

# **The Korean Wave: Korean American Identities and Diaspora Engagement Policies**

By  
Min Sung Kang

Submitted to  
Central European University  
Department of International Relations and European Studies

In partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Masters of Arts

Supervisor: Professor Youngmi Kim

Budapest, Hungary  
2015

Word Count: 12,936



## **Abstract**

The purpose of this thesis is to understand how the Korean Wave has enhanced Korea's diaspora engagement. I have hypothesized that the impact the Korean Wave's impact on the identity formation of Korean American youth has enhanced Korea's diaspora engagement. However, there is no literature that specifically evaluates the Korean Wave's influence on identity formation for diaspora engagement; I will use literature on soft power and diaspora engagement in order to understand how this process works. The following chapters will be dedicated to further analysis of how the Korean Wave has enhanced Korea's diaspora engagement by improving identity formation. The research methodology will involve the analysis of literature on soft power and diaspora engagement. This will be followed by a background of the Korean Wave in the United States and Korea's diaspora engagement; then in order to understand how Korean American identities have developed there will be an analysis of the results of my survey on Korean American identity. This will be followed by a combined analysis of my findings to understand how the Korean Wave has enhanced Korea's diaspora engagement.

## **Acknowledgements**

I would like to thank my supervisor, Youngmi Kim, for being so helpful during my thesis writing process.

## **List of Abbreviations**

Korean Culture and Information Service (KCIS)

Korean Popular Music (K-pop)

European Union (EU)

Export Led Industrialization (EIS)

First Basic Plan for Immigration Policy (FBPIP)

Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MOFAT)

Ministry of Science, Information, Communication, Technology and Future (MSIP)

National Assembly of the Republic of Korea (NARK)

National Assembly in Seoul (NAS)

Overseas Koreans Foundation (OKF)

Presidential Council on National Branding (PCNB)



## Table of Contents

Abstract.....	i
Acknowledgements.....	ii
List of Abbreviations .....	iii
Introduction.....	1
Chapter 1: Literature Review.....	8
1.1: What is Soft Power? .....	8
1.1.1: The Korean Wave and Its Soft Power Production.....	10
1.2: What is a diaspora?.....	13
1.2.1: The Korean American Identity and South Korea’s Diaspora Engagement.....	15
Chapter 2: Historical Background .....	18
2.1: The Korean Wave in the United States.....	18
2.2: South Korea’s Diaspora Engagement.....	22
Chapter 3: Findings of a Survey on Korean American Identity .....	26
Chapter 4: Korean American Identity & South Korea’s Diaspora Engagement .....	34
Conclusion .....	40
Appendices.....	44
Bibliography .....	46



## Introduction

Beginning in 1965, the number of Korean immigrants to the United States gradually increased reaching the 30,000 mark by 1976 and maintaining an annual number of over 30,000 until 1990.<sup>1</sup> As a result of immigration and the birth of second and later generations, the Korean American population has increased from 1,228,427 in 2000 to 1,706,822 in 2010, an increase of 38.9%.<sup>2</sup> As of 2013, the Korean diaspora population was about 7 million with a little over 2 million living in the United States.<sup>3</sup> The Korean diaspora population in United States made up about 29% of the total diaspora population. As a result of this steadily growing population, the South Korean government, in the mid-1990s, became more active and systematic in its diaspora engagement policy.<sup>4</sup> In essence, the Korean American population has continued to flourish.

Whereas, in South Korea because there is the potential for a demographic crisis with a rapidly aging population, a falling fertility rate, a continuing outmigration of its middle class, and a slowing economic growth rate, South Korea has enhanced its diaspora engagement policies.<sup>5</sup> The National Assembly in Seoul (NAS) has simulated that, due to South Korea's low fertility rates, by 2750; South Koreans will become extinct.<sup>6</sup> Ironically, the rising Korean American population and falling domestic population, exists because of South Korean development efforts. In 1962, an intensive family program was launched alongside a program

---

<sup>1</sup> Pyong Gap Min. *Koreans' "Immigration to the U.S: History and Contemporary Trends"*, Accessed April 3, 2015.

<http://www.qc.cuny.edu/Academics/Centers/RCKC/Documents/Koreans%20Immigration%20to%20the%20US.pdf>.  
. 8.

<sup>2</sup>The Asian Population: 2010. Accessed May 12, 2015. "2010 Census Briefs"

<https://www.census.gov/prod/cen2010/briefs/c2010br-11.pdf>.  
15.

<sup>3</sup>Ministry of Trade and Foreign Affairs. Accessed April 23, 2015.

[http://www.index.go.kr/potal/main/EachDtlPageDetail.do?idx\\_cd=1682](http://www.index.go.kr/potal/main/EachDtlPageDetail.do?idx_cd=1682)

<sup>4</sup>Changzoo Song. "Engaging the diaspora in an era of transnationalism", Accessed June 2, 2015.

<http://wol.iza.org/articles/engaging-the-diaspora-in-an-era-of-transnationalism.pdf>.  
. 3.

<sup>5</sup> Song 2.

<sup>6</sup>Jonathan Cheng. South Korea 'To Go Extinct By 2750'. <http://blogs.wsj.com/korearealtime/2014/08/25/south-korea-to-go-extinct-by-2750/>

of sending workers overseas to relieve population pressure and to earn foreign currency.<sup>7</sup> In essence, the policies the South Korean government implemented have worked a little too well.

Nevertheless, Inbom Choi, in *Korean diaspora in the making: Its current status and impact on the Korean economy* found that “South Korea trades more with a country where more ethnic Koreans reside”.<sup>8</sup> Therefore, Korea’s diaspora engagement<sup>9</sup> was primarily developed through an economic relationship. Korean popular culture was also developed for economic purposes, but an unexpected benefit has been the transitional national popularity of Korean popular culture, especially in Asia,<sup>10</sup> which has increased Korea ability to produce soft power. Through the analysis of existing literature and a survey of Korean American youth, this thesis seeks to understand the how the Korean Wave<sup>11</sup> has enhanced Korea’s diaspora engagement in the United States.

On July 15<sup>th</sup> 2012 a chubby eccentric South Korean man dancing as if he were riding a horse, PSY, released his “Gangnam Style” music video on YouTube.<sup>12</sup> For most of the West, PSY was their foray into the Korean Wave. However, in 1994, the Presidential Advisory Board on Science and Technology discussed how South Korea could benefit from popular culture on the basis that a Hollywood movie like Jurassic Park could earn as much as selling 1.5 million Hyundai cars.<sup>13</sup> However, it was not until the late 1990s, when Asia went through a huge financial crisis that South Korea’s leaders decided to use music to improve its

---

<sup>7</sup>Song. 2.

<sup>8</sup> Inbom Choi. *Korean diaspora in the making: Its current status and impact on the Korean economy*. Ed. C. Fred Bergsten & Inbom Choi. , *Special Report*. Vol. 15 *The Korean Diaspora in the World Economy*. Washington, DC: Institute for International Economics, 2003.

21.

<sup>9</sup> Diaspora engagement is the coordination of policy decision making or enforcement in a given issue area across national borders. Fogarty, Edward. *Encyclopaedia of Governance*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, 2007.984-85.

<sup>10</sup> Youna Kim “Globalization of Korean Media: Meanings and Significance,” in D. Kim and M. Kim (eds) *Hallyu: Influence of Korean Popular Culture in Asia and Beyond*, Seoul: Seoul National University Press.

<sup>11</sup> The global spread of Korean popular culture.

<sup>12</sup> PSY. YouTube. “Gangnam Style (강남스타일)” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9bZkp7q19f0>

<sup>13</sup> Gunjoo Jang and Won Paik. *Korean Wave as a Tool for Korea’s New Cultural Diplomacy*, Accessed May 22, 2015. <http://file.scirp.org/Html/22229.html>.200.

image and build its cultural influence.<sup>14</sup> Euny Hong, states, “[Korea] had been setting up the mechanism for pop culture domination since the dawn of the World Wide Web in the 1990s.<sup>15</sup> Nevertheless, in 2009 the Presidential Council on National Branding (PCNB) was formed and immediately started a nation branding project.<sup>16</sup> The PCNB was started because for many people when they think of Korea there are few negative images that come to mind, for instance, North Korea, the Korean War, a xenophobic population, etc.<sup>17</sup> However, since then the Korean Wave has continued to flourish and has gradually changed the sentiments towards South Korea. In other words, the Korean Wave was a project funded by the South Korean government, primarily to stimulate the economy that has had the added benefit of producing soft power.

Though, Korea’s diaspora engagement policies were entirely separate from the development of Korean popular culture. The South Korean government began paying attention to its diaspora in the 1990s, viewing the diaspora as an investment in South Korea’s future.<sup>18</sup> In 1997, the Overseas Koreans Foundation (OKF) was established to strengthen the connection between diaspora Koreans and their ethnic homeland and to help them settle successfully in their host societies.<sup>19</sup> In 1999, South Korea implemented the Act on the Immigration and Legal Status of Overseas Koreans in order to attract investment from diaspora Koreans, which gave diaspora Korean the right to enter South Korea freely, conduct business, and own real estate.<sup>20</sup> In October 2009, the National Assembly of the Republic of Korea (NARK) passed legislation making overseas ethnic Koreans eligible to participate in

---

<sup>14</sup> Kat Chow. *How the South Korean Government Made K-Pop a Thing*, Accessed May 3, 2015.

<http://www.npr.org/sections/codeswitch/2015/04/13/399414351/how-the-south-korean-government-made-k-pop-a-thing>.

<sup>15</sup> Euny Hong. *The Birth of Korean Cool: How One Nation Is Conquering the World Through Pop Culture*, New York Picador, 2014. Kindle. Location 4-5.

<sup>16</sup> Kim. *South Korean Cultural Diplomacy and Efforts to Promote the Rok’s Brand Image in the United States and Around the World*, Date Accessed. June 2, 2015.

<http://web.stanford.edu/group/sjeaa/journal111/Korea2.pdf>. 125.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid. 124.

