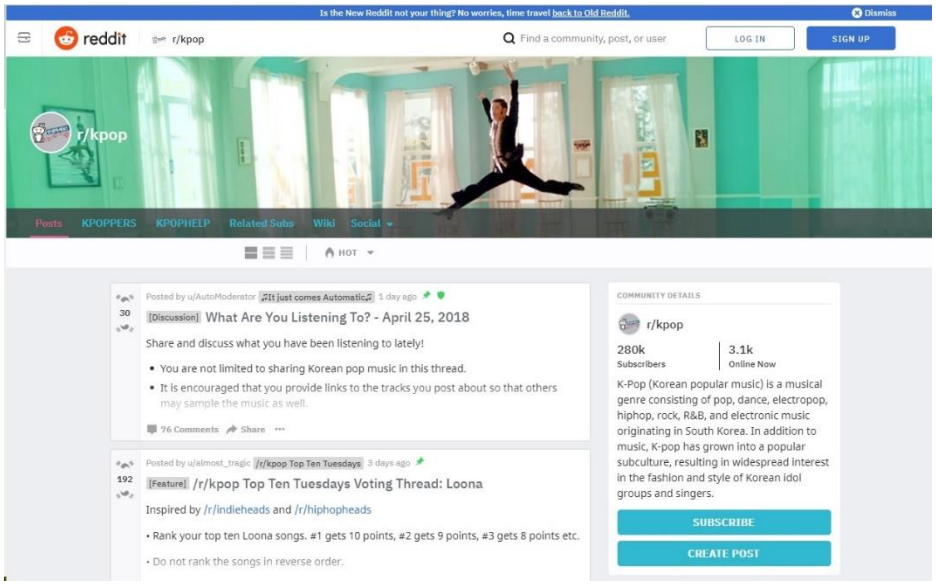

Figure 19. Reddit K-pop thread, a U.S. based online community. April 25, 2018.

Most of my second generation informants mainly consumed Korean media in their daily lives and engaged in conversations about Korean transnational media. They

freely explored transnational media content, got updates on entertainment news, and participated in conversations about it.

> Sometimes I send them old songs and then they say "What are you doing?" and then they send me the newer version, the remake version. But I like "No, guys. Old version is better." I think like when I talk about older thing, I talked with my mom about them and newer thing like new songs, new dramas, with my friends.
> (Cindy, 19, 2nd generation, college student, interviewed in English)

> Alex: We watch Korean drama together usually. We also listen to the same K-pop groups. *The Descendants of the Sun* (a Korean drama, 2016), or Korean drama sometimes. My favorite group for K-pop is Twice.
> HL: When was the most recent conversation about Korean culture or something, anything about Korea?
> Alex: Probably yesterday.
> Joon: Last night, I mean, they are always talking about.
> Alex: I think the recent one was Twice's comeback and stuff like that.
> (Alex & Joon, 19, 3rd &1.5st generation, college students, interviewed in English)

> HL: When you consume this media, do you feel like you're closer to Korea?
> Andy: Yeah, whenever I use the Reddit or whenever I look at YouTube videos of variety shows and stuff I feel like I'm a part of that culture. I do feel closer in that aspect. All this stuff is very recent to me.
> HL: What did you usually listen or watch before then?
> Andy: Before, it was all American pop. And on YouTube I would watch video game videos and sometimes cooking videos or something, but mostly it's now all Korean media.
> HL: You think you know Korean culture well now?
> Andy: Mm-hmm. As a kid, my parents would always show me *무한도전* (*Infinite Challenge*, a Korean variety show). Yeah, because it was funny. I wouldn't understand all of it, but I thought it was just kind cool and funny that they had these variety shows.
> (Andy, 19, 2nd generation, college students, interviewed in English)

> I came here early (18 years ago). Yet, I feel like I'm Korean still. I'm an U.S. citizen, but I always cheer for Korean team than the U.S. team in the Olympics.
> (SiWon, 30s, 1.5 generation, professional, interviewed in Korean)

> I don't have time. I wish I do. My husband is not that interested in the dramas, but if I find a good one then he is interested in that too. He watched, *천번의 입맞춤* (*A Thousand Kisses*, 2011). He was the one who found it. I think he liked it we watched it together.
> (Emma, 30s, 2nd generation, professional, interviewed in English)

Although a certain portion of their lives involved consuming Korean media contents, I also sensed its limitation as a means of building belonging to their ancestral homeland. Their belonging in Korea is rather limited in their imaginations. Since they mainly pursue entertainment news and their favorite media contents, their sense of engagement is mainly with Korean popular media. They were indifferent to Korean society itself. For most young second generation Korean Americans, consuming Korean media and talking about everyday life in Korea is mainly for immediate pleasure or social bonds.

> HL: Did you talk about the current social issues, like Sewol Ferry?
> Heena: No, I don't talk that kind of stuff.
> Siwon: I talked a lot about our daily lives here, not about politics or social issues. If there is no Internet, I would not engage that much. I can use the Internet everywhere, so I looked at the Korean stuff more, more interested in it. It depends on who I am talk more. Someone told me "GOD concert is coming soon" then I thought "what! GOD concert? Where, when?" then looked at my phone. If there is a drama I like, then I always wonder how the main actor does, then I looked at the article about him.
> HL: Do you look at the local news or newspaper?
> Siwon: No. I sometimes read the Kookmin Ilbo (Korean ethnic newspaper).
> HL: Read about Korea or local news?
> Siwon: News from here. I do not read about Korea.
> HL: Do you sometime talk about big issues in Korea like the Sewol ferry?
> Heena: We do not talk about these kinds of issues.
> Siwon: I just talk about our lives here, but rarely discuss about the political issues.
> (SiWon & Heena, 30s, 1.5 and 1st generation, professionals, interviewed in Korean)

> HL: How about Korean culture, Korean society? Are you interested in that too?

Cindy: Like news? I guess sometimes, one like scandals, when celebrity scandal happens.
HL: YooCheon Park, like.
Cindy: Wow, wowo…(laughter)! That one was like scary. I really liked him.
HL: You know the news from Korea.
Cindy: There are a lot of American websites about Korea. Everything is in English. So sometimes when it gets big, my friends share it in the Facebook. Then we like "what!!"
HL: You mainly consumed in these English based websites.
Cindy: Yeah. Like Soompi and Koreaboo. I think Koreaboo is mostly popular among non-Koreans. I am not checking regularly. But when it pops up in Facebook, maybe read the caption. "Oh! Suzie and Lee Minho are dating!" like that. I do like American singers like Adele or Maroon Five. But I don't listen to them as much as K-pop. I think cause I know as much as Korean persons. Does that make sense?
(Cindy, 19, 2nd generation, college student, interviewed in English)

In several cases, their direct experiences of Korean culture made them realize that Korean culture would not be for them. One of my informants who had moved to Korean to work remembered her experiences of exclusive attitudes from her Korean coworkers. Collective and hierarchal working culture in Korea was another cultural barrier to my second generation Korean American informants.

They always said "oh, she looks Korean, but she is an American" they always said like that. I first thought I was kind of offended. But OK. Then morning, someone implied me to "coffee" and then, "No thank you, remember, I'm American." So I thought they called me American in a negative way, but at the moment they expected something from me, they imposed the Korean culture on me. I felt like it was very double edge thought. That I did not like. They labeled me Korean when it was convenient for themselves. … There is something I do not like in Korea and also in the U.S. I'm mixed from both. It is not clear to me one over the other. Before I think it is not that comfortable, but when I get older it is OK with me.
(Helen, 30s, 2nd generation, professional, interviewed in English)

Emma: I have also a Korean American friend who went back to there for the job. Especially I know one of them have a very hard time with the cultural adjustment.
Jenna: Especially for the working culture.

Emma: They are almost like a family. After work, they always should get together to drink.
Jenna: It will make the black bow if you don't go.
Emma: I would like to be there. But working there, I wouldn't. Because inferred my friends, you are expanding all the time with your co-worker. To me, that sounds very... People have their own family, so work late in the night is...
Jenna: I think after I was watching Korean media. I think it would be really fun. After I went to the Korea, I think it was a beautiful city.
HL: So you sense it is close enough these days. It is connected each other.
Jenna: Yes. In terms of media, I think it is not that far away. You know I keep in touch with my friends in Korea, through cell phones, and keeping in touch with my parents in the U.S.
(Jenna and Emma, 30-40s, 2nd generation, professionals, interviewed in English)

The ethnic identity of these Korean Americans is but one facet of their overall identity that interrelates to all kinds of Korean culture. Regardless of her disappointment in the working culture of Korea, she visits Korea just to have the traditional humble foods they used to eat when she grew up.

Helen: I went to Korea a lot. I can't count. I think more than ten times? Usually I go by myself. Usually foods. I wish I went there for the family, but I do not have that many family over there.
HL: Is that worth the 14 hours of flying?
Helen: I mean why not? I know the language, I have a family there. It's like a fun. The culture is fun.
(Helen, 30s, 2nd generation, professional, interviewed in English)

Their Korean dimension of identity is fortified and ensured through their familiarity with and appreciation of their Korean side of them. However, their engagement in Korean culture does not mean they experience a sense of plain belonging in their ancestral homeland. The rise of the Korean Wave in America and their indulgence in Korean popular media made them feel more content where they are located now, since they feel more connected to imagined others who probably feel and live like them in different worlds.

When I was younger I did. I wanted to work in Korea. That was very big to me. In high school I was like, "Oh, I want to study abroad in Korea and maybe work there" because I'm a teacher so I thought maybe I can teach in Korea, but not so much anymore. I still want to visit. I think it's fun. The food is good. I have a family there to visit and just the culture to see, but I don't know if I want to work there or go to school there anymore. I'm just happy where I am, yeah.
I lived here, and then my parents are here and I go to school in the city. So I'm just like up here, I guess by choice. And Korean-Americans, I think I'm content in America, but then it just happened to be that the Korean culture is growing in Philadelphia. It's like, it's nice to see that, I can take my friends to eat at a local Korean buffet or BBQ or something. But yeah, I'm very content at where I am but it's like good, it's nice to see the Korean population and culture growing here too. ⋯ I think the same. I think I feel no different from any other Korean because I do the same thing they do. I watch the shows they watch, I watch the dramas they watch and stuff like that. So I don't feel different. I just feel because there are a lot of Korean-Americans now, I think I'm just one among them. ⋯ I think I just met very good groups of people. I mean right now I haven't met too many new people, but all the people that I've met so far are very open people that are willing to learn about new cultures and stuff like that. Because my parents' generation there were a group of friends who are mostly just church friend, but then now because I speak both English and Korean, my group of friends is bigger than theirs.

(Amelia, 22, 2nd generation, college student, interviewed in English)

Andy: I was born in Philadelphia, so I definitely feel at home here. I definitely feel very local and I feel that this is my home.
HL: Is there any community you are engaged in?
Andy: Well the KSA was actually one of my first ones. Besides my friends group that I made from my high school, I didn't really have any communities. I didn't go to church either, so I didn't have any communities or anything…. Yeah, I think that before, before when my parents first moved here, all they had was our family. All they talked to was our family. With Smartphones now, they can talk to all their friends in Korea. Definitely now for them they feel more comfortable living in America because they have so many connections in Korea. They download dramas and stuff and variety shows, so they always watch that. So they feel more connected and stuff.

(Andy, 19, 2nd generation, college students, interviewed in English)

HL: After this more Asian presence… you feel closer to Asia than before?
Hannah: Probably. Cause I expose myself more to Korean culture specifically in the social media sites I see it everywhere. So I feel more in touch with than I did before I exposed myself. I was close

> to the Asian American community still I want to the church community. But most people I hang out with talk about Korean entertainment or like we did it listen to the music, talk about dramas, any of these issues on Korean society. We just talked about things, happening in America now we just obviously still think about America but to get that outside source.
> (Hannah, 20, 2nd generation, college student, interviewed in English)

Instead of blurring their Korean side and assimilating to American society, they could be proud that it is not necessary to overwhelm the other sides of their identity. They felt that they could fit into American society just as they are. While they found their favorite communities and connections in the U.S., their in-between identity was not problematic at all for them.

> I think generally wherever I go I want to fit in, so if I'm with Koreans I want to fit in, so my Korean side comes out. If I'm with Americans, my American side comes out. I just want to like fit in. I don't want to stick out, like I don't know it is different, but also at the same time I do want to show that I'm culturally. I'm very subtle if that make sense not like, "Oh, I'm Korean," but like, "Oh yeah, I'm Korean," very quietly.
> (Amelia, 22, 2nd generation, college student, interviewed in English)

> Definitely when I joined Korean Student Association, I felt like I fit in right away. I wasn't an outsider by any means. Since we're living in America, obviously we have an American side, right? Even Korean-Korean people, if they move to America, they're Americanized. They're not, obviously, American, but they have an American side to them. The fact that we can match both sides, like the Korean side and the American side, the ability to do that, I think, makes me feel at home.
> (Andy, 19, 2nd generation, college students, interviewed in English)

> HL: Sometimes you feel like you are juggling between two cultures?
> Helen: No, you feel pressure to be a certain way with your friends and the other way with another group of friends. But you wanna fit in when you grow up.
> (Helen, 30s, 2nd generation, professional, interviewed in English)

As discussed regarding their shifted relations within the Korean American communities and with non-Korean Americans, these young people started thinking they fitted in both culture instead of regarding it as juggling. Thus, their belonging is mostly

stable within their local and national Korean American community while they collectively imagine their ancestral homeland.

> I tried to make a diverse group of friends, but somehow it always ends up my closer friends are Korean Americans. We just fit best in both worlds, yeah. Maybe it's based on the Internet they consume more media product from their home and then they are more emerging and then… I think the same. I think I feel not different from any other Korean, because I do the same thing they do. I watch the shows they watch, I watch the dramas they watch and stuff like that. So I don't feel different, I just feel because there is a lot of Korean Americans now, so I think I'm just among one of them.
> (Amelia, 22, 2nd generation, college student, interviewed in English)

> As I am getting older, I found myself gravitate to the same background, it is just Korean Americans. I do get along with Korean people, I do get along with American people, but my best friends are mostly Korean American people from church, high school.
> (Helen, 30s, 2nd generation, professional, interviewed in English)

> You know what? Cause I remember in the high school speaking Korean became important to me. And I remember, in college, it became a little bit more important to me because circle of your friends. After the college, I became friends with Koreans. They were into Korean music. So that's why I most got the Koreans. The things came from my brother. When he went to college, he was influenced a lot from Korean people. Right now, he is not into there, but he is not even teaching his kids Korean. But I think different reasons in your life and think like you are dating someone from Korea. That's another reason why you want to learn Koreans. Another thing you asked about me about Social media about how I use the Instagram. Well, I follow Korean stars' blogger. Sometimes I follow with Koreans and so from there. In terms of media contents, I also follow that learn more about.
> (Jenna, 40s, professional, second generation, interviewed in English)

It might not be a huge shift for my second generation informants since they continued to build close relationships within their Korean American community. However, when these young Korean Americans were collectively exposed to media content from Korea, it crafted a part of their Korean American identity through continuing engagement in their global imagination with their ancestral homeland. As

illustrated above, that created a stronger sense of belonging in their Korean American community in the U.S. and reflected on their ethnic identity positive way.

> I quick to see my daughter. It is not about having yellow hair, or blue eyes. I always tell her like "I like to watch people who look like us" because it represents who we are. I try to get Asian dolls. I was not that successful. There were not many. I think I am pretty conscious the images she sees, at the same time, I also realized it is so limited in terms of what is available. That you kind of have to consume. Like Elsa has blonde hair. Dora, every other dolls, so you know, she was first brought blond doll. That was bothered me a lot. What would that say about who she wants to be emulate. I don't like her think when she grows up and think her black hair is bad thing. I feel like to, one time, she said to me. "You don't like the doll which does not have same hair color like us I like." But it reminded me we should be proud about who we are. You know. I thought it was interesting that she told that. I automatically would say certain things and she picked up on it.
>
> (Emily, 30s, 2nd generation, professional, interviewed in English)

International Students/First Generation Professionals

Unexpected dynamics emerged. The K-Pop Night sponsored by the Korean Student Association was the most successful cultural event I attended in Philadelphia. When I arrived in the underground hall at the student center at a university, I was impressed by the unexpected scene. At the entrance, alphabet balloons K-S-A and K-P-O-P hung from the ceiling with small, twinkling lights and a rotating disco ball next to a table with snacks. It was quiet outside of the hall, but almost one hundred seats were taken by students of diverse ethnicities. In fact, the majority of the audience was ethnically non-Korean. I saw different skin colors and female students with hijabs. When the two male and female moderators appeared with the stage lights, the entire audience screamed with excitement. About ten teams performed the dances of popular K-pop songs. Between the songs, two moderators, one male and one female Korean American, told a fictional story which generated the theme of the songs performed throughout the

program. The well planned flow of the event added to the night's musical impact. Two screens stood on both sides of the stage. Andy, one of my informants, ran the audio visual control table showing music videos or Korean drama scenes during the performances or breaks. To my surprise, except for a few teams comprised of the members of the Korean Student Association, most of the teams were non-Koreans. Most were youths, but there were also a few middle aged participants.

Figure 20. K-pop Night e-flyer at Temple University.

Figure 21. Performance at K-Pop Night at Temple University.
February 24. 2017.

Audiences at the K-pop Night collectively engaged in transnational Korean culture. With the crowds, their shouts and their fervor, the hall turned into a place that I never experienced before. Students from diverse cultures simultaneously watched and consumed the same media content superseding their differences of culture and language. Many students who could not take seats just stood behind. Yet as the performance began, they danced the choreography of the K-pop idol groups where they were. When they played the music video of the popular Korean drama, *Guardian: The Lonely and Great God* (*도깨비*, 2016), the whole audience was most excited and shouted at the romantic scene. The host team prepared K-pop goods for the K-Pop quiz time. They also utilized a smartphone application to vote for the best participants to win the prize at the end of the night.

K-pop Night is a new form of locality that its participants experienced as a part of their college life in Philadelphia. The Korean media often portrays foreign fans of the

Korean Wave as being passionate and excited when K-pop singers arrive at the airport or at their global concerts. Mainly Korean international students and second generation Korean Americans created the particular event in their local space and with their understanding of transnational Korean culture. That brought a direct experience of the zeal of diverse ethnic youth to this local place.

Figure 22. K-pop quiz time at K-pop Night. February 24, 2017.

Building a New Bridge Between Young Koreans

There was a barrier between international students and second generation Korean Americans since they have different aims within a shared ethnicity-based group. For example, a second generation Korean American informant Cindy was interested in the Korean Student Association but explained her discontent with the activities of the

international Korean students at her school. She sensed that these international Korean students mainly got together to drink and followed a hierarchal attitude based on age.

> For some reasons, maybe because I am not a second generation and I am not that close to them, I do not know the second generation well. For example, there is a college festival in August and we sat outside and welcomed the newcomers. A Korean passed by with an African American. Then the African American talked to the Korean like "there are Korean students" and then the Korean said, "I'm not Korean, I'm black" and then they left (laughter). Many Korean Americans have that kind of hatred toward Korean organizations. ··· A few days ago, I talked with another second generation Korean American. He asked me if KSA is a group just for drinking and entertainment. I told him that we never just hang out for drink. Then he said one of his friends told him not to join the KSA since it is just for drinking and hang out. Frankly speaking, some KSAs did that, but we don't. I felt that there are some negative images on us. I sensed that the second generations do not have positive feelings.
> (JiHye, 20s, international student, interviewed in Korean)

Culturally, they could easily mingle with the Korean seniors since they are both familiar with the culture and issues of Korea. Korean seniors have interest in the Korean American community and tend to take care of these young newcomers.