<sup>18</sup> Song. 3.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid 3.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid. 4.

domestic elections. An estimated 2.23 million overseas ethnic Koreans had the opportunity to vote for the first time on April 11<sup>th</sup> 2012.<sup>21</sup> Around 160,000 overseas ethnic Koreans living abroad cast their vote.<sup>22</sup>

In 2010, the South Korean government attempted to further embrace its diaspora with revisions to the Nationality Law to recognize dual nationality.<sup>23</sup> South Korea has implemented other progressive diaspora engagement policies through the OKF. Fostering Korean identities, greater economic and political cooperation and creating networks among the diaspora population are the stated goals of the OKF; in order to foster a Korean identity the OKF especially among the younger generations has provided educational support.<sup>24</sup> The OKF has a program that as Changzoo Song<sup>25</sup> states where, “Koreans are invited to visit South Korea to learn the traditions, history, and language of their ancestral homeland, thus strengthening their sense of Korean identity”.<sup>26</sup> Nevertheless, these measures extending political participation and providing educational support have had less impact on identity formation than the Korean Wave.

In order to impel Korean American youth to form connections with their ethnic homeland there needs to be a means to incite interest. Coincidentally, because of the Korean Wave, South Korea has become one of the few countries that have influenced its diaspora through soft power. In the Monocle Soft Power Survey 2014/15, South Korea was ranked 15<sup>th</sup>.<sup>27</sup> As the attractiveness of South Korean culture has improved, Korean American youth have become more comfortable with their Korean identities. The increased popularity of

---

<sup>21</sup> Ministry of Trade and Foreign Affairs . Accessed April 15, 2015.

[http://png.mofat.go.kr/webmodule/htsboard/template/read/engreadboard.jsp?typeID=16&boardid=10297&seqno=677056&c=&t=&pagenum=1&tableName=TYPE\\_ENGLEGATIO&pc=&dc=&wc=&lu=&vu=&iu=&du=](http://png.mofat.go.kr/webmodule/htsboard/template/read/engreadboard.jsp?typeID=16&boardid=10297&seqno=677056&c=&t=&pagenum=1&tableName=TYPE_ENGLEGATIO&pc=&dc=&wc=&lu=&vu=&iu=&du=)

<sup>22</sup> Anna Heo. *Korea's First Overseas Voting for Presidential Election Closed*, Accessed Date April, 30, 2015.

[http://www.arirang.co.kr/News/News\\_View.asp?nseq=141821](http://www.arirang.co.kr/News/News_View.asp?nseq=141821)

<sup>23</sup>Ibid. 4. Eligibility for dual citizenship limited to highly skilled foreigners, marriage migrants, Korean adoptees, and members of the Korean diaspora aged 65 or older.

<sup>24</sup> Song. 3-4.

<sup>25</sup> Changzoo Song is a Senior Lecture the University of Auckland’s Asian Studies Department and currently researches Korean politics and nationalism, Korean and Asian Diasporas and globalization.

<sup>26</sup> Song. 4-5.

<sup>27</sup> Monocle. <http://monocle.com/film/affairs/soft-power-survey-2014-15/>

Korean popular culture has provided Korean American youth with an avenue into Korean culture that would not have been possible through educational efforts alone. The Korean Wave has allowed Korean American youth to reinforce their Korean identities, while retaining their American insights. In essence, it has allowed Korean American youth to develop a unique transnational Korean identity.

The purpose of this thesis is to understand how the Korean Wave has enhanced Korea's diaspora engagement. I have hypothesized that the impact the Korean Wave's impact on the identity formation of Korean American youth has enhanced Korea's diaspora engagement. However, there is no literature that specifically evaluates the Korean Wave's influence on identity formation for diaspora engagement; I will use literature on soft power and diaspora engagement in order to understand how this process works. The following chapters will be dedicated to further analysis of how the Korean Wave has enhanced Korea's diaspora engagement by improving identity formation. The research methodology will involve the analysis of literature on soft power and diaspora engagement. This will be followed by a background of the Korean Wave in the United States and Korea's diaspora engagement; then in order to understand how Korean American identities have developed there will be an analysis of the results of my survey on Korean American identity. This will be followed by a combined analysis of my findings to understand how the Korean Wave has enhanced Korea's diaspora engagement.

## Research Methodology

This thesis will begin by analyzing the existing literature available in order understand how the Korean Wave has enhanced Korea's diaspora engagement. I have hypothesized that the Korea Wave has helped to develop Korean American identities. I have divided the literature review into two sections to avoid confusion. The first section will focus on soft power and the latter section will focus on diaspora. This literature in combination with a survey of Korean American youth through discourse analysis will make it possible to understand how the Korean Wave's impact on identity has enhanced Korea's diaspora engagement.

The research has proven that identity formation for Korean Americans has been a multifaceted process. I have found that the Korean Wave can be an effective tool for identity formation, but has limitations. In order to grasp a better understanding of the role of the Korean Wave has played in the development Korean American identities. I will first evaluate the Korean Wave and soft power, and then I will evaluate diaspora and diaspora engagement. I will also provide a background of the Korean Wave in the United States and diaspora engagement. Then I will provide and analyze the results of my survey on Korean American Identity. This will be followed by a combined analysis of the literature and survey results to begin to understand the multifaceted nature of Korea's diaspora engagement. Aside from the historical background required to understand how events developed, the scope of the discourse has been limited to the late 1990s through the 2000s.

There are limitations however in my research.<sup>28</sup> The survey has 100 surveyees all of whom are ethnically Korean that live or have lived in the United States. Aside from a few outliers most of the surveyees are between the ages of 15-25 and mostly reside in the north eastern part of the United States. There are only a few surveyees from other parts of the

---

<sup>28</sup> For instance, I am ethnically Korean; therefore I have some biased opinions. However, I did my best to remain neutral in my research.

United States. However, of the 100 Korean American youth that responded to the survey a large majority of them were unaware of South Korea's diaspora engagement efforts. A large majority of the surveyees also felt there was little the government could do to change their opinions of Korea; they cited conservative societal tendencies that the government cannot change. Therefore, the scale of the survey is limited and may not reflect the positions of all ethnic Koreans living in the United States.

The data for this survey was collected using a Google survey, I created. The survey responses were made anonymous and through social media outlets I created a private group and asked Korean Americans to answer the survey and add more Korean Americans to do the same. Surveyees had to log into their Google accounts to complete the survey. The survey was constructed of 10 required questions regarding Korean American identity, opinions of different aspects of Korean culture, and general knowledge of Korea. There were 11 optional sections that surveyees could have used to further explain their responses. Nevertheless, given the constraints of the thesis, the methodology I have used provides an effective means to understand how the Korean Wave has enhanced Korea's diaspora engagement.

## Chapter 1: Literature Review

This literature review will first review the Korean Wave ability to produce soft power followed by literature on diaspora and diaspora engagement. It is important to understand that this literature review was multifaceted and has required separate evaluations in order to understand how the Korean Wave has enhanced Korea's diaspora engagement. Although there is literature on how the Korean Wave has helped to develop Korean American identities, there was no literature that evaluated this effect on diaspora engagement.

### 1.1: What is Soft Power?

It is important to assess the work of Joseph Nye, when evaluating the Korean Wave. Nye developed the concept of soft power and is the most important scholar in the field. He has consistently clarified and corrected his conception of soft power. In *Bound to Lead: the Changing Nature of American Power*, Nye coined the term soft power. According to Nye, "soft power is the ability to influence the behaviour of others to get the outcomes one wants" through attraction and seduction rather than coercion.<sup>29</sup> Nye elaborates on his concept in *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics*, he stated that, "soft power is more than just persuasion or the ability to move people by argument...it also rests on the ability to entice and attract."<sup>30</sup> Under this definition, the Korean Wave has provided Korea with potential elements for the production of soft power.

In *Soft power and the Korean Wave*, Nye with Youna Kim explains the advantage of utilizing soft power over hard power and why in the age of globalization South Korea should focus on developing soft power because it is a more attractive power.<sup>31</sup> According to Nye and Kim, the soft power of any country rests primarily on three resources: (1) the attractiveness of its culture, (2) its political values, when it lives up to them at home and abroad, and (3) its

---

<sup>29</sup> Joseph Nye. *Soft Power: Bound to Lead: the Changing Nature of American Power*. New York: Public Affairs, 1990. 32.

<sup>30</sup> Joseph Nye. Nye, Joseph. *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics*. New York.: Public Affairs, 2004. 5.

<sup>31</sup> Joseph Nye and Youna Kim. *Soft power and the Korean Wave* in "*The Korean Wave: Korean Media Go Global (Internationalizing Media Studies)*" New York: Taylor and Francis. 2013. Kindle. Location. 951.

foreign policies, when they are seen as legitimate and having moral authority.<sup>32</sup> Nye and Kim are keen to point out that soft power is more than just the attractiveness of culture by giving equal weight to culture, political values and foreign policies; therefore, further implying that the Korean Wave has the potential to produce soft power.

However, Geun Lee, in *A Theory of Soft Power and Korea's Soft Power Strategy*, argues that Nye's concept was not based upon a well-developed theoretical framework.<sup>33</sup> Lee, states that, " [soft power] has been used mainly as a descriptive tool to describe the anomaly of the US power or to list up country's soft power resource without revealing the power translation mechanisms.<sup>34</sup> He has developed a preliminary theoretical framework to understand the logical connections among soft resources, soft power, and the policy goals of soft power, and to develop a practical power solution to some of the major foreign policy problems in an attempt to trigger new debates or further development of soft power theories for various areas of international relations.<sup>35</sup> Lee modelled his concept of soft power to more accurately fit a middle power like South Korea.

Lee has categorized soft power into 5 categories in accordance with the policy goals to achieve, which are: (1) Soft power to improve external security environment by projecting peaceful and attractive images of a country (2) Soft power to mobilize other countries' supports for one's foreign and security policies (3) Soft power to manipulate other countries' way of thinking and preferences (4) soft power to maintain unity of a community or community of countries (5) soft power to increase approval ratings of a leader or domestic support of a government.<sup>36</sup> This categorization of soft power is important because it allows

---

<sup>32</sup> Ibid. Locations 957-959

<sup>33</sup> Geun Lee. 'A Theory of Soft Power and Korea's Soft Power Strategy' 2.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid. 2.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.2.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid. 3.

for a more strategic goal oriented approach to soft power.<sup>37</sup> Nevertheless, in the case of the Korean I find both Lee and Nye's conceptions of soft power are applicable.

I find that Nye's conception of soft power can be applied to the Korean Wave on the basis that as Nye and Kim have stated, "In addition to its stunning economic success, it has developed a truly democratic political system, characterized by human rights, free elections and the transfer of power between different political parties".<sup>38</sup> Although, Lee states, "the goal of just becoming attractive is meaningless unless a country is an empire or hegemon like the US".<sup>39</sup> I find Lee has underestimated the potential of the Korea's soft power capabilities. Therefore, along with popular culture the overall progression of South Korea has made South Korea an attractive country.