> I was invited by seniors at the church. They always turn on the television. They often meet young people at the church and we do not talk about the drama that much. But it is like a background music. Once I lived with them for a month, and the seniors watched Korean television four hours every morning until the lunch time. All the daily dramas. There are not many things to do for them. The grandfather stood up, and the grandmother sat on the sofa.
> (HyunJung, 30s, 1st generation, professional, interviewed in Korean)

> When I came here, I stayed at a Korean elder's place, like a homestay. At that time, they talked a lot about the politics or any social issues in Korea. They have huge interests in Korean current affair(s). They really enjoyed the conversation. They wanted to let me know what happened in Korea.
> (SeongJin, 20s, international student, interviewed in Korean)

Within the international student group, the primary purpose of the organization was the welfare of Korean students. They wanted to help each other and enjoy school life within their ethnic student community. In addition to resolving their isolation as

newcomers to U.S. society, my international student informants often sensed a lack of the kind of collective culture in the U.S. which they would have expected in a college in Korea. The student association is operated by spontaneous activities; thus participation of students is critical to continuing the organization. The primary goal of the Korean Student Association was to help international students by establishing a community of international students. They shared many parts of their lives and that made it easy for them to become close and share their concerns and experiences.

> JiHye: First of all, our vision is written as introducing Korean culture. Thus, we are preparing a food fair and K-pop Night. These are the major events. Besides, we hope to have small fun activities with other international students. That's the goal of Korean Student Association (KSA). Building connections and helping each other.
>
> SeongJin: I hope they feel comfortable here. Since I am a Korean, I hope to give more benefits to Korean students. That's all. I am not sure how our organization will continue for the next few years. We have not had the officer for the next year. Korean students tend to be only interested in themselves, not the Korean community. KSA might be perish since there would be no one to serve in behind. We all have many things to accomplish. If they understand the importance about our culture, background, and community, then KSA will continue. More people will get together.
>
> (JiHye and SeongJin, 20s, international students, interviewed in Korean)

Since the popularity of Korean media products, my informants sensed that some of their second generation friends were more actively engaged more when they talked about Korean popular culture. Second generation Korean Americans are more interested in the ethnic culture and eager to learn about Korea. This shift, initiated by the second or 1.5 generations, invigorated relationships across the different immigrant generations both individually and as a group. More than families or friends in Korea, Mina could continue a pleasant conversation about her favorite Korean shows with her second/1.5 generation friends since they looked for someone with whom to share their interpretations of or

emotions about the shows. She could recommend to them which shows are good since she has a better understanding and sensibility about popular culture in Korea. On the other hand, the second generation/1.5 Korean Americans were more interested in local Korean cultural events and Korean cuisine. They asked the international students/professionals to join the events together.

> Mina: The people at the church I attended in 2002 to 2004 in Philadelphia, all the people were second generation of Korean Americans including the pastor. There were few international students. They did not tend to be fobs. They even did not talk to me in Korean. Kate was completely assimilated into the U.S. culture. Among them, missing Korean culture does not sound cool. 1.5 generation Korean Americans missed Korean culture a lot. But second generation rarely had interested in Korean culture. I was not interested in Korean culture at that time among them. I also did not watch Korean television program before I came to the U.S.
>
> HL: You went to the Coffee Boy (커피소년, a Korean ballad singer) concert at the international house? Is there anything else in Philly?
>
> Mina: I went to the concert because Jenna (a second generation Korean American friend) wanted. She also brought me a Korean pub, with her 1.5. generation friends. They brought me there. I realized that Koreans in Korea do not watch dramas that much, thus I do not share the Korean dramas via my Facebook.
>
> HL: You told me Jenna and Deborah (1.5. generation) liked it.
>
> Mina: Jenna is the one who are really interested in Korean dramas these days. If I talked to her a currently airing drama in Korea, she was so excited and enjoyed the conversation. “Right! I thought that was so fantastic!” So I often talked about the Korea drama to her.
>
> HL: When you meet her?
>
> Mina: Or I also sent a Kakao Talk message, like “did you watch this?” and recommended her. Then she became vigorous about the topic. She loves it. Then to her, I gave her information about the Korean dramas or shows. “Please try this show. This is fun.” Then our conversation went well. Deborah also loved the show *Korean Food War*. She texted me “did you watch it this week?” She loves the stories of competition and she also loves Korean foods. She also watches lots of Korean dramas. I think her feeling on Korea expressed in this way. She watches Korean dramas and goes to the Korean church. She does not attend the Korean American church, instead, she attends the Korean church (Korean service church). I think both are similar contexts. She has interested in Korean

culture a lot. Anyway, she looks for someone who watches the specific show.

(Mina, 40, 1st generation, professional, interviewed in Korean)

HL: The second generation and international students really mingled well in the KSA. Is that new?

JiHye: Right. I think these second generation Korean Americans really love Korea and Korean culture, these officers. They made me open my heart to them. In most cases, second generations are not like them. ⋯ I think we share the common goal to introduce the Korean culture.

HL: Second generation Korean Americans are always half of the KSA?

JiHye: I think international students were more in the past.

SeongJin: I heard that too. Before there were two groups, second generation and internationals separately.

(JiHye and SeongJin, 20s, international students, interviewed in Korean)

As illustrated by the vignette of the K-pop Night, the rise of the Korean Wave caused an unprecedented shift inspiring Korean international students to create new activities they could present to the local society. When I met the leaders of the Korean Student Association after the successful K-pop event, they said they did not expect such popularity and success when they prepared the event. Diverse ethnic groups and their cultures are often highlighted and appreciated along with the traditional and exotic aspects of the culture. Yet, for that reason, it is often seen as being for people who have direct experience with their ancestral homeland and excluding most other people. However, the Korean Student Association became a space for the young second generation Korean Americans to meet people who are up on Korean culture with an insiders' perspective. This shift drove the leaders of the Korean students to rethink what they pursue as a community and how they represent their goals.

I believe Korean Student Association (KSA) should be the link between the second generation and the international students. It could be same in the Korean church. Korea is the biggest categories. Within that, the second generation, 1.5 generation, and so on. Koreanness can embrace people whoever have interested in the Korean culture. KSA should serve the role.

> I do not think KSA should only work for the second generation of Korean Americans. If they are Koreans, ethnically Korean, or interested in Korean culture, KSA should be the one who can work with them.
> (SeongJin, 20s, international student, interviewed in Korean)

A Piece of Multicultural Society in the Diasporic Community

Different transnational flows in the local space served as an ice breaker between people who never understood or thought about the culture of a different world. My informants met many non-Koreans who were exposed to or liked Korean media or popular culture. Since they are fluent in English, it is easier for them to introduce and chat over the culture from their homeland.

> Like the Korean drama *Yellow Handkerchief* (*노란 손수건*, 2003) by the KBS (Korean public broadcasting system), they always show Korean shows from a regular channel. Now that we don't watch Korean regular main channel, so I don't know whatever it is. Still sometimes I met those people. My Iranian neighbor, she talked about Super Junior (a Korean male idol group since 2005). I asked, "how did you know about that?" Then she answered she was talking with a cousin lived in Germany. He was sending all these music files from Germany. And she is in America. Those random things come from more younger generation.
> (HyunJi, 30s, 1st generation, professional, interviewed in English)

> HL: Did you have any opportunity to talk about Korean culture with non-Korean people here?
> YounHee: Numerous times. My conversation partner, he likes Korean dramas so much. He watched them a lot. He loves it. Then you know the Japanese lady. She almost addicted to the Korean dramas. She showed her respects on Korean culture many times after she watched Korean dramas. She loved *the Jewel in the Palace*, because she thought it is very delicate. And then my patients, sometimes, they asked me if I know the General Soonshin Lee, once they watched the Korean drama about him.
> HL: How can they watch them?
> YounHee: There is a public channel for Korean dramas in the U.S. TV broadcasting system. There is a channel for Japanese contents too.
> (YounHee, 41, 1st generation, professional)

However, most of them sensed that their interactions with other cultures were about more than just influence of Korean media culture. As they moved to the U.S.

society, they could meet many neighbors, friends, and colleagues who visited or moved from another culture. They were interested in different cultures as much as the local culture. All these different cultural contacts and their imaginations of global worlds (e.g., about foods, language, working culture, dating and marriage) were facilitated through their media consumptions and discussed within the multicultural local community. This circumstance made cultural diversity valued more than ever before.

> HL: Do you have any opportunities to talk with non-Koreans about Korean culture?
> SeongJin: Many times. I have a Caucasian friend, Mike. He is so interested in Korean culture and asked me many things. He approached me. I was not in that position. I talked a lot and am still contacting him.
> HL: How come he has interest in Korea?
> SeongJin: He studied in Japan and speaks Japanese well. He has some genuine interests in Asia and also has talent in learning language.
> JiHey: Chinese students always have interested in Korea. Most of them I have met.
> SeongJin: Right, we have some advantage.
> HL: For the K-pop groups?
> JiHye: They always like Koreans, that's why I… (laughter). They like Koreans, so am I. We could get closer.
> SeongJin: They seem like to watch many Korean programs. Like *Running Man*.
> JiHye: Right. They like Korean foods.
> SoengJin: They watch famous shows like *The Knowing Brother*. Well. For that, I think Koreans here are gaining benefits, honestly.
> HL: Do you actually do something with them?
> SoengJin: I don't.
> HL: Just conversations?
> SoengJin: I would like to talk, but I do not know much about Korean TV programs (laughter). Just the *Descendent of the Sun*? For that drama, they asked if I went to the military service. Every Korean man has that ideal body once they came back from the military service. So I said "I didn't watch the show, but that is not true." That's the answer I could give.
> HL: So they approached you first.
> SeongJin: Yes.
> JiHey: I had an opportunity to watch a Korean film together when I lived in suburb area. All my housemates were Chinese. Once we had a dinner together and decided to watch a Korean film. But we failed

to connect the TV, so just watched *Running Man* (a Korean variety show).

(JiHye and SeongJin, 20s, international students, interviewed in Korean)

If I learn little bit and say hello in Spanish, whatever, if we have an icebreaker, that will work. For some people, TV shows, language, foods, something like that. These days, like K-pop, Tasting Table (New York based media company introducing food and drink trends) is huge popular and often appears on Facebook. The most hip spice these days is Korean hot pepper paste (Gochoojang, 고추장). And it showed how to make a fried Kimchi. Ethnic spices became popular here, India, Japan, and now Korea. They just call it Gochoojang, hot spices. I think it is not just for the K-pop, or the Korean Wave. My country developed economically and invested money to promote that. Koreans also came here and spend money. Schools also have interested in Koreans, since many Koreans, Chinese, Japanese, are all Koreans. Chinese first, India second, and then Korea in American school. That means Koreans spend lots of money here. Comparing the size of the population, Koreans spend lots of money here. Anyone who stayed in a dorm knew Korean schoolmates. They became friends and cook for each other. Similarly, everyone should have human contact. They do not just listen K-pop through the Internet.

(HyunJi, 30s, 1st generation, professional, interviewed in English)

Their empowered cultural identity motivated my informants to more actively engage in promoting the culture from their homeland. Among the Asian groups, my informants gave more ideas and led cooperation with other ethnic groups. With their transnational identity or ethnic identity, the members of local Korean organizations or social meeting were excited about the boost to their ethnic culture among other minority cultures. Through this process, they often cooperated with other Asian ethnic groups and had conversations about their ideas and feelings about the culture to which they belonged. They started to reflect on the multicultural environment at the current stage of the globalized world and share their subculture which posed challenges to the hegemonic culture in their local place.

JiHye: There are big events such as a food fair to introduce Korean foods. We will cooperate with other organizations. There is a Chinese Student Association, Chinese, Malaysian, and Japanese students.

HL: Is there any reason to collaborate with Asians?

JiHye: I would like to work with them and that will make more attentions. These Asians will also experience Korean culture and we can experience other cultures too. That will make our event bigger and others will have interests more than just Korean food fair. I hope to host alone someday. Chinese Student Association is a very big organization. If we work together, it will be much safer than alone. We are all friends anyway.
HL: You became a friend with Chinese students?
SeongJin: I just know who they are.
JiHye: I am very close to them.
HL: Could you explain how you became close to them?
JiHye: I just look like them (laughter). Because I got along with Chinese since high school. In my high school, Chinese and Koreans hang out well. We made an effort to get along well. Chinese were open their heart to us. For that experience, I became get along with any Chinese at college, easily became a friend.
SeongJin: But I expected within Asia, Korean section will stand out. Thanks to the K-pop and the Korean Wave, people have more interested in it and will come to our section. I think that is great. I am not disrespecting Malaysia, but if we were Malaysians, we could not expect that much.
HL: What would be the ultimate goal for this event?
SeongJin: I just let them know about Korean culture. No more profound meaning in it.
HL: How about the excitement among the members of KSA?
SeongJin: Well, I would like to put emphasis on introducing Korean culture.
HL: Did the leaders of the Asian Student Association meet together for this project?
SeongJin: Yes, we did.
HL: The idea of the food fair came from that meeting?
SeongJin: No, it was our idea.
(JiHye and SeongJin, 20s, international students, interviewed in Korean)

I feel like these people who are interested in Korean culture, many times they are coming from kinds of countries where they concern old values about very conservative culture, where they feel kind of uncomfortable with almost R-rated TV shows of America. They feel “oh, that’s too sexual, that’s too violent.” When they start to watch Korean show, the main characters even do not kiss that much. They feel like, “wow, that’s love.” Many kinds of these bring people who like truly connected. They feel they are minority ‘cause they are immigrants. Young generation who are kinds of not feeling fit in this main stream culture.
I’m not saying this is culture for losers, but I feel “not fits.” When I met people in the social meeting of Korean culture, they want to escape this culture and that’s the reason they got together. Think about even Joseph

(second generation of Korean American, HyunJi's husband). He wants to live in Korea, but he should live here. Korean culture becomes a kind of outlet in the sense of "not-fitting" here.

(HyunJi, 30s, 1st generation, professional, interviewed in English)

Negotiating Transnational Belonging in Imagined Korea

My informants in this category regarded themselves as Korean. Some of them had lived in the U.S. about 7-8 years for school or work. Others achieved citizenship or a working visa for their extended stay in the U.S. However, by defining themselves as Korean, they expressed their strong belonging in Korea. Although JiHye moved to American when she was around 15-years-old, her relations with other family members made her always belong in Korea.

JiHye: Koreans are Koreans.
HL: You are different from the second generations?
JiHye: I heard that they experience a crisis at some point. They were brought up in American culture, but their parents are Koreans. But we are different. We grew up in Korea and our parents are in Korea. All about Korea. We are inherently Koreans. I never thought I am American. Even we live longer here.

(JiHye, 20s, international student, interviewed in Korean)

Being exposed to more Korean media, they constantly situated themselves in their imagined space. Sometimes it was due to their attachment based on their past experiences and memories. Korean media reinforced their emotional bonds with their ancestral homeland when they watched the represented nationality in a mediated scene. Sometimes, my informants fathomed what they felt was a deficiency or difference in their local place. Consuming Korean media eventually made them construct more belonging in their homeland.

Heena: I heard that people only like luxurious stuff, seniors live alone, the class gap became serious. I think I cannot survive there. It would be very complicate to live there. Air pollution is critical. Everyone

wears masks. I do not want to live like that. Air is clear, lots of resources in the U.S. If we work hard here, we can live better.

HL: But why do you keep checking the Korean news?

Heena: I'm curious. That's my country. Still wonder, still.

HL: Even if you do not go back there forever?

Heena: Yes, I still wonder how the Korean culture is. I would like to listen and know what the current affair is. I am not just American. ⋯ Particularly when I watch the sports channel, like Olympic, when Korean people did well. Then I feel my Korean pride and miss Korea too. That is great. I stay with family here and prepare foods. Eating foods together and if they won the golden medal. Then wow.. I feel really happy.

(Heena, 30s, 1st generation, professional, interviewed in Korean)

> The unfamiliarity (of Korea) became less. I thought I was almost blocked from Korea and fear of being there. I felt I might not survive there. People look very different to me. They look shrewd or mean. They might take advantage from me. Those kinds of ambiguous fears. Now, I realized the favorite and missed part of Korean culture. "Right, I really appreciate this part of Korea." I think the Korean dramas reminded me these feelings. "That peculiar culture in Korea, that friendship. I miss that." Something this society does not have. That often appears in media. I am not sure now, but I found many favorable dimensions of Korea too in the Korean media.
>
> (Mina, 40, 1st generation, professional, interviewed in Korean)

On the other hand, it is hard for any of my informants to construct a strong sense of belonging with Korea while living in the United States. To some extent, they sensed the struggle to "survive" in the U.S. as a migrant. Some of them experienced difficulties becoming a naturalized U.S. citizen or renewing their working visas. International students constantly explored the next steps, whether or not they should move back to their homeland. That would be another new beginning for those like Mina who was afraid of going back to Korea.

> To survive in America, I should have gone to like schools continuously. I should have had the degrees and I have a lot of licenses since I got married to him (second generation Korean American). And then even for the language. You know Korean people speak English. It really does not give a lot of benefits. I felt like people if you can afford, you need to learn more languages. As a cultural closeness, I chose Japanese and Chinese because that will open up my opportunity. That will plus benefits. It will kinds of

> open up the door try to understand the people for coming from those cultures. Rather than being stuck as an immigrant only speak English barely. I felt like if I know more, that will open up more.
> (HyunJi, 30s, 1st generation, professional, interviewed in English)

Further, it was also a matter of their reception and how they were portrayed in the mainstream media in the U.S. Besides their struggle in their real circumstances, they also imagined how other members of the local community perceived them. Digitalized media, like social network sites, helped them feel included in the U.S. Yet, they still felt excluded from or could not find identifiable images in the mainstream U.S. media. That circumstance hindered them in cultivating belonging in U.S. society and made them always feel a firm belonging in their homeland.

> I am more impressed how Asians are represented by the U.S. media. In the past, a Korean is always an owner of a laundry in an old Hollywood film. For now, for example, I remember a Christina Yang as a medical doctor in *Grey's Anatomy*. In reality, I met many Korean Americans who are highly educated, like medical doctors. People start thinking Asians are smart and hardworking. Also I saw a post on Facebook that discusses a Chinese mayor or an advertisement with an image of happy interracial couple, a Caucasian man and an Asian woman with their kids. These commercials in magazine and television, especially these images of Asian women. I think they made the perspectives of the whole society on the Asian Americans.
> (Mina, 40, 1st generation, professional, interviewed in Korean)

Senior First Generation Korean Americans

In general, senior Korean Americans were doubtful of the influence of the Korean Wave in American society. This lukewarm reception was partly due to their imagination of American society and limited social activities within their ethnic community. They rarely interacted with the non-Korean population besides business customers. There was not much need for them to interact with non-Koreans. Nonetheless, the language barrier and cultural differences existed. Accordingly, their engagements in Korean churches and

Korean business communities were the most significant part of their social lives. These groups were their main sources of social or cultural events, such as classical music concerts, concerts by Korean singers for religious fundraising events, local sports leagues, or registration for the Korean elections. Word of such events is spread through flyers posted at the gates of Korean restaurants, on the walls of ethnic stores, or circulated in their social community. Nevertheless, whether they were aware or desirous of it or not, the contexts of their lives were influenced by the upsurge of Korean popular culture. This section explores whether — and if so — how the advance of Korean popular culture in this local space impacted their engagement and belonging within the varied contexts of these senior Korean Americans' daily lives.