#### **1.1.1: The Korean Wave and Its Soft Power Production**

When thinking about South Korea the first thing that comes to mind is probably, PSY. As of June 2015, PSY's "Gangnam Style" music video had more than 2.3 billion views on YouTube.<sup>40</sup> This music video is perhaps the most well-known of the endless flow of Korean popular culture. At first, PSY, laughable, but if you take into consideration he has become an international famous celebrity, according Lee, PSY has soft power.<sup>41</sup> For most in the west, PSY, was there sudden introduction to the Korean Wave, but across the developing world its impact was been felt for more than a decade.<sup>42</sup>

Therefore, the popularity of Korean popular culture appears sudden, but a little insight into how Korean popular culture was developed reveals that this sudden phenomenon was a gradual calculated process. In late 1990s, when Asia went through a huge financial crisis South Korea's leaders decided to use music to improve its image and build its cultural

---

<sup>37</sup> Ibid. 15.

<sup>38</sup> Nye and Kim. Location 970-971.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.15.

<sup>40</sup> PSY.

<sup>41</sup> Lee.5-6.

<sup>42</sup> Mark Russell. *The Gangnam Phenom*, Date Accessed: May 7, 2015. <http://foreignpolicy.com/2012/09/27/the-gangnam-phenom/>.

influence.<sup>43</sup> Nevertheless, in January 2009, former President Lee Myung Bak made upgrading Korea's national brand image one of his top priorities.<sup>44</sup> These efforts by the South Korean government have been quite successful. [Korean popular culture] as a cultural brand promoting Korean exports ranging from soft drinks to cosmetics to consumer electronics – suggests that Western countries aren't likely to have a lock on the hearts and wallets of the developing countries for long.<sup>45</sup> [This] illustrates the new reality that the North-South pattern of trade and cultural exchange that has dominated the world since the ascendance of European colonialism is giving way and making room for unexpected soft power.<sup>46</sup> The growing export of Korean media culture has improved the national image and led to heightened awareness of general Korean products.<sup>47</sup> In other words, the South Korean government has effectively utilized the Korean Wave for Korea's soft power production.

In Asia, Korean popular culture has maintained its popularity, but the west has only begun to pay attention to Korean popular culture, therefore the Korean Wave has continued to increase Korea's attractiveness. Moreover, the Korean Wave has positioned South Korea with the momentum to utilize soft power and garner influence throughout the world. Nevertheless, Nye and Kim point out with a population of about 50 million, South Korea is not big enough to become a great power.<sup>48</sup> However, there are a few countries with similar limitations that have effectively produced soft power. Countries like Canada, the Netherlands and the Scandinavian states, for example, have political clout that is greater than their military and economic weight, because they have incorporated attractive causes such as economic aid or peace making into their definitions of their national interest.<sup>49</sup> Therefore, it

---

<sup>43</sup> Chow.

<sup>44</sup> Kim. South Korean Diplomacy. 124.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

<sup>47</sup> Kim. Kindle Location 528.

<sup>48</sup> Nye and Kim. Locations. 965-966.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid. Locations. 967-968.

makes sense for South Korea to follow the model of these countries to produce and utilize soft power.

Nye and Kim state that, “Korean popular culture has proved attractive across borders, in particular among younger people in neighboring Asian countries and beyond”.<sup>50</sup> In addition, Lee has suggested that, “in countries where the [Korean Wave] [has] [been] welcomed, the South Korean government [can] spread [Korean culture] ... by the influence of Korean celebrities, or deliberate efforts of the government to spread standards and brands”.<sup>51</sup> The United States has become one of these countries. Youna Kim has stated that, “the Korean culture industry has been developed as a national project competing within globalization, not against it”.<sup>52</sup> In other words, Korean popular culture has been highly adaptable, working with globalization. Nevertheless, although, Nye, Kim and Lee acknowledge the transnational attractiveness of Korean popular culture, they do not evaluate what effect it has on identity formation.

Hong has stated, “Popular culture has emerged as a core component of a nation's economic competitiveness which extends to interests in cultural influence and cultural diplomacy”.<sup>53</sup> Jung Sung Park in *Negotiating identity and power in transnational cultural consumption Korean American youths and the Korean Wave*, evaluates, “how Korean American youths' consumption of South Korean culture is interrelated with their search for identity and community”.<sup>54</sup> He has found that Korean popular culture brings South Korea closer to Korean American youth and lays the foundation for a sense of community.<sup>55</sup> Therefore, the Korean Wave has helped South Korea produce soft power, which in turn

---

<sup>50</sup> Ibid. Locations. 976-977.

<sup>51</sup> Lee. 13.

<sup>52</sup> Youna Kim. *Korean media in a digital cosmopolitan world in The Korean Wave: Korean Media Go Global (Internationalizing Media Studies)*, New York: Taylor and Francis. 2013. Kindle. Locations 344-345.

<sup>53</sup> Hong. Locations 1130-1131.

<sup>54</sup> Jung Sun Park. *Negotiating identity and power in transnational cultural consumption Korean American youths and the Korean Wave in The Korean Wave: Korean Media Go Global (Internationalizing Media Studies)*, New York: Taylor and Francis. 2013. Kindle. Location 3095.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid. Locations 3240-3241

influenced Korean American identities. However, Park does not take into account how this formation of identity has enhanced Korea's diaspora engagement. Although, Jang and Paik have recognized the Korean Wave's cultural diplomacy potential they do not mention identity or diaspora.<sup>56</sup> There has been no direct study of how the Korean Wave has helped to develop Korean American identities, which has enhanced Korea's diaspora engagement.

### **1.2: What is a diaspora?**

Diaspora is often used to describe a dispersion of people from a common origin.<sup>57</sup> Historically, there are three concepts of a diaspora: original, classical, and contemporary.<sup>58</sup> The contemporary concept of diaspora, which simply refers to people of one country dispersed into other countries,<sup>59</sup> the Korean diaspora fits well under the contemporary concept. There however seems to be five key criteria for the existence of diaspora: (1) dispersal of a large number of individuals from an original homeland to two or more foreign regions; (2) an involuntary and compelling element in the motivation for people to leave their home country due to serve political, economic, or other constrains; (3) a groups' conscious and active efforts to maintain its collective identity, cultural beliefs and practices, langue or religion; (4) peoples' sense of empathy and solidarity with members of the same ethnic group in other countries of settlement leading to efforts to initialize transnational network of exchange and (5) communication; and the peoples collective comminute to preserve and maintain a verity of explicit and implicit ties with their original home country, provided it is still in existence.<sup>60</sup> Therefore, under these basic guiding principles the Korean diaspora does exist.

---

<sup>56</sup> Jang and Paik. 198

<sup>57</sup> Choi. 9.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid. 9.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid. 10.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid. 11.

However, Chaliand and Rageau raised two questions about the Korean migration being a diaspora: they questioned the magnitude of migration and the limited destination.<sup>61</sup> Choi argues that although the Korean diaspora if the one can call the Japanese emigration a diaspora then the Korea diaspora qualifies, because the Japanese diaspora is relatively small.<sup>62</sup> He also argues that proportionally the Chinese and Indian diaspora are consists of about 3.9% and 2.0%, whereas the Korean diaspora takes up about 8.2%, which including the population of the entire Korean peninsula.<sup>63</sup> The Korean diaspora has also maintained a collective ethnic identity; therefore the Korean diaspora certainly exists.<sup>64</sup> In the United States ethnic Korean communities are concentrated in two are: about 30 percent in the Los Angeles area and about one quarter in the New York area; in the Los Angeles are alone, there are more than 200 various associations of ethnic Koreans.<sup>65</sup>

Moreover, Gamlen extends the definition of diaspora by including first generation emigrants settled in another country, and descendants of emigrants who – in certain paces at certain times – identify as diasporic or even as members of a fully-fledged diaspora “community”.<sup>66</sup> Therefore, although there are clear criteria as to what makes a diaspora, diaspora does not have to a homogenous group as long as the group can share a state centric identity they can be called diaspora;<sup>67</sup> consequently, making a transnational Korean identity all the more important. Gamlen has also stated, “incorporating the diaspora into the state ... redefine or reconfigure what it means to be a member of a ‘national society’”.<sup>68</sup> He has suggested that by virtue of engaging with diaspora the very notion of national identity

---

<sup>61</sup> Gerard Chaliand & Jean-Pierre Rageau. *The Penguin Atlas of Diaspora*. New York; Viking Penguin. 1995.

<sup>62</sup> Choi. 15.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid. 16.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid. 16.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid. 17.

<sup>66</sup> Alan Gamlen. 2008. 4.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid. 4-5.

<sup>68</sup> Gamlen. 2008. 5.

changes. The Korean wave for South Korea has provided this change in identity formation for Korean American youth.

### **1.2.1: The Korean American Identity and South Korea's Diaspora Engagement**

Alan Gamlen has reasoned that diaspora engagement policies can be attributed to the transnationalization of Foucault's governmentality.<sup>69</sup> Governmentality is the means by which population is rendered governable, through the construction, machination, and normalization of a set of governmental apparatuses and knowledges.<sup>70</sup> Gamlen suggests that, "diaspora engagement policies should not necessarily be seen as part of a unitary, coordinated state strategy, rather, they form a constellation of institutional and legislative arrangement and programmes that come into being at different times for different reasons, and operate across different timescales at different levels within home states".<sup>71</sup> Therefore, diaspora engagement can come from anything, anywhere, or anytime.

Although, diaspora engagement in South Korea has primarily increased because engagement became crucial, by 2050, there will be three elderly South Koreans for every South Korean child,<sup>72</sup> a demographic crisis that is likely to stagnate the economic growth of South Korea, there will be a need for greater engagement with its diaspora.<sup>73</sup> However, as Gamlen suggests, the Korean Wave, which was not intended to be used for diaspora engagement has improved diaspora engagement. Primarily, because the Korean Wave has helped to develop a transnational Korean identity which, Carlos González Gutiérrez in *Fostering Identities: Mexico's Relations with its Diaspora*, states "the capacity of a home state to implement diaspora engagement policies is dependent firstly on the imagined (or

---

<sup>69</sup> Gamlen. 5-6.

<sup>70</sup> Michel Foucault. *The Foucault Effect: Studies in Governmentality: with Two Lectures by and an Interview with Michel Foucault*. Edited by Burchell, Graham, Colin Gordon, and Peter Miller. Chicago: University Of Chicago Press, 1991.

<sup>71</sup> Gamlen 4.