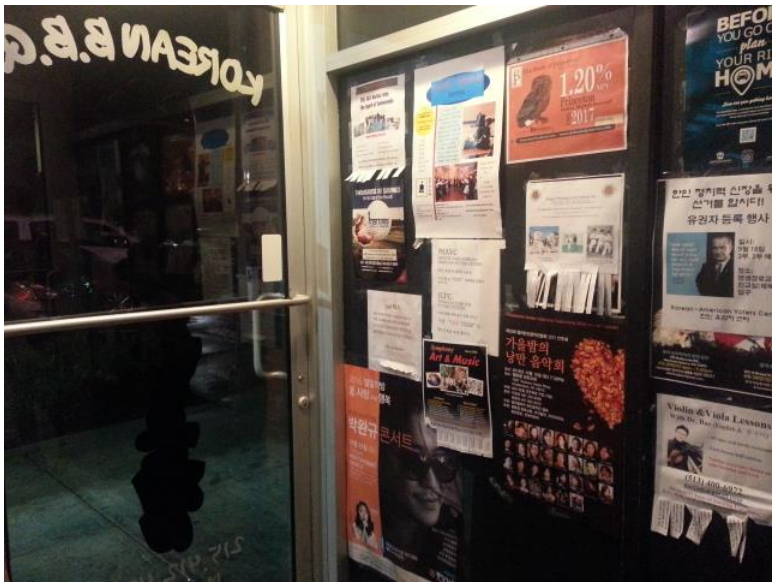

Figure 23. Korean ethnic event flyers at a Korean restaurant in North Philadelphia. September 29, 2016.

Engagement within the Korean American Community

At Joseph's birthday party, I observed how the Korean Wave mediated the different generations of Korean Americans. After the dinner, seniors continued to drink soju, an alcoholic beverage from Korea, and their voices sometimes became louder with laughter. While they enjoyed the evening, Joseph asked other younger guests to sing Korean songs with a karaoke machine in the living room. The living room and the dining room were arranged in an open-floor plan with a dividing wall. The seniors sank into their own conversations, while we sat in the living room choosing songs. While Joseph sang songs in his English accented Korean, I and the other international student could not easily take part in the party night. We were not fans of Psy and hesitated to interrupt the seniors' conversation right in the next room. Later, when we were about to leave, the seniors started singing their favorite, rather old Korean songs. The guests at the party did not mingle well. Yet, on that evening, Joseph's engagement in Korean culture generated the milieu of the Korean culture for all of us across the different generations. While listening to his song, others had a moment to reflect on the Korean Wave and their imagined homeland together in North Philly.

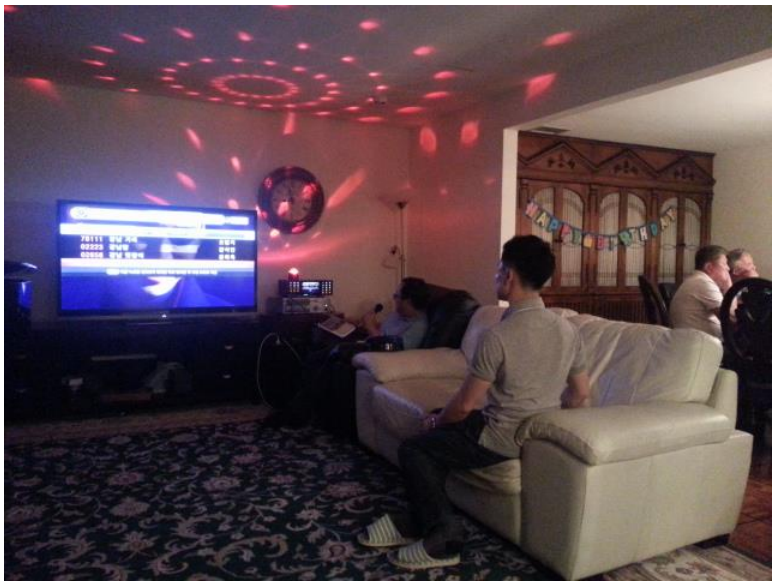

Figure 24. Joseph's birthday party with Korean karaoke.
Cheltenham, Pennsylvania. September 2016.

Although the senior informants expressed doubts about the influence of the Korean Wave within their local space, their daily lives and understanding of the current globalized world were continuously tuned by the advance of the digitalized communication and their reflections on transnational flows from Korea. As much as the other generations, they have observed increasing numbers of local Korean events, sometimes in an upscale format. Whereas second generation Korean Americans remembered their parents intentionally turning on Korean television to introduce them to Korean culture and history, senior Korean Americans directly attended cultural events with their family members. They also talked more about Korean television programs since their watching schedule was immediately synced between their Korean American community and Korea.

HL: Do you go to the local theater here?
SuJin: Sure, I go to the theater with my children.
HL: Do you go to the theater for the Korean movies?

SuJin: I do not watch Korean movies at a theater. It is not released well in here. Oh! I watched one recently! *Assassination* (*암살*, 2015)! I like JungWo Ha, so went to watch it. The actors I liked.

HL: How did you come to like him?

SuJin: Since I'm a Korean. I watched several films he appeared and found how he is attractive. Whenever his film comes, I went to the theater.

HL: Who goes with you?

SuJin: Mostly my family or friends from church. We all love films. We go to the theater, sometimes go to Lancaster to watch the religious shows. Sometimes Broadway shows. Hope to go more often, but the ticket is too expensive. I think I really enjoy movies. …… Yiruma (a Korean pianist and composer) also had a concert at the Carnegie Hall in New York, but I could not get the ticket. It was completely sold out.

(When people watched Korean programs via VHS tapes) we did not talk about what we were watching. But now, we talk more.

HL: Is that because you know more about Korea than before, like current affairs?

SuJin: No, we have our own favorite subject. Travel, foods, something like that. If we meet a group who have similar interests, we just have casual talk like "I watch a show last night. Did you enjoy it?" like that. Usually we do not go deeper. It is just one hour fun in our daily lives.

(SuJin, 50s, 1st generation, senior, interviewed in Korean)

Community wise, the expanded recognition of Korea encouraged them and empowered their Korean identity. MyungSoo regarded the rise of the Korean Wave as beneficial and an opportunity for the Korean immigrant community to be more firmly settled in America. He had considered a homecoming migration but as his migration of Korea has been reshaped, he actively engaged in the local Korean American community.

The Korean Wave became big all over the world. That re-convinced me to settle in the U.S. I often think that there is nothing we can do in Korea for now. We should make our own place here. The next generations, 1.5 or second generation, rarely wants to go back to Korea. We need to build something here. I am thinking what the role is the first generation to build the Korean American community here.

(MyungSoo, 70s, 1st generation, senior, interviewed in Korean)

Myungsoo reflected on the role of the seniors as mediators of Korean cultural heritage to the younger generations. This role of senior informants can be emphasized based on their connectivities to their ancestral homeland. Bilingual ability has become reinstated as an element of survival in the globalized American society. More Korean corporations have opened branches in America and recruit those who can speak Korean as well as English. Many local companies also value bilingual ability since there are more Korean customers who demand someone who can translate their language.

> YoonKyung: But these days, if a Korean American second generation adult comes to my store, then I tell them "I can only speak Korean, so you should learn Korean and visit again. And if you want to get a job here, you should speak three languages."
> HL: Why do you ask them to do something so difficult (laughter)?
> YoonKyung: They should. They should. I just tell them. But they will not do it. They do not realize the demand. Similar to the situation when we were young, our parents nagged us to study hard. They do not listen what I tell them. I really love Korea. It is a small country, but it has been developed this far.
> (YoonKyung, 60, 1st generation, senior, interviewed in Korean)

> It will be better if Korean Americans know both Korean and English. For now, there are more opportunities if you know more language. In the past, parents thought if they learn Korean first, they would learn English slowly. I also have an experience to bring up a child here. They were able to pick up English when they attended the school. On the contrary, we should help the second generation not to forget their Korean. Thus, Korean dramas are helpful, I believe. I was strongly against the idea (of) "only English" for the second generation. My kid should speak in Korean at home and English at school. That was a strict rule in my home. ⋯ So, my son has more opportunities now. In his company, it is a financial company, if they need something related to Korea, they look for him. He can speak Korean well. He is better than (a) Korean who cannot speak English fluently like him. I believe I did well for keeping the rule.
> (SuJin, 50s, 1st generation, senior, interviewed in Korean)

MyungSoo stressed that speaking Korean has practical value now, but also regarded it as an emotional tool by which to be connected to and supported by one's ethnic community. This has increased during the last several decades.

> Korean Americans did not teach Korean to the second generation in early period of immigration. We hope the children adjust into the American culture faster. If they learn speaking Korean first, their English will not be perfect. Just teach them English first. Then they cannot communicate with their parents. It became a conversation between a student in Seoul National University and a farmer in a country side. Their sense and understanding of language were not improved. Then, if their language and facial expression do not match each other, we cannot communicate with them. Then we sense the distance to each other and feel lonely. Even (if) the second generation reaches the mainstream society, do you think they are able to successfully assimilate into the culture there? It does not work out. It is very competitive. We watched that women couldn't break the ceiling. Immigrants will be less successful than women. It is inevitable they will face the wall. I think our children should go to the Himalayas from the base camp that the Korean American community built. If we do not make our power and organization and ask them to climb to the mountain, they are not able to go up to the mountain. They will give up. That's it. Their idea should be strengthened through their notion about the Korean American community, understanding about the Korean language, and strong relationship with their parents.
>
> (MyungSoo, 70s, 1st generation, senior, interviewed in Korean)

As illustrated above, speaking Korean has both practical and emotional value for young Korean Americans today. However, as depicted in the scene at Joseph's party, there is a certain gap between generations as much as in other cultures. On one hand, my senior informants contemplated more than before the historical value and assets of Korea as a critical part of their ethnicity. Yet, they rather hoped the second generation would find their own way to survive in American society and assimilate to American style more than senior Korean Americans. This is inevitable and not negative at all for the young Korean Americans who live here.

> HL: How about your son? Does he have a Korean identity?
> YoonKyung: I think 70% is Korean.
> HL: Because he came here when he was a teenager?
> YoonKyung: Yes, he works as a manager at a car wash in New York. My son-in-law is an owner of the business. So their customers are the Americans, but their personal lives are Korean style. His wife is a Korean nurse. So they all speak in Korean and live like a Korean.
> HL: They all watch Korean media too?

> YoonKyung: Of course. But their children would assimilate more into the U.S. culture. My customers are same. The first generations are mostly live like Koreans, maybe 90%. 1.5 generation would be half and half? Second generation would be 80% Americanized and rarely speak Korean. The next generation will not speak Korean at all.
>
> (YoonKyung, 60, 1st generation, senior, interviewed in Korean)

At the same time, they also sensed that the lives of Korean Americans often converge on the Korean American community where they can help each other without the barriers of being a minority. As YoonKyung described, the cultural identity of the second generation has become more assimilated into American society, but they often work at sites within the ethnic human network. This experience made JeongWon less worried about the construction of the second generations' cultural identity since he thought the increased interchanges of transnational culture will eventually make them stay more within the ethnic space. This, however, might be distinctive of his generation or people in or from Korea.

> They will learn Korean anyway. My first son speaks Korean anyway and younger one does not feel the need since all of us can communicate in English with him well. But now they are exposed more Korean contents than before although they do not feel the needs for now. But they will learn once they go to the college. ⋯ If they stay within the Korean community, they will learn it anyway. I met many second generation youths who only cherish their ethnic culture, not language. I am also doubting if they really need to learn Korean. I do not want to give a pressure to them for now.
>
> (JeongWon, 50, 1.5 generation, senior, interviewed in Korean)

My Ethnicity Became an Icebreaker

Although most of the senior informants were doubtful about the impact of the rise of the Korean Wave, it influenced both their imaginations and interactions with non-Koreans. My senior informants were not typically passionate about K-pop. Still, they

were aware of the cultural power and global connectivities in their local place. SuJin, who rarely interacted with non-Koreans, said that it was helpful to mention the K-pop stars when she approached a stranger for missionary purposes. She admitted using K-pop as an ice breaker to start the conversation. Even though only a small percentage of people told her that they knew about Korean culture, it gave her confidence to actively approach them. Introducing herself with her ethnic culture helped non-Koreans to get more clues about her than they would have before the Korean Wave. This eased the tension of starting a conversation with a stranger, especially one of a different cultural background.

> SuJin: (Since the Korean Wave,) if we talk about Korea, people feel familiar. Wherever we visit, if we started to talk about the Korean Wave, then we can find a contact points.
> HL: Did you actually do that?
> SuJin: Yes, I did. When I approach people to spread a faith in Upper Darby area, I sometimes asked "you know the Korean pop songs, right?" on the street.
> HL: Do you invite them to your church?
> SuJin: No, I just want to deliver the story of Jesus. I tried to find a contact point anyway. When I asked if they knew Korean, I also questioned if they listen to a popular music. ⋯ I sensed that the Korean Wave helps in these kinds of activities. I think the Korean Wave is very positive things for us. It helps for our missionary (activities). Wherever we go, most of the local people did not know Korea before. Now everyone knows Korea. I think the Korean Wave is the biggest contributor of this change. Media and songs, especially. But that's it. It is just a tool for the missionary (activities). It could be a contact point. It is not easy to approach to someone you never met before. ⋯ Just let them know I am Korean. That's is easy. If I talk about Jesus, then people feel uncomfortable about it. Thus, I introduce myself first as a Korean.
> (SuJin, 50s, 1st generation, senior, interviewed in Korean)

As illustrated by her experiences, transnational culture gave rich clues about Korean ethnicity and helped Korean Americans to deploy their ethnic identity in American society. That is not only credited to the rise of the Korean Wave in terms of K-pop or *Gangnam Style*. Non-Koreans around my senior informants are being collectively

exposed to transnational images and starting to imagine other cultures. They are continuously supplied with transnational images in their daily lives through YouTube, Facebook, and other social networks. This mediated environment inevitably creates contexts in which to discuss different ethnicities. The rise of the Korean Wave amplified these circumstances as a prominent flow. The rise of transnational corporations and transnational migration also generates constant transnational contact within local communities.

> JeongWon: I talked more about Korea to my non-Korean colleagues. In many cases, they do not know about Korea. Probably know about North Korea, and then "Koreans are rich. Chinese are rich." Those are the most cases I have experienced. Thus, I introduced the Korean corporations and history. These made them change their perspectives. I believe we should let them know more. Then they browsed more information on the Internet. They were impressed by the history of Korea and how Koreans has developed fast.
>
> HL: Do you talk about Korean popular culture too?
>
> JeongWon: It is hard to build relations through the K-pop or other forms of popular culture with my friends. Probably my sons and their friends, Caucasians and African Americans also, like a certain genre of K-pop. In my age group, we haven't experienced that kind of culture. We just listened (to) the news that K-pop is rising in a certain nation through the media. We do not have a chance to be exposed (to) these kinds of music in our daily lives and do not like these kinds of music anymore. Thus, I would better introduce to my colleagues by telling stories about Korea. Then they felt interested in that and looked for more information.
>
> HL: Do they have more opportunities to be exposed to Korean culture, like watching Netflix?
>
> JeongWon: If they find something interesting, they showed it to me. Today, Joseph? Joseph Butso? He, an African American, appeared in a Korean show and sang a Korean song. His video was spread via the Facebook. Then my African American colleagues showed to Korean Americans. It became popular in the American Facebook users. It was a Korean song. I do not know the song. Anyway, I knew the person before. One of my friend sent the video that he sang a contemporary Christianity music in Itaewon (a cosmopolitan district in Seoul). He became famous. So I knew him. He won the first prize at a show in Korea. It became big and my church people shared the video via their Facebook. My (non-

> Korean) colleagues brought the video to me. Others also watched it and sent to me. An African American in Korea spoke Korean well and performed great. Well, media help us to empathize (with) each other, mediated among us.
>
> (JeongWon, 50, 1.5 generation, senior, interviewed in Korean)

The conditions of globalization have made different people work together in various local spaces. Since JeongWon works at a Korean branch company in Philadelphia, he tries to mediate both cultures as a 1.5 generation. Under these working conditions, he sensed that his ethnic culture and history intrigued his colleagues to be enlightened about a totally different culture. More than a mere history of the past, watching the journey and achievement of an American in a contemporary Korean society helped them to imagine globalized worlds in mediated contexts. Multi-directional flows of images brought different global imaginations together among ethnically different workers in the local context. Digitalized global media became more than an icebreaker.

Rethinking Korean American Lives

Another notable shift in their daily lives was that senior Korean Americans experienced transnational connectivities every day using smartphones. They could easily access contacts in their homeland in spite of the time differences. As YoonKyung explained below, seniors who came to the U.S. many years ago may not contact their relatives and acquaintances in Korea every day. However, their awareness of the convenient accessibility made them frequently reflect on people and their lives in Korea ventilating their emotional isolation as minority immigrants.

> Andy: I think, before, when my parents first moved here, all they had was our family. All they talked to was our family. With smartphones now they can talk to all their friends in Korea. Definitely now for them they feel more comfortable living in America because they have so many connections in Korea. They download dramas and

stuff and variety shows, so they always watch that, so they feel more connected.

HL: How about within the Korean-American community?

Andy: Besides their little community, they don't really talk to many other friends. If they were to interact, it's that community (Korean alumni meeting) I mentioned and then a couple of different friends that they've made here and there. But other than that, it's mostly American people that they talk to (for their business).

(Andy, 19, 2nd generation, college students, interviewed in English)

YounKyung: I think Kakao Talk (a messenger based on a smartphone) is terrific. Huge influence! Internet is so advanced, and it is easy to access convenient information. It is true that the world is in my hand! Every information is from the cell phone. Sometimes even scary. Good things and bad things too. My children are young and they bought the smartphone when the Kakao Talk came out first.

HL: Do you contact people in Korea every day?

YounKyung: No. Not that much. I have six hundred customers in my phone, just customers of my business. So I cannot contact all them. If any message comes, I just reply. Not daily basis. I sometimes talked with relatives in Korea asking about their health and well-being. I am too tired to do that. But, whenever I want, I can contact with people everywhere. That’s convenient and it is free. I really, really like Kakao Talk.

(YoonKyung, 60, 1st generation, senior, interviewed in Korean)

In addition to their interpersonal and transnational communication, they also consume transnational Korean media on a daily basis. These mediated communications kept them contemplating and comparing the culture here and in Korea. That inevitably brought up negotiations in navigating their future lives as immigrants. For example, SuJin valued the traditional family meal practice from Korea and continued it as an important family principle. Since these seniors mainly interacted with the Korean American community and were exposed to Korean media, discourse on the crisis of family values in Korea became a focal topic that she really wanted to treasure within her family. YoonKyung passionately discussed the political crisis such as the impeachment of the

president in Korea saying it is shameful to Korean immigrants since people in other countries watch it together.

> SuJin: I heard that individualism has grown in Korea. They do not talk much as before. Every youth watch their phone even when they sit together in the restaurant. I heard many negative issues, rarely positive things. Companies have problems, many single families. Anyway, much more individualism and less value in family lives.
> HL: You talk about this with your church members?
> SuJin: Not these topics. I am thinking alone based on what I heard. Family system is ruined in Korea. Their relationship is broken. Everyone relies on their smartphone. It is broken. We do not have to think anymore.
> HL: You value the family?
> SuJin: Yes, I am. Family is really important. My family always have a meal together once a week. I think the culture of eating together is the most important thing for family. The meal prepared by the mother, that is particularly important.
> HL: You do not think individualism is more developed here?
> SuJin: Well, still people in here value the family relations. It is not true that all people are just individualistic here. Like close-knit, they love each other and care about family members. I think their feeling could be even deeper than Koreans. They respect the individuality, but break the rule of the family. I think they manage well these things.
> HL: Could you explain how you sense that?
> SuJin: People around me. Many families live with seniors in my neighborhood.
> (SuJin, 50s, 1st generation, senior, interviewed in Korean)

> I think the politicians in Korea should be changed. They do not think about the big picture of the nation, but take care of their own interests. As an ordinary person, I think we (South Koreans) should unite and then move toward the global stage.
> (YoonKyung, 60, 1st generation, senior, interviewed in Korean)

As they watched the situation in Korea, they also sensed that the others were watching them. That stimulated my senior informants to contemplate their own position in the global world. The increased visibility of Korea in America made my senior informants engage more with current issues from their ancestral homeland. They had

more confidence about their ethnic identity based on these connectivities since they were watching the progress of both worlds.