<sup>72</sup> Neil Howe, Richard Jackson, & Keisuke Nakashima. *The Aging of Korea Demographics and Retirement Policy in the Land of the Morning Calm*. Date Accessed: May 28, 2015.

[http://csis.org/files/media/isis/pubs/070321\\_gai\\_agingkorea\\_eng.pdf](http://csis.org/files/media/isis/pubs/070321_gai_agingkorea_eng.pdf) 7.

<sup>73</sup> Song. 8.

discursive) existence of a cohesive transnational community, based around a common, state centric national identity, towards which policies can be directed”.<sup>74</sup> In other words effectively implementing diaspora engagement requires a transnational Korean identity, which for South Korea the Korean Wave has developed.

Gamlén also argues that, “states firstly aim to produce a relationship of communication at the transnational scale, based around the idea of the nation – a system of symbols and signs within which states can immerse the exercise of power”.<sup>75</sup> The Korean Wave which has provided countless elements of popular culture has done this for South Korea. The Korean Wave has in essence provided an avenue to develop a stronger sense of identity, which Song states “A [stronger] Korean identity among diaspora Koreans all over the world will build loyalty to their ethnic homeland, [which] is bound to bring numerous long term benefits to [South Korea]”.<sup>76</sup> Although, the Korean Wave was not an effort to produce a relationship of communication at the transnational scale the relationship was enhanced as a side effect of Korean popular culture’s popularity. Therefore, Korea’s diaspora engagement effort has been improved by the Korean wave, which has in essence become a de facto diaspora engagement policy.

Nevertheless, Korean diaspora communities have not been idle. There have been efforts by Korean diaspora communities that have strengthened the diaspora engagement of South Korea. Korean Americans were the bridgeheads for the successful penetration of the US market by Korean car, electronics and white goods manufacturers.<sup>77</sup> Korean diaspora communities for instance have long pursued their right to political participation, which they

---

<sup>74</sup> Carlos González Gutiérrez. *Fostering Identities: Mexico's Relations with its Diaspora*. *Journal of American History*, Special Issue: Rethinking History and the Nation-State: Mexico and the United States Vol. 86, No. 2 (Sep., 1999) 545.

<sup>75</sup> Gamlén. 5.

<sup>76</sup> Song. 5.

<sup>77</sup> Graeme Hugo. *Migration and Development: A Perspective from Asia*, Date Accessed: May 15, 2015. [http://www.childtrafficking.com/Docs/hugo\\_iom\\_2003\\_\\_migration\\_an.pdf..](http://www.childtrafficking.com/Docs/hugo_iom_2003__migration_an.pdf..)

welcomed when South Korea ruled the restriction unconstitutional in June 2007.<sup>78</sup> Gamlen states that, “the rationale behind politically incorporating emigrants is that this upgraded membership status will falter or appease expatriates, producing goodwill relationships that help to protect steady flows of remittances and investment”.<sup>79</sup> South Korea extending political participation to its diaspora might have solidified a flow of remittance or investment, but as Gamlen argues that if states fail to extend civil and social rights to their diaspora and expect to leverage shared national identity in order to get something for nothing from emigrants, they are playing against the odds.<sup>80</sup> Therefore, extending political participation to its diaspora Korea was a politically motivated effort to strengthen diaspora engagement by improving a sense of Korean identity.

Therefore, the Korean Wave, because of ability to produce soft power has allowed the South Korean government to more easily engage with its diaspora because of its impact on identity. The Korean Wave has essentially become a de facto diaspora engagement policy that has improved other diaspora engagement policies. The following chapter will provide the historical background of a Korean Wave in the United States and a historical background of Korea’s diaspora engagement. In order to gain an understanding of how the Korean Wave has infiltrated the United States and understand how diaspora engagement has developed in the United States.

---

<sup>78</sup> Song Sang-ho. *Overseas Koreans get voting rights*, Date Accessed: May 6, 2015. <http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=200902060042>

<sup>79</sup> Gamlen 10.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid. 11.

## **Chapter 2: Historical Background**

This section I have provided a historical background of the Korean Wave in the United States and a historical background of Korea's diaspora engagement. In order to avoid confusion this section has been divided into two parts. The first section will focus primarily on the Korean Wave in the United States; whereas the second section will primarily focus on Korea's diaspora engagement in the United States. The goal of this section is to understand the progression how of the Korean Wave in the United States has impacted Korean Americans identities and understand the progression Korea's diaspora engagement in the United States.

### **2.1: The Korean Wave in the United States**

The Korean Wave was the result of a government funded effort to develop an entertainment industry. However, in the United States the Korean Wave, for most Americans, probably stimulates memories of watching the viral YouTube sensation, PSY. Clearly, there is more to Korean popular culture than PSY. The Korean Wave is generally understood in terms of the recent increase in the popularity of Korean cultural products such as television dramas, movies, popular music (K-pop) and dance (B-boys), video games as well to a lesser extent toward Korean fashion, food, tourism and language.<sup>81</sup> The Korean Culture and Information Service (KCIS) states the Korean Wave became global when the popularity of drama Dae Jang Geum (Jewel in the Palace) provided the opportunity for Korean dramas to expand beyond Asia to markets in other continents.<sup>82</sup> In 2005, Dae Jang Geum aired across China, Vietnam, Thailand, Malaysia and other part of Asia, making it to 91 countries around

---

<sup>81</sup> Jang and Paik. 198.

<sup>82</sup> Korean Culture and Information Service. "Birth of the Korean Wave" 27.

the world.<sup>83</sup> A little insight shows that the Korean Wave did not spontaneously appear with PSY. The popularity of Korean culture had gradually gained traction.

As evidenced by the surprising popularity of YG Entertainment's hip hop boy band BIGBANG in the United States. In March 2011, BIGBANG's fourth mini-album was No. 7 on Billboards' Heat seekers Albums chart and No. 3 on its World Albums chart, despite little promotion in the United States and the album being in Korean.<sup>84</sup> In essence, with a little help from the Internet, the Korean Wave was beginning to infiltrate the United States. Since, Korean management agencies have effectively utilized the social network services like Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube to stimulate the popularity of K-pop.<sup>85</sup> SM Entertainment's popular girl group Girls' Generation's music video "Gee" for instance, as of May 2011 had more than 42 million views on YouTube, with viewers from all over the world, including Thailand, the United States, Japan, and Europe.<sup>86,87</sup> There were other Korean popular culture icons that amassed a following in the United States that appeared to be more prospective candidates to break into the United States.

No one could have predicted that "Gangnam Style" would have strengthened the Korean Wave in the United States. Therefore, PSY is anomaly; there was not an inkling of rational to believe that the antics of PSY would become a global sensation. Therefore, ironically, although PSY appeared to be a Phenom, PSY was just the icing on the cake. PSY only solidified the manifestation of the Korean Wave in the United States. The popularity of Girls' Generation and BIGBANG reveal that the Korean Wave had already infiltrated the United States before the advent of PSY. In essence, including PSY, the Korean Wave has

---

<sup>83</sup> Yang Sung He. *Lee Young-ae could return to iconic series*, Date Accessed: May 17, 2015. <http://koreajoongangdaily.joins.com/news/article/Article.aspx?aid=2986743>

<sup>84</sup> Ibid. 48.

<sup>85</sup> Korean Culture and Information Service. 2011. *Contemporary Korean No. 1 Birth of the Korean Wave*. Korean Culture and Information Service Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism Service 47.

<sup>86</sup> Girls' Generation (소녀시대). YouTube. "Gee" <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U7mPqycQ0tQ>. As of May 2015 the music video had more than 140 million views.

<sup>87</sup> Korean Culture and Information Service 47.

created international celebrities that have played an important role in the spread of soft power.<sup>88</sup> Nevertheless, PSY can be credited with kicking the Korean Wave door wide open in the United States.

PSY accelerated the infiltration of the Korean Wave in the United States. Before “Gangnam Style” the Korean Wave in the United States was primarily confined to Korean enclaves in New York City and Los Angeles.<sup>89</sup> The unexpected surge in PSY’s popularity significantly helped the Korean Wave spread into other ethnic groups.<sup>90</sup> Subsequently, far reaching effects of the Korean Wave have continued to have a significant impact on Korea’s soft power. The number of students enrolled in Korean language classes in the United States rose 45 percent from 2009 to 2013.<sup>91</sup> According to Nye, soft power is more than just persuasion or the ability to move people by argument, it is the ability to entice and attract.<sup>92</sup> The increased popularity of Korean language learning demonstrates that the Korean Wave has become a remarkable soft power tool. Even the American entertainment industry has made an effort to capitalize on the Korean Wave.

On April 6<sup>th</sup> 2015, a K-pop inspired musical sitcom series, *Make It Pop*, aired on the American television network, Nickelodeon. The series, which was Nickelodeon’s No. 1 show with K 6-11 and G 6-11, was renewed for a second season on May 1<sup>st</sup> 2015.<sup>93</sup> The success of this crossover series demonstrates that the Korean Wave is not going away anytime soon. Additionally, on April 30<sup>th</sup> 2015 the Korean hip hop boy band BIGBANG released their new singles “Loser” and “Bae Bae” after a three year hiatus. Even after three years BIGBANG managed to top the iTunes charts in 10 countries, including Hong Kong, Indonesia, and

---

<sup>88</sup> Lee. 5-6.

<sup>89</sup> August Brown. *K-pop enters American pop consciousness*, Date Accessed: May 6, 2015  
<http://articles.latimes.com/2012/apr/29/entertainment/la-ca-kpop-20120429/2>

<sup>90</sup> John Seabrook. *Factory Girls*, Date Accessed: April 23, 2015  
<http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2012/10/08/factory-girls-2?currentPage=all>

<sup>91</sup> Gordon.

<sup>92</sup> Nye. Soft power means to success.

<sup>93</sup> Denise Petski. *'Make It Pop' Renewed For Season 2 by Nickelodeon*, Date Accessed: May 25, 2015.  
<http://deadline.com/2015/05/make-it-pop-renewed-season-2-nickelodeon-1201420443/>

Thailand.<sup>94</sup> BIGBANG has demonstrated Korean popular culture's sustained transnational popularity among youth populations. Therefore, having effectively produced popular culture that has sustained popularity, South Korea has paved a way to develop its diaspora engagement policies through soft power. The impact the Korean Wave has had on Korea's ability to produce soft power is immeasurable.