> HL: Do you use some Korean stuff?
> SuJin: All are from Korea. I have used all the stuff from Korea. There are some pieces from America. Like this table. We use Korean things. We eat Korean foods, so all of the dinnerware are mostly from Korea. I brought them all as a moving luggage. I am still using some jars from Korea (in 90s).
> HL: You feel you are Americanized, but think Korean style looks better for you?
> SuJin: Right, that's different. I prefer Korean sentiment. My life in here is more comfortable (than in Korea), but my national identity is never changed. When I am getting older, I am more leaning toward the Korean style. I think that is common in my peer groups.
> (SuJin, 50s, 1st generation, senior, interviewed in Korean)

> Korea has rich stories people would like. People sometimes asked me if these historical things really happened. Sui dynasty started the war with Korea with one million soldiers. People told that "it sounded like a myth like the story of the *Lord of the Rings*," and "your country had a real history." We talked about this stuff in a Korean community meeting.
> (MyungSoo, 70s, 1st generation, senior, interviewed in Korean)

My senior informants who live in Philadelphia enjoyed the transnational connectivities via digitalized communication. Although they did not take seriously the impact of the cultural dimension of globalization as much as the economic development of their homeland, their daily lives in their local place demanded that they negotiate their socio-cultural identity as an in-between identity.

> HL: You understand the differences of Korea better since you watched the Korean television shows?
> JeongWon: Of course. I also work at the Korean company. The situation in the company is more extreme. The bosses are from Korea. We often talk about the conflicts. I'm kind of mediate between them. There are many conflicts, especially Korean bosses are struggling. In Korea, once a boss talks, then people should follow, but not here (laughter).
> HL: So watching Korean shows helps you to handle that?
> JeongWon: Yeah. There are many cases. The hierarchal relations in Korea, North Korea, military culture.

HL: When did you start watching Korean television?
JeongWon: Well, there was a period that I struggled with the relationship with my (Korean Korean) wife.
(JeongWon, 50, 1.5 generation, senior, interviewed in Korean)

Like JeongWon's experience at the Korean company and at home, the senior informants realized there is a spectrum of Koreanness and Americanness in them. Nevertheless, they believe they are Koreans in many ways. Extensive connectivities to their ancestral homeland often compel them to reflect on their distinctive role in American society. All of my senior informants were religious and actively engaged in the Korean Christian community. Thus, their faith in Christianity expanded into their global missionary work, visiting North Korea to spread the faith. That was probably generated and refined within their own Korean American community in Philadelphia. But it was also a result of their collective global imagination and working together based on their transnational engagement and belonging.

HL: Do you think you are Korean always?
SuJin: Of course. I never thought I'm an American at all. ⋯ In fact, I became an American citizen for the missionary purpose. I hoped to visit the North Korea someday. Even for now, South Korea does not have any exchange with North Korea. Thus, we cannot visit North Korea freely. A person who has the U.S. citizenship can visit North Korea if they want. I actually achieved the U.S. citizenship for that purpose.
……
HL: You do not want to live in Korea necessarily, but you have a strong belonging in Korea.
SuJin: Of course, I am always thinking my Korean identity, how I can be responsible for the global missionary strategy as a Korean. ⋯ I am always thinking how Korea can be developed more. Something cannot be improved in a short period. But I always pray for it. There is nothing I dislike.
(SuJin, 50s, 1st generation, senior, interviewed in Korean)

HL: Korean Americans went to North Korea for as missionaries?

JeongWon: I heard that. But I haven't been there. My circumstance is not good enough for the missionary for now. But, I am hoping, just hope.

(JeongWon, 50, 1.5 generation, senior, interviewed in Korean)

Conclusion

Chapter 6 explores the grassroots globalization process among Korean Americans in terms of the production of locality under the influence of the transnational Korean cultural flow. Appadurai stressed that the cultural dimension of globalization should be comprehended by the specific ways of generating locality, which is fundamentally construed through the interactions and relations among the members of a community. He argued that global imagination and imagined worlds motivate people in building different relationships. This results in constructing a new form of neighborhood in spite of physical distance, time difference, and many other differences. Based on his insights, I explored the engagement of Korean Americans within Korean American/non-Korean American communities under the influences of the Korean Wave. This discussion was developed into the question, "how are the engagement and belonging of Korean Americans developed beyond their local place into the transnational context"?

In both individual and collective contexts, my Korean American informants initiated relationships within and across the Korean American community. Particularly, young second generation Korean Americans actively engaged in activities/communities in their local place and mediated contexts. This change brought out the differences in the characteristics of local Korean American activities which focused on the ethnic traditions, not contemporary Korean culture. This shift drove them to approach the other generations of the Korean American community in an active manner and contributed to strengthening their ethnic identity. While their engagement is beyond their ethnic community and

local/national place, their belonging converged into and intensified within the Korean American community.

The role of the international students/professional immigrants became more prominent in hosting the local cultural events and introducing authentic cultural contents in the local place. They also realized the cultural power of Korea and their privileged position as Koreans, particularly among Asian Americans. The rise of the Korean Wave gave them more opportunities to cooperate with other minority groups. This inherently brought more understanding of multicultural society. Unlike the second generation Korean Americans, their belonging was strongly rooted in their Korean national identity and they felt more affinity through their daily consumption of transnational Korean media.

Although the senior Korean Americans have enjoyed Korean media, the intensified Korean cultural power in the local and transnational connectivities made them reflect on their positionality in American society as Korean Americans. The senior Korean American informants appreciated their Korean heritage including history, language, or other cultural property and reflected more about Korean current affairs. They often strongly identified with their ancestral homeland, but their engagement and belonging developed based on roots in the Korean American local community.

CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSION

This study aimed at understanding the current status of globalized media culture, focusing on transnational media flow via digitalized communication technology in the cultural terrain of America. Historically, U.S. audiences who live in a media saturated society have been mostly exposed to U.S. originated media. Ethnic groups often consumed transnational or ethnic media due to the language barrier, cultural or religious reasons, and a strong desire to be connected to their ancestral homeland. Since the advance of digitalized technology, American audiences, especially ethnic minority groups, have convenient access to any transnational media content such as TV programs and movies in its domestic market, especially ethnic minority groups. This has undermined the hegemony of the U.S. media.

Under conditions of globalization, this local space became a place where different transnational flows juxtapose and spread. Further, advances in digitalized communication technology provided unforeseen convenience and opportunity to be connected to any transnational world. Accordingly, the traditional notion of locality is inevitably complicated. Appadurai (1996) stressed the need to examine grassroots globalization in order to understand the cultural dimension of globalization. This study paid attention to the role of the media in creating global imagination. Through their daily transnational media consumption, people collectively imagine other worlds in relation to their local place, and that eventually drive them to reshape their locality.

With this understanding, this study explored how the rise of the Korean Wave influences the facilitation of global imagination and produces locality among Korean Americans in the Philadelphia metropolitan area. The progress of the Korean Wave in the

U.S. is creating different waves compared to the Asian region. The focus phenomenon, the Korean Wave, is a notable mediascape particularly outstanding in Asia and among the Asian diaspora. Many Asians have consumed Korean media content through local broadcasting systems and have cultivated their imagination of modernity in Asia. However, the spread of Korean media content in the U.S. is more closely based on the Internet distribution, including English-language based websites, online streaming services, YouTube, and social network services.

This study paid attention to its *sui generis* significance for its upsurge as a non-Western media flow within American cultural territory after the advance of the digitalized media environment. Assuming the majority of the 2.5 million Korean migrants in North America access Korean media or communicate with someone in their homeland (Bergsten & Choi, 2003, p. vii), the sites of their media practice would provide a significant context in which we can observe transforming locality as a process of the cultural dimension of globalization within the U.S. Ethnographic qualitative research methods were employed in order to investigate the media practices of twenty-nine informants in their daily lives in the Philadelphia area. Besides the series of focused interviews over a ten month period, I participated in many local ethnic events including film screenings, going to the theater, lunch meetings, a student association general meeting, a K-pop Night event, a fund raising concert, a speakers' series, a birthday party, political rallies, and social meetings. I tried to generate field notes and images at these varied events.

Key Findings and Contributions

As an example of global audience research, this project illustrated the current state of media globalization by presenting empirically rich data. This research portrayed how our culture is media-saturated, but very individualistic in media consumption. Most of my informants started to use digital devices and the Internet to watch Korean media around 2006. Since then, they have been able to individually watch Korean media every day with only about two hours difference with people in Korea. Watching Korean media is not a family practice anymore. Young second generation Korean American informants explored Korean media content based on their own tastes and the quantity of their media consuming hours has expanded too.

In fact, this change in their media environment and the global upsurge of Korean popular culture has impacted their perception of Korea/Asia/U.S.'s places in the world. Most Korean Americans believed that Korea had developed far off during the last several decades and the reputation of Korea has sharply changed. Young second generation Korean Americans were most excited about the rise of Korean popular culture in the U.S. This shift made them value their ethnic identity and imagine Korea as a cool place to live. They planned to travel, study, or find a job in Korea. This finding stands in contrast to the experiences of senior Korean Americans who were skeptical about the rise of the Korean Wave in the U.S. and its cultural power to boost the Korean national brand at the global stage. As opposed to the response of the young second generation, these seniors concerned about the indulgence of the young Korean Americans in the Korean culture. Rather, they emphasized the importance of assimilation into the U.S. mainstream society to be a successful Korean American.