The Korean Wave has unquestionably become an asset for Korea's diaspora engagement. Especially, among Korean American youth who have struggled with their identity formation. The Korean American identity is no longer what, Bruce Cumings<sup>95</sup> has stated "A Spanish American teacher will assume that a student named John Kim sitting in her class is Japanese; an African American or Jewish American student sitting next to him will say he's Chinese; the response that he is Korean is not quite right, either, because John Kim thinks of himself as an American".<sup>96</sup> Although, to some degree there issues developing a Korean American identity may persist, the Korean Wave has brought South Korea and its culture closer to the Korean American youths, laying the foundation for a sense of community.<sup>97</sup>

In essence, Korean popular culture has ingrained a sense of Korean belonging, which has helped Korean diaspora communities who have been active in forming ethnic Korean community associations.<sup>98</sup> The Korean Wave has sustained a presence in the United States, which has helped to develop Korean American identities by providing an avenue in Korean culture. Park states, that "Korean popular culture connects Korean American youths of

---

<sup>94</sup> Kim Jae-heun. *BIGBANG sweeps music charts in comeback*. Date Accessed: May 14, 2015. [http://www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/news/culture/2015/05/201\\_178163.html](http://www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/news/culture/2015/05/201_178163.html)

<sup>95</sup> Bruce Cumings is the Gustavus F. and Ann M. Swift Distinguished Service Professor in History, and the chair of the history department at the University of Chicago. He specializes in modern Korean history and contemporary international relations.

<sup>96</sup> Bruce Cumings. *Korea's Place in the Sun: A Modern History*. updated ed. New York: W.W. Norton, 2005.448-9.

<sup>97</sup>Park. Kindle Locations 3240-3241

<sup>98</sup> Choi. 16.

different backgrounds... and elicits a sense of camaraderie among them”.<sup>99</sup> Although, this category of soft power as stated by Lee, “soft power to maintain unity of a community or community of countries”, was meant for institutions like the European Union (EU) to maintain unity,<sup>100</sup> I find that his concept can be applied to Korea through the notion that Korea has maintained its diaspora communities. In essence, the Korean Wave as become an effective means for diaspora engagement because it has helped to develop a transnational Korean identity.

## 2.2: South Korea’s Diaspora Engagement

Nevertheless, Korea’s diaspora engagement started since the Park Chung Hee administration with the Overseas Emigration Law of 1962,<sup>101</sup> through economic ties reciprocal relationship has existed for decades that the South Korean government sent farmers to Latin America, miners and nurse to West Germany and contract construction workers to private companies in the Middle East.<sup>102</sup> These emigrants sent remittances to Korea for use as seed money for homeland economic development.<sup>103</sup> Historically, Korea has had a reciprocal relationship with its diaspora. At first, financial incentives were provided to promote the return migration of highly skilled workers.<sup>104</sup> However, the South Korean government soon realized that research and development activities abroad could have a profound effect on economic growth.<sup>105</sup> Therefore, the policies the South Korean government has implemented have been highly adaptable.

From 1961 to 1978, during the Park Chung Hee administration, South Korea benefitted from the return migration of scientists and engineers.<sup>106</sup> Korea’s diaspora has stimulated economic growth primarily through the transfer of knowledge and skills back to

---

<sup>99</sup> Park. Locations 3252-3253

<sup>100</sup> Lee 6.

<sup>101</sup> Ku Sup Chin and David Smith. *Global Networks 15. A reconceptualization of state transnationalism: South Korea as an illustrative case*, 2014. 86.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid. 86.

<sup>103</sup> Ibid. 86.

<sup>104</sup> Choi. 25.

<sup>105</sup> Ibid. 25.

<sup>106</sup> Song. 7.

Korea.<sup>107</sup> In the mid-1960s, the South Korean government coordinated an export led industrialization (ELI) strategy.<sup>108</sup> Through this effort South Korea began its diaspora engagement with Koreans in the United States. Chin and Smith state that, “it mobilized expatriates in the United to serve the US market as wholesalers and retailers of items manufacture in [South Korea] ... [and] in return, Korean immigrants used their economic ties with [South Korea] to establish and maintain small businesses”.<sup>109</sup> This effort contributed to transnational flows of remittances, cultural exchanges, economic ventures and political engagements that have lasted.<sup>110</sup> Therefore, this mutually benefiting reciprocal relationship for South Korea has continued for decades.

However, it was not until the 1990s because of an aging population and falling fertility rates the South Korean government realized the significance of its diaspora for Korea’s future development. Since, 1990, remittances to South Korea have increased nearly four-fold.<sup>111</sup> Moreover, during the Asian financial crisis in 1997, diaspora Koreans in wealthy Western countries helped by sending money to South Korea and by buying Korean products.<sup>112</sup> Essentially, the South Korean government has had a reciprocal relationship<sup>113</sup> with its diaspora that has evolved over time.

In essence, through economic ties South Korea has maintained a relationship with its diaspora. Since, the early 1990s, the number of return migrants has been rising.<sup>114</sup> The return migrants from the United States, with higher levels of education and English-language fluency, have contributed to globalization of the country’s economy.<sup>115</sup> In 1997, the South

---

<sup>107</sup> Choi 25.

<sup>108</sup> Chin and Smith. 86.

<sup>109</sup> Ibid. 86.

<sup>110</sup> Ibid. 86.

<sup>111</sup> Jie Zong & Jeanne Batalova. *Korean Immigrants in the United States*, Date Accessed: May 26, 2015.

<http://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/korean-immigrants-united-states>

<sup>112</sup> Song. 5.

<sup>113</sup> Reciprocal relationship – term I use to describe the relationship of mutual exchange between the Korean Diaspora and the South Korean government.

<sup>114</sup> Song. 7.

<sup>115</sup> Ibid. 7.

Korean government established the OKF, a non-profit organization affiliated with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MOFAT) with a clear development mandate from the outset: to ‘utilize the capabilities of overseas Koreans for nation development in line with globalization policy’.<sup>116</sup> Since then, the South Korean government has implemented several politically motivated diaspora engagement policies in order to face the demographic crisis.

In October 2009, the National Assembly of the Republic of Korea passed legislation giving overseas ethnic Koreans eligibility to participate in domestic elections. An estimated 2.23 million overseas ethnic Koreans had the opportunity to vote for the first time on April 11<sup>th</sup> 2012.<sup>117</sup> In 2010 the National Assembly revised citizenship requirements allowing dual citizen an effort to prevent brain drain and attract talented foreigners.<sup>118</sup> These efforts have allowed Korea to begin to play the role of a legitimate sovereign.<sup>119</sup> However, there have been a few issues that have limited South Korea’s diaspora engagement policies.

Although, the effort by the South Korean government extend dual citizenship under most circumstances would be a logical decision. However, technicalities have intensified for foreign born Koreans, especially Korean males. Under this revision all Korean males are required to fulfil compulsory military service.<sup>120</sup> Unforeseen technicalities associated with dual citizenship have limited South Korea’s ability to strengthen diaspora engagement. For instance, Susan Lim, an ethnic Korean, was told by the admissions office of a Korean university that Korean Americans are not allowed to enter the school.<sup>121</sup> This unforeseen consequence of dual citizenship has kept away many foreign born Koreans from entering the

---

<sup>116</sup> Dovelyn Rannveig Agunias. *How to improve diaspora engagement*, Date Accessed: June 1, 2015. <http://www.theguardian.com/global-development-professionals-network/2013/feb/20/improving-asian-diaspora-insituations>

<sup>117</sup> MOFAT. [http://png.mofat.go.kr/webmodule/htsboard/template/read/engreadboard.jsp?typeID=16&boardid=10297&seqno=677056&c=&t=&pagenum=1&tableName=TYPE\\_ENGLEGATIO&pc=&dc=&wc=&lu=&vu=&iu=&du=](http://png.mofat.go.kr/webmodule/htsboard/template/read/engreadboard.jsp?typeID=16&boardid=10297&seqno=677056&c=&t=&pagenum=1&tableName=TYPE_ENGLEGATIO&pc=&dc=&wc=&lu=&vu=&iu=&du=)

<sup>118</sup> Tae Hoon Lee. *Dual Citizenship to be Allowed*, Date Accessed: May 17, 2015.

[http://www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/news/nation/2010/04/116\\_64629.html](http://www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/news/nation/2010/04/116_64629.html)

<sup>119</sup> Gamlen. 6.

<sup>120</sup> Lee.

<sup>121</sup> Philip Chung. *Discrimination of foreign-born Koreans*, Date Accessed: May 23, 2015.

[http://www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/news/opinon/2012/02/137\\_105900.html](http://www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/news/opinon/2012/02/137_105900.html)

country.<sup>122</sup> Therefore an inconsequential minor technicality has essentially alienated an entire generation of foreign born Koreans from studying at a Korean university.

In order to enter a Korean university, foreign born Koreans, would have to renounce their citizenship. However, for foreign born Korean males, due to the compulsory military service, the process is a little more complicated. A male dual citizen cannot renounce his citizenship, until he has completed his compulsory military service.<sup>123</sup> Therefore, for the foreign born Korean male renouncing his citizenship becomes redundant. There is no reason any Korean male willing to serve in a country that they have barely set foot in would want to renounce their citizenship.

The policymakers who drafted the dual nationality law find no issues with requiring military service, but to foreign born Koreans, military service is unthinkable.<sup>124</sup> The South Korean government has realized the need to strengthen ties with its diaspora, but a few minor technicalities have limited the potential of Korea's diaspora engagement policies. Moving forward the South Korean government will need to address such technicalities. Nevertheless, the Korean Wave has hardened a sense of Korean identity and the historic strength of the reciprocal relationship suggests that Korea's diaspora engagement will continue to evolve in order to accommodate the changing demographics of the Korean diaspora.

---

<sup>122</sup> Ibid.

<sup>123</sup> Ibid.

<sup>124</sup> Ibid.

### Chapter 3: Findings of a Survey on Korean American Identity

The Korean Wave has had significant impact on the identity formation of Korean Americans; therefore the South Korean government should utilize the Korean Wave to continue to strengthen a transnational Korean identity to promote economic participation, political participation and the return migration of ethnic Korean youth. There have been enough stimuli for some Korean American youth to seek opportunity in Korea. Jae Chong for instance, is an American born Korean that achieved success as a producer in the Asian pop industry.<sup>125</sup> Chong states that, “We don’t know where our real home is you know? When I’m in the US I feel like I’m an outsider, and here in Korea I’m sort of an outsider”.<sup>126</sup> Chong’s statement exemplifies the complexity of what it means to be Korean American not quite American and not completely Korean. However, people like Chong, prove that the Korean Wave has nurtured a sense of belonging to Korea and has helped to develop a transnational sense of identity.