The role of the media has intensified, but it is hard to generalize. For example, among my informants, the processes of identity construction were complicated in varied ways. Daily media practices among Korean Americans have changed since the advance of digitalized media and the upsurge of Korean popular culture in the U.S. Their complicated imagined worlds influence other identity factors in terms of negotiating gender roles and perceiving attractiveness as well as planning future paths. Young female second generations did not agree with the gender role representations of Korean media or the gender dynamics in Korea. One the other hand, second generation Korean Americans discovered and appreciated virtues of the Korean version of romantic relationships. With this shift, they could find a Korean (Asian) role model to identify with. This drove them to challenge white privilege in their daily lives. International students and professional immigrants or senior Korean Americans inevitably negotiate gender roles and attractiveness as they migrate into U.S. society, but they were familiar with the gender dynamics in the Korean media.

The perceptions of attractiveness as a result of consuming Korean media were clearly articulated in a gendered way. Second generation female youth especially embraced K-beauty and pursued it by consuming more Korean commodities. International students and professional immigrant female informants followed more strict beauty norms for themselves to which they were accustomed in Korea. The rise of K-beauty is one option for challenging white-centered beauty hegemony. These women could empower themselves with their cultural capital on this issue. However, it is doubtful that this change incited my informants to interrogate or defy the current gender system. They remained chained to the beauty myth — albeit a transnational, Asian

version, and integrated into the global capitalism system. Further, the key elements of K-beauty overlap with the Western beauty standards such as white flawless facial skin, skinny body type, and small framed face.

As a natural consequence of their fascination with Korean media content, cultural empathy became very important to both genders. They wished and dreamed more about inner ethnic romantic relationships and marriage. This tendency is all too common and fortified among my young informants. Considering their minority situation, this could be an anticipated difficulty, especially for female informants.

As Appadurai (1996) has explained, my informants' imagined worlds and emotions engendered by their Korean media consumption made them denaturalize, refuse, or embrace ideas and cultural elements in both cultural spaces. Most distinctively, young second generation Korean Americans who were excited about this new current were intensively influenced by their participation in the Korean Wave. The rise of the Korean Wave stimulated young second generation Korean Americans to aspire to and pull out future paths that their parents' generations had not anticipated before. Although this does not mean that all of the second generation Korean Americans just hoped to move back to Korea, their negotiations of possible lives are intensified transnationally. This change innately weakens the U.S. hegemony in the local as well as global worlds. Their global imagination was actively developed when it was not firmly anchored into direct experiences of transnational Korean culture. This difference supports Appadurai's argument that the influence of transnational media consumption magnifies global imaginations and facilitates their agency.

The rise of the Korean Wave promoted the formation of collective global imaginations among Korean Americans. That drove their agency to construct a new locality in terms of their individuals' interactions with others, Koreans and non-Koreans, in physical and mediated contexts; and to construct their engagement and belongings across local, national, and transnational contexts. In particular, young second generation Korean Americans actively engaged in activities/communities in their local places and mediated contexts. This transformation, in turn, changed the characteristics of local Korean American activities into being more contemporary and open to other ethnic groups. It also stimulated them to approach the other generations of the Korean American community in an active manner and contributed to strengthening their ethnic identity. Consequently, their active engagement with this transnational culture drove them into a more intensified belonging within their local ethnic community. The rise of the Korean Wave gave international students more opportunities to work with other minority groups. This inherently made them reflect on their culture more thoroughly and understand multicultural society in depth. The senior Korean Americans also noted that Korean cultural power was intensified in the local areas. Interestingly, they became more strongly identified with their ancestral homeland, but their engagement and belonging are developed based on roots in the Korean American local community.

Although I discussed global imagination and the production of locality in different chapters to present them clearly, they interactively shape each other and work together consistently. Global imagination played a key role in the production of locality, transforming localities. Expanded communicative space and thickened communicative activities and interactions within it stimulated global imaginations among my informants.

One of my senior informants, Myungsoo received some positive comments about Korean popular culture from local neighbors and sensed the excitement among Korean youth groups in Philadelphia. This transformed locality led him often to reflect on the elevated status of Korea at the global stage and regard the role of the Korean American community within Philadelphia and the U.S. more seriously.

All of these findings in response to my research questions illustrate that the process of globalization brought about cultural hybridization in the U.S. on a local level in contrast to concerns about cultural homogenization in the past. As Kraidy (1999) argues, "glocalization" would be more appropriate term as the global and the local work together everywhere. My Korean American informants almost exclusively enjoyed transnational media and participated in generating local ethnic activities. They did not share many social issues or local topics with their physical neighbors. Instead, they connected with their new neighbors or mediated imagined community, who could continue conversations based on their cultural tastes and interests, regardless of differences in identities, physical distances, or time.

The richness of the data in this study sheds some light on further elaborations of Appadurai's insights on the cultural dimension of globalization. Although he emphasized disjunctures, ruptures, or juxtaposed heterogeneous cultures in the local space as a result of nomadic global flows, Appadurai does not discuss in depth how each individual who lives in the local place constructs identity within the constraints of local and global forces. As described in my research, a categorization among Korean American groups emerged while progressing with the field work. I could observe that finer boundaries were constructed by their imaginations based on their experiences, barriers, and life

conditions in Korea and American society. I also recognized gender as a critical element in forming an individual's global imagination and operating agency. These differences, rooted in finer dimensions of social identity under the capitalized system, have not been thoroughly discussed in Appadurai's works. This project clearly represented how genders and consuming practices engendered differences in their imagination of the global among my informants.

In responding to this divergence, Garcia Canclini (2014) stressed understanding the existent globalized capital forces and systems. Since they are well managed to operate and play a significant role in providing a utopian image of our future but, on the other hand, they exclude many others who do not own enough resources to cooperate with it. Global imaginaries generated by migrants and the marginalized are still significant since they present the fracture of globalization. He stresses that they will possibly give us hints at alternative directions of global forces (Garcia Canclini, 2014, p. xxxviii). His argument gives an explanation of why the aspiration of attractiveness is more distinctively discussed among young female informants. Their aspiration of cosmopolitan attractiveness is often actualized by their consumption of fashion and beauty items. The power of global capitalism flexibly combined with the Asian beauty myth and actively operated among my female informants.

Ethnicity matters. Appadurai (2006) discussed possible negative influences of global imagination. Today, we are exposed daily to the news about immigration issues that sometimes cause anxiety, fear, and oppression against ethnic/cultural/religious minorities and terrorism everywhere. On the contrary, my research showed how the transnational cultural wave and mediated images worked positively among the ethnic

migrant group. By this shift, they could occupy a different position within their local community from minority, as they termed, to the privileged minority that holds cultural power in their local place. At the same time, they increased the sense of attachment in their local place where their ethnic culture was accepted and embraced. In this way, although most of my informants strengthened their ethnic affinity and hoped for more intra-ethnic relationships, they were often approached by non-Koreans who were curious about Korean cultures. These small practices made my informants more open to pursuing cooperative work with other ethnic groups.

Limitations and Future Suggestions

This study employed the perspective of global media studies which emphasizes the integrated understanding between the shift of the structure and the actualization of its meaning among audience groups (Miller & Kraidy, 2016). The current study has its strength in exploring and comparing different generations of immigrants. However, more examination of a controlled social identity group, such as social class, age ranges, would make a strong case too. For example, I sensed that class identity including education or monetary capital, decided many other issues I discussed in this research. Students who attended an Ivy League school and a public school have different perspectives and approaches to their engagement in popular culture and community activities, as well as their reflections on Korean American identity. A second generation Korean American student who was attending a privileged private school drew a clear line between international students and herself. On the other hand, the culture of the Ivy League international student was also exclusive to the local Korean American students. They probably assume class differences between themselves and immigrants. Contrary to the

student association at a public school, there was not much interaction between young Korean Americans at the Ivy League school. Although I could only observe a few cases, upper class students hesitated to engage in local cultural activities and to admit enjoying popular culture. Although most of the youth I met did not define their cultural activities as a waste of time, upper class students tended to engage in these cultural activities in a more individualistic manner.

Continued investigation of different ethnic/migrant groups in different locations is critical to map the complicated process of globalization. Although digitalized technology allowed people communicate with each other within a thickening network, people's communicative spaces and their living place/its locality cannot be detached from each other (Hepp, 2009, pp. 329-330). In a similar vein, Korean Americans would share their mediated spaces centering on Korean culture, but their living space and locality would provoke in them different global imaginations. Although this project focused on a metropolitan area in the U.S., trans-local approaches to compare and contrast global imaginaries and their production of locality among the Korean Americans living outside the metropolitan areas or even local people in Korea or Asia would illuminate the role of global media in the process of globalization.

Finally, it is important to constantly examine the role of social media in creating imaginations of the global. Social media appeared after Appadurai's early writing on mediascape and cultural globalization. However, with the advance and influence of social media, his argument becomes even more legitimate and appealing. Social media has shifted the way of transnational communication, thickened the web of communicative space, and paved the way for transnational media flows to easily enter transnational

cultural territories. In this way, social media can serve as a channel for creating transnational cultural flows potentially free from global capital hegemony.

From the audience's perspective, my informants implied that the Internet provides them with a new experience of popular culture as an active participant of grassroots globalization. Jin & Yoon (2016) argued that the interplay between the technological affordance of social media and the fans' sociality is the most important element of the recent Korean Wave in North America. My informants also engaged and participated in spreading and creating social media content of Korean celebrities. They had more opportunities to observe the characteristics of their favorite transnational celebrities based on multiple online sources via their personal tweets and other social media. Especially the social media made Korean Americans feel culturally empowered since they could connect with the transnational Korean community who hold more cultural authenticity. They deserve further examination.

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