There are a myriad of societal influences that shape identity for Korean American youth, which is reflected in the survey responses. The following statement, “I lived in Korea as child, but because of my American tendencies I feel alienated in South Korea”, by a surveyee depicts the ambiguity of identity formation for Korean American youth. Unexpectedly, none of the surveyees identified themselves as only American.<sup>127</sup> This implies that their Korean heritage has had some bearing on their identity formation. There were 76 surveyees that identified as being Korean American, 21 surveyees that identified as being Korean and 3 surveyees that were unsure. Upon closer examination of the survey responses provides interesting insights into identity formation for Korean American youth. Although, 76 surveyees identified as Korean American there were various rationalizations.

---

<sup>125</sup> Elise Hu. *How Asian-Americans Found a Home in the World of K-pop*, Date Accessed: May 22, 2015. <http://www.npr.org/sections/codeswitch/2015/04/14/398255011/how-asian-americans-found-a-home-in-the-world-of-k-pop>

<sup>126</sup> Ibid.

<sup>127</sup> Question: How do you identify yourself? With the options (1) Korean (2) American (3) Korean American (4) Other.

Nevertheless, many of these rationalizations prove that the Korean Wave has enriched their point of view towards Korea.

For instance, there were a few surveyees that were born in South Korea who moved to the United States as an early age that identified as Korean American. There were surveyees that identified as Korean American because they were ethnically Korean, but defined their nationality as American. A few surveyees stated they identified as American, until they realized the importance of their Korean heritage. There surveyees that identified as Korean American because they had relatives living in Korea or felt the need to maintain their ancestral roots. Cultural barriers with parents, language issues, and heritage were also among the reasons surveyees identified as being Korean American. The 3 surveyees that were unsure mentioned feeling both Korean and American. The following statement: “Too American to be Korean, but too Korean to be American” made by a surveyee, accurately encapsulates the general notion of identity among Korean American youth. Therefore, how Korean American youth have developed their sense of identity has been multifaceted. This ambiguous sense of identity is why the Korean Wave has been effective in developing a transnational Korean identity.

Since, the Korean American identity is a fragile multifaceted hybrid identity that can definitely be swayed. In the United States, Korean popular culture has sustained its popularity among Korean American youth. Unsurprisingly, a majority of surveyees, 66, stated that Korean popular culture affected their identity.<sup>128</sup> There were 30 surveyees that felt Korean popular culture had not affected their identity. The general consensus of the surveyees affected by Korean popular culture was that it provided them with an avenue to develop their identity. Interestingly, a few surveyees stated that their parent’s displeasure with American culture was their reason why Korean popular culture affected them.

---

<sup>128</sup> Question: Has Korean popular culture affected your sense of identity? (1) Yes (2) No (3) Other

Even a few of the surveyees that stated they were not affected by Korean popular culture mentioned at some point in their lives they had an interest in Korean popular culture. Nevertheless, there were surveyees that completely rejected Korean popular culture or never really cared for it. The remaining 4 surveyees felt somewhat affected by Korean popular culture because it was so prevalent in their lives. This confirms Hong's statement that, "Korean American youths' consumption of South Korean culture is interrelated with their search for identity and community".<sup>129</sup> Although, nearly a third of surveyees stated their identity had not been affected by Korean popular culture all of the surveyees have had some contact with Korean culture.

Unsurprisingly, most of the surveyees have made an effort to learn Korean.<sup>130</sup> Regardless of whether or not their parents forced them to learn Korean, 80 surveyees, stated that they had made an effort to learn Korean. Only 10 surveyees stated that they had not made an effort to learn Korean. The remaining 10 surveyees stated they were forced to learn by their parents or Korean was their first language. The primary reason mentioned for learning Korean was to be able to communicate with parents. There were a few that learned to better understand Korean dramas.

Predictably, 86 surveyees stated that they were interested in Korean pop, Korean dramas, Korean food, and other aspects of Korean popular culture.<sup>131</sup> There were 10 surveyees that stated they had no interest, while the remaining 4 surveyees were keen on emphasizing they were only interested in Korean food. Even though only 66 surveyees stated their identity was affected by Korean popular culture, in essence 90 surveyees have had interest in various aspects of Korean culture. Therefore, we can conclude that the Korean Wave has had an impact on the identity formation of Korean American youth.

---

<sup>129</sup> Hong. Location 309.

<sup>130</sup> Question: Have you made an effort to learn Korean? (1) Yes (2) No (3) Other.

<sup>131</sup> Question: Are you a fan of K pop, K-drama, K-food, etc.? (1) Yes (2) No (3) Other.

Therefore, having been influenced by the Korean Wave many Korean American youth are willing to embrace their Korean heritage.<sup>132</sup> 75 surveyees felt an inclination to embrace their Korean heritage; upon closer examination their reasons epitomize the complexity of their Korean American identity. A majority of the surveyees felt inclined to embrace their Korean heritage, primarily because they were ethnically Korean. A few of the surveyees expressed the importance of learning the Korean language, whereas other surveyees were inclined to embrace their Korean heritage because of language barriers and cultural barriers with their Parents. There was also a surveyee that stated being a minority had inclined them to embrace their Korean heritage.

There were 22 surveyees that did not feel inclined to embrace their Korean heritage. However, several of those who stated they were not inclined to embrace their Korean heritage stated they would not mind embracing their Korean heritage there just has not been an inclination to do so. The remaining 3 surveyees were unsure. For these surveyees there were certain aspects of Korean culture they admired, but there were other aspects that they could not stand. For instance the focus on family values, education, and respect were positively viewed, whereas the overwhelming pressure of performance above all was negatively viewed. For instance, researchers found more than half the Koreans age 11 to 15 reported high levels of stress in their daily lives, due to the pressure of succeeding.<sup>133</sup> Nevertheless, being ethnically Korean has influenced Korean American youth to embrace Korean culture beyond that of the Korean Wave.

There were 95 surveyees stated they have visited or wished to visit Korea. The 5 other surveyees were already in Korea.<sup>134</sup> However, the responses to the following questions reveal the limits of the Korean Wave's ability to entice Korean American youth. There were 46

---

<sup>132</sup> Question: Has there been any inclination to embrace your Korean heritage? (1) Yes (2) No (3) Other

<sup>133</sup> Hu.

<sup>134</sup> Question: Have you visited or plan to visit Korea? (1) Yes (2) No (3) Other

surveyees that expressed interest in studying in Korea.<sup>135</sup> Several surveyees stated that they were interested in living in Korea, while simultaneously learning about Korean culture. While other surveyees stated that studying in Korea would be an interesting experience and a way to learn the Korean language. There were 47 surveyees that have not considered studying in Korea.

In essence, the thought of studying in Korea was divided evenly among surveyees. These surveyees were primarily turned off by Korea's extreme competitiveness and strict regulations. There were a few surveyees that felt studying in Korea would be too far from home. There were even a few surveyees that felt cultural differences and the pressure to succeed would be too much for them to handle. A few surveyees even expressed the fear of being bullied, while studying in Korea; whereas other surveyees felt there was no reason to consider studying in Korea, when they could easily just study in the United States. The remaining 7 surveyees had either already studied in Korea or were unsure. These responses demonstrate the limits of the attractiveness of the Korean Wave.

The Korean Wave has undoubtedly generated interest in Korean culture, but as evidenced by the underwhelming desire to study in Korea, the Korean Wave has its limits. There were only 24 surveyees stated that they have considered living in Korea permanently,<sup>136</sup> demonstrating the limits of the Korean Wave all the more. These surveyees, however often linked their decisions with conditionality. There were a few surveyees that were just curious to know what it would be like to live in Korea. Surveyees also stated being able to find a suitable job or living in Korea only as an adult. There was one surveyee that stated they would live in Korea, but would not raise children there.

There were 70 surveyees stated that they have not considered permanently living in Korea. These surveyees primarily stated the comfort of living in the United States or not

---

<sup>135</sup> Question: Have you ever thought of studying in Korea? (1) Yes (2) No (3) Other

<sup>136</sup> Question: Have you considered permanently living in Korea? (1) Yes (2) No (3) Other

being able to speak Korean fluently as their reasons. The remaining 6 surveyees were unsure because they were concerned with the type of lifestyle they might have to lead. These results demonstrate that the soft power produced by the Korean wave can only go so far. No matter how attractive Korean popular culture has become to Korean American youth the rigid hierarchical nature of Korean society has dissuaded them from considering permanently in living in Korea.

An additional illustration of the limitations of the Korean Wave is the general lack of awareness of Korean politics or political issues. The surveyees primarily were not interested of Korean politics or political issues. Only 37 surveyees stated that they were aware of Korean politics or political issues.<sup>137</sup> The level of awareness however was limited on the basis of the responses. There were mentions of the ongoing conflict with North Korea. There were mentions of the Dokdo/Takeshima island dispute and the comfort women issue, which are just a few of the disputes Korea has had with Japan. Some surveyees mentioned the sinking of the Sewol. A few surveyees mentioned that they knew South Korea had a female president. The responses of the surveyees prove there is generally a lack of awareness when it comes to Korean politics, because what happens in Korea lacks importance. There were 44 surveyees that were not aware Korean politics or political issues; most were generally not interested in politics. The remaining 19 surveyees were not confident enough to say that they were aware of Korean politics or political issues; primarily because most were only aware via word of mouth. In essence, for most Korean American youth the only aspects of Korean politics that reaches them are the events that reach the international level. In other words Korean American youth could care less about what happens in Korea.

In general, Korean American youth do not feel the South Korean government can do anything to change their opinion. Only 23 surveyees felt that there was something the

---

<sup>137</sup> Question: Are you aware of South Korean politics or political issues? (1) Yes (2) No (3) Other.

government could do to change their opinion. Surveyees stated that Korea would become a viable place to live if the government increased the minimum wage and eliminated its compulsory military service. Surveyees also stated that their opinions could change if the ultra-competitive education system was restructured. There were a few surveyees that felt that reducing the political corruption in South Korean government would be a step in the right direction.

Nevertheless, there were 67 surveyees that thought there was nothing the government could do to change their opinion. There were a few surveyees that stated they were unsure what the government could do because they did not know anything about the government. However, surveyees generally felt the changes necessary for their opinion to change would be something the government could not change. The remaining 10 surveyees responded with similar responses, they alluded to societal changes that the government has little control over. For instance, Alexis Barnes states, “if you want to teach English in Korea, it’s a lot easier if you’re white”.<sup>138</sup> Surveyees did not like the highly homogenous and prejudice aspects of Korean society.

The responses by the surveyees have proven that Korean popular culture has impacted in one way or other affected all the surveyees. However, a majority of Korean American youth did not care for Korean politics or did not wish to live in South Korea. Their opinions sway in this direction, primarily because societal and cultural differences. Therefore, although, the Korean Wave has helped to develop Korean American identities the South Korean government needs to do more to develop strengthen this transnational Korean identity. The Korean Wave has provided South Korea with a basis for enhancing a transnational Korean identity, but the South Korean government needs to adapt to the evolving demographics of its diaspora population. A lot of Korean Americans have been

---

<sup>138</sup> Alexis Barnes. *South Korea’s Not So Subtle Racist hiring Practices*. Date Accessed: June 2, 2015. <http://www.vice.com/read/south-koreas-not-so-subtle-racist-hiring-practices-0000313-v21n5>

discouraged or alienated in their attempts to study or work in South Korea. Therefore, although the Korean Wave has provided the South Korean government with foundations to enhance its diaspora engagement; engagement policies have been limited by Korea's societal norms.

## Chapter 4: Korean American Identity & South Korea's Diaspora Engagement

As a soft power entity the Korean Wave can be categorized, as Lee has stated, “soft power to improve external security environment by project peaceful and attractive images of the country”.<sup>139</sup> The Korean Wave has undoubtedly generated positive images of South Korea. Nye and Kim also state, “Thanks to the Korean Wave popular culture, the awareness and image of South Korea have perhaps changed in the popular mind abroad”.<sup>140</sup> In general, the Korean Wave is liable for enhancing the attractiveness of Korea; therefore, increasing the attractiveness of Korea for Korean American youth. This is evidenced by the fact that none of the surveyees identified as only American. However, there were other societal elements of Korean culture that have limited potential diaspora engagement.

Nevertheless, the South Korean government has been progressive in implementing policies in the hopes of enhancing its diaspora engagement. Korea has begun to implement, as Gamlen, states, “a civic model of citizenship can be transnationalized through the adoption of points regimes regulating immigration according to skills and capital ownership”.<sup>141</sup> Nevertheless, in my opinion the government's approach was been ill-advised. Even though, facing a looming demographic crisis, Korea has made a concerted effort to enhance its diaspora engagement. According to Korea's First Basic Plan for Immigration Policy (FBPIP), the South Korean government sought to create a “social integration policy that helps immigrants become responsible and self-reliant members of society rather than beneficiaries of support”.<sup>142</sup> Korea's FBPIP, however superficially accepts the strength of the transnational Korean identity among its diaspora population. There is only an effort to help establish the identity of multicultural families in Korea.<sup>143</sup> The survey results reveal that although the Korean Wave has helped, Korean American youth develop a sense of identity, this identity is

---

<sup>139</sup> Lee. 15.

<sup>140</sup> Nye and Kim. Locations 1100-1101

<sup>141</sup> Gamlen. 11.

<sup>142</sup> First Basic Plan for Immigration Policy. 4.

<sup>143</sup> Ibid. 58.

malleable. The South Korean government in essence has taken for granted the Korean Wave's impact on identity formation.

Although, Korean Popular culture has emerged as a core component of a nation's economic competitiveness which extends to interests in cultural influence and cultural diplomacy,<sup>144</sup> in the case of Korean American youth, although the Korean Wave and their Korean ethnicity have influenced their identities their sense of identity is ambiguous. The Korean aspect of their identities primarily stems from their Korean ethnicity and Korean popular culture. Although, the Korean Wave has had an effect on their identity formation there is little inclination for Korean American youth to engage beyond the consumption of Korean culture. In *Korea in World History Textbooks: A Look through a Narrow Window*, Chizuko Allen reveals the shortcomings of American textbooks. Although recently published textbooks fair better, the scope of exposure to Korean history is significantly limited.<sup>145</sup> In other words, other than their parent's perceptions of Korea, there is virtually no avenue in which Korean American youth to acquire knowledge of Korean history.

Nevertheless, as evidenced by the survey results, although, most Korean American youth have made an effort to learn Korean; many are not comfortable with their Korean language abilities. The South Korean government appears to have acknowledged this and have embraced the logic that greatest foray into any culture is through language because by studying a language, the learner will inevitably embrace more culture; based efforts by the South Korean government to stimulate a transnational Korean identity. For instance, "the OKF brings Korean language teachers from all over the world to South Korea for training so that they can teach future generations in their regions".<sup>146</sup> Likewise, since its foundation in 2005, the King Sejong Institute has established Korean language institutes all over the world,

---

<sup>144</sup> Nye and Kim. Locations 1122-1123.

<sup>145</sup> Allen. 9.

<sup>146</sup> Song. 5.

including seven in the United States.<sup>147</sup> However, by virtue of being ethnically Korean for Korean American youth there has an effort to learn Korean. Although, the OKF and King Sejong Institutes might have increased the number of Korean language learners it does little to enhance a sense of Korean identity. Since, there are numerous other attributes of Korean culture and society that are not attractive to Korean American youth.

For instance, Cumings states that, “Should [a Korean American] dare to spend a summer in [Korea]... they will be told that they can’t possibly be Korean, because they don’t speak the language”.<sup>148</sup> In other words, a Korean American that does not speak the Korean language properly to the eyes of Koreans is not Korean because they cannot speak their language proficiently. This type of discrimination is a societal issue that the South Korean government cannot easily resolve. Likewise, there are other forms of discrimination that Korean American cannot accept. For instance, “Bonogit Hussain, a 29-year-old Indian man, and Hahn Ji Seon, a female Korean friend, were riding a bus near Seoul when a man in the back began hurling racial and sexist slurs at them”.<sup>149</sup> This type of discrimination is something the South Korean government can do virtually nothing about. Therefore, in the case of Korean American youth the South Korean government cannot attribute language acquisition alone to an avenue for enhanced engagement.

Therefore, the primary issue that has limited diaspora engagement for the South Korean government are societal issues that cannot be resolved easily. The societal issues are the primary reasons why Korean Americans have been dissatisfied by Korea. For instance, when current President Park Geun Hye attempted to appoint Jong Kim as the head of the new Ministry of Science, Information, Communication, Technology and Future Planning (MSIP), he was met with harsh criticism even though he spoke perfect Korean because he was Korean

---

<sup>147</sup> King Seijong Institue Foundation. Date Accessed: May 28, 2015. <http://eng.ksif.or.kr/business/locSejong.do>

<sup>148</sup> Cumings. 467.

<sup>149</sup> Cho Sang Heun. *South Koreans Struggle with Race*, Date Accessed: June 3, 2015. [http://www.nytimes.com/2009/11/02/world/asia/02race.html?pagewanted=all&\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2009/11/02/world/asia/02race.html?pagewanted=all&_r=0)

American.<sup>150</sup> Although, the South Korean government has promoted a progressive sense of Korean identity, conservative values have persisted. Hong sarcastically states, “Now, attitudes toward Korean Americans have become more enlightened, which is to say, we are now recognized as a demographic category instead of just a bunch of pathetic souls whose parents had the bad judgment to uproot us”.<sup>151</sup> Therefore, in Korea societal changes have barely begun to take shape.

Nevertheless, as many of my surveyees have commented there needs to be societal change within Korea in order for the benefits of the Korean Wave to manifest in its entirety. However, the South Korean government has implemented liberal immigration and ethnicity laws that can change the societal discrimination over time. The FBPIP states that, “Korea is preparing for the advent of the multicultural society those results as more immigrants make Korea their long-term home”.<sup>152</sup> Also a part of Korea’s nation branding effort has been to recognize the need to “treat foreigners and multicultural families better: In an effort to improve Korea’s attractiveness as a tourist destination, the government has started a campaign to encourage Koreans to be friendlier and more hospitable to foreigners”.<sup>153</sup> However, for now the discrimination in Korean society has limited the attractiveness of Korea for Korean American youth. A recent survey revealed that only 5.5% of foreigners in Seoul felt that they never experienced discrimination.<sup>154</sup> However, as previously mentioned there are policies in place that have the potential diminish these societal issues. Nevertheless, there are few immediate things the South Korean government can do to enhance its diaspora engagement.

---

<sup>150</sup> Jeong Kim. *Jeong Kim: A return to South Korea, thwarted by nationalism*, Date Accessed: May 28, 2015. [http://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/jeong-kim-a-return-to-south-korea-thwarted-by-nationalism/2013/03/29/fa674336-97f8-11e2-814b-063623d80a60\\_story.html](http://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/jeong-kim-a-return-to-south-korea-thwarted-by-nationalism/2013/03/29/fa674336-97f8-11e2-814b-063623d80a60_story.html)

<sup>151</sup> Hong. 243.

<sup>152</sup> Korean Culture and Information Service 12.

<sup>153</sup> Kim. 126.

<sup>154</sup> Lee Ji Eun. *Survey: only 5.5% of foreigners in Seoul say they’ve never experienced discrimination*, Date Accessed: May 27, 2015. [http://english.hani.co.kr/arti/english\\_edition/e\\_international/692693.html](http://english.hani.co.kr/arti/english_edition/e_international/692693.html).

For instance, about half of the surveyees stated that they would like to study in Korea, although, it seems that many surveyees were unaware decided to study in Korea for an ethnic Korean it is not that simple. Due to dual citizenship laws, an ethnic Korean would have to renounce their Korean citizenship to enter a Korean university.<sup>155</sup> This small technicality alienates many Korean Americans and prevents them from studying in Korea. A revision that foregoes this technicality for Korean Americans would undoubtedly increase the number of Korean American students studying in Korea. In essence, although dual citizenship was meant to increase a sense of Korean identity, for some Korean Americans it did exact opposite. Especially, Korean American males who are required fulfil their compulsory military service.

Gamlen states, “Sometimes [states] grant special membership concessions to emigrants, who confers status upgrades but avoid reconfiguring theoretical/legal definitions of citizenship”.<sup>156</sup> One of these measures can be to forgive duties like compulsory military service.<sup>157</sup> However, in Korea military service has become cultural rite of passage into adulthood.<sup>158</sup> So, much so that men refusing to carry compulsory military service will see jail time and be stigmatized by Korean society”.<sup>159</sup> Therefore, a revision in the near future is unlikely. Simply, extending dual citizenship is not enough to stimulate a feeling of transnational Korean identity. The South Korean government should focus on small incremental changes that will continue to attract Korean Americans.

Extending the right to political participation for instance, although a step in the right direction towards the development of a transnational Korean identity based on the results of the survey has virtually no impact Korean American youth. This is because they simply do

---

<sup>155</sup> Chung.

<sup>156</sup> Gamlen. 11.

<sup>157</sup> Ibid. 11.

<sup>158</sup> Stella Kim. *A Dreaded Rite of Passage: Korea's Mandatory Military Service*, Date Accessed: May 7, 2015. <http://www.brownpoliticalreview.org/2013/12/a-dreaded-rite-of-passage-koreas-mandatory-military-service/>

<sup>159</sup> Simon Mundy. Mundy, Simon. *South Korea faces dilemma over conscientious objectors*, Date Accessed: June 2, 2015. <http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/3e898098-f868-11e4-8e16-00144feab7de.html>

not care about Korean politics. The Korean Wave has undoubtedly impacted Korean Americans enough to want to engage in Korean culture, but not enough to incite interest in engagement in Korean politics. Although, some are acutely aware of some of Korea's international issues there is not much else Korean American youth have reason to care for Korean politics. The Korean Wave has had an impact on identity, but it has its limits. Nevertheless, the Korean Wave has provided a sense unity among Korean American youth. As Hong, has stated, “[Korean popular culture] brings South Korea and its culture closer to the (am) migrant youths, laying the foundation for a sense of community”.<sup>160</sup> Therefore, the Korean Wave has provided the foundations for a sense Korean identity through a sense of community.

In essence, the Korean Wave has created sense of transnational Korean identity. The Korean American identity has developed with the embrace of Korean culture, but with particulars of American society. Although, communities have formed based on ethnicity, the Korean American identity has enough distinct characteristics that set them apart. Once more I repeat as mentioned by one of my surveyees, “Too American to be Korea, but too Korean to be American”. Therefore, the Korean American identity is a sort of hybrid identity that encompasses both Korean and American culture. Therefore, in this context the Korean Wave has in essence, hardened this hybridity. Therefore, because the Korean Wave has helped to develop this sense identity, if the South Korean government can make the adjustments to adapt to American sensibilities there is room for significant improvement in diaspora engagement.

---

<sup>160</sup> Hong. Locations 3240-3241

## Conclusion

This thesis has analysed the existing literature available in order to understand how the Korean Wave has enhanced Korea's diaspora engagement. The research has demonstrated the Korean Wave has helped to develop Korean American identities enough to entice Korean American youth to embrace their Korean identities. There was a need to evaluate the Korean Wave with the concept of soft power in order to understand the ways in which the Korean Wave has influenced diaspora engagement. Although, Nye and Lee provide different conceptions of soft power in both cases, the Korean Wave fits into their conceptions of soft power.

Nevertheless, the need to engage with its diaspora arose when the South Korean government realized the country was aging, fertility rates were falling and outmigration continuing. With the potential of facing a demographic crisis the South Korean government started to invest in its diaspora. Though, economic engagement between Korea and its diaspora has always been quite strong. As Choi has stated, "South Korea trades more with a country where more ethnic Koreans reside".<sup>161</sup> In the United States there has been a strong economic relationship. However, in terms of political engagement this relationship has been limited. There have been efforts by the South Korean government to politically engage its diaspora, through efforts like extending political participation and granting dual citizenship. In an effort to further develop a transnational Korean identity.

Although, diaspora engagement policies for South Korea have primarily been implemented due out of necessity, because of the popularity of Korean popular culture, the Korean Wave has become a medium for diaspora engagement. Since, for diaspora populations a sense of identity is important. Therefore, the Korean Wave has importance because it was provided a sense of transnational Korean identity. Without which the South Korean government cannot effectively implement diaspora engagement policies. Legislating new

---

<sup>161</sup> Choi. 21.

diaspora engagement policies mean nothing, if there is not any sense of identity. Although, diaspora engagement policies have been relatively progressive, unless the South Korean government begins to directly incorporate the Korean Wave with diaspora engagement policy. The strength of diaspora engagement has the potential to deteriorate.

Nevertheless, the Korean Wave has produced soft power for Korea that has helped to develop Korean American identities. Nevertheless, through the OKF the South Korean government made an effort to strengthen its diaspora engagement policies primarily by educational means. However, the Korean Wave has been more effective in strengthening Korea's relationship with its diaspora. Since, it helped to stimulate a sense of transnational Korean identity. Nevertheless, as evidenced by the responses of my surveyees, this sense of identity can be quite complex. Most Korean American youth cannot identify as completely American or completely Korean. For one reason or another, most Korean Americans feel stuck in between their Korean identity and their American identity. Therefore, for Korean American youth identity is malleable, but Korean popular culture has created a sense community within Korean American society.

All the same, the ability of the Korean Wave to produce soft power has had unforeseen benefits for Korea. The sustained popularity of the Korean popular culture has helped Korea implement cultural diplomacy. Since, the attractiveness of Korea has gradually increased because of the Korean Wave. Although, the Korean popular culture was an endeavour to stimulate the economy, it has allowed Korea to more easily engage with Korean American youth. Since, it has provided Korean American youth with an outlet to immerse them in Korean culture. Although, there limits to how much influence the Korean Wave has had on identity. The Korean Wave has enticed Korean American youth with an interest in Korean culture. However, diaspora engagement polices have somewhat lagged behind the

Korean Wave. Diaspora engagement policies have primarily been about improving relations, but has tended to take for granted the need for sense of transnational Korean identity.

The Korean Wave has provided this sense of identity, but diaspora policies have not adapted fast enough. There have been a number of minor technicalities that have prevented Korean Americans from engaging with South Korea. Dual citizenship for instance, although meant to be progressive and promote a sense of transnational Korean identity has alienated many Korean Americans. Since, in order to study in South Korea, dual citizens have to renounce their citizenship just to study in South Korea. For Korean American males, compulsory military service is required before they can renounce their citizenship. These technicalities along with Korea's conservative societal values have put off many Korean Americans.

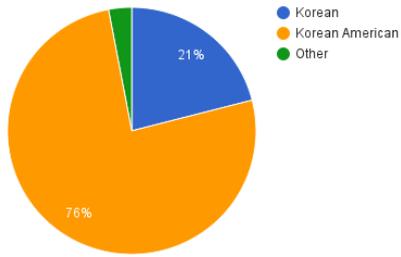
The discrimination and prejudice in South Korea are cultural differences for Korean Americans. Nevertheless, the South Korean government implemented measures towards developing a more open society having implemented plans to be more accepting of different ethnicities. Although, Korea still has a long way to go before it will incite Korean American youth further. The stigma against them still remains strong, as evidenced by the failure to appoint Jong Kim as the head of the new MSIP. However, the South Korean government has been doing its best to adapt in order to become a more attractive country.

Although, the Korean Wave has its limitations, the Korean Wave has generally had positive impact on most Korean American youth. Even though, South Korea's popular culture production and diaspora engagement policies are separate entities, I have found the former has assisted the latter. South Korea's diaspora engagement policies, especially among Korean American youth would not have been as effective if the Korean Wave did not provide a sense of belonging to South Korea. However, the South Korean government will need to implement different policies in order to strengthen this sense of transnational Korean

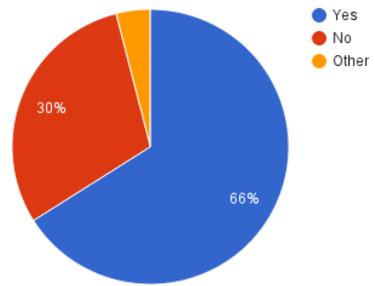
identity the Korean Wave has provided. There are two different avenues the South Korean government can take. The first is to encourage societal changes within South Korea, which South Korea is already doing. The second is to somehow incite Korean American youth to engage in South Korea's political affairs. Nevertheless, the Korean Wave by having helped to develop a sense of Korean identity for Korean American youth has enhanced the diaspora engagement of South Korea.

# Appendices

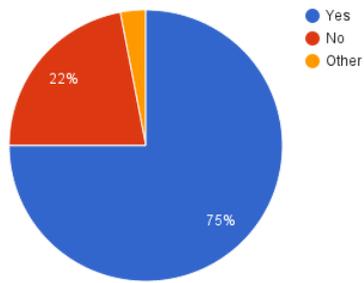
How do you identify yourself?



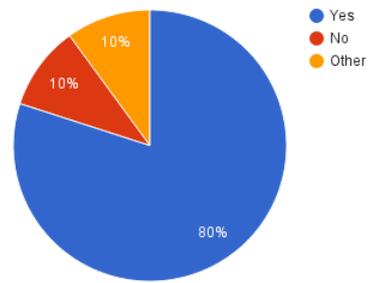
Has Korean popular culture effected your sense of identity?



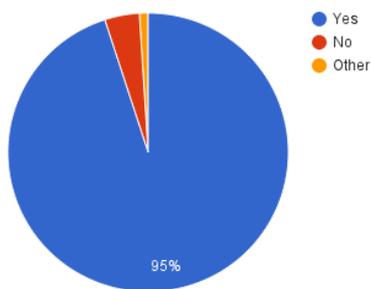
Has there been any inclination to embrace your Korean heritage?



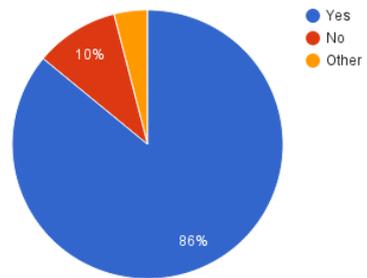
Have you made an effort to learn Korean?



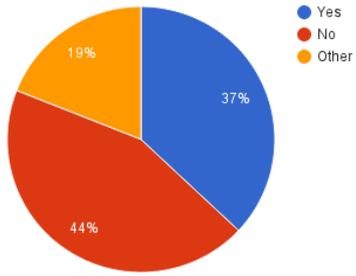
Have you visited or plan to visit Korea?



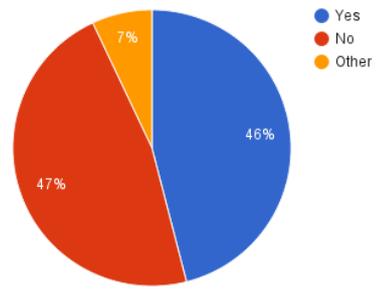
Are you a fan of K-pop, K-drama, K-food, etc.?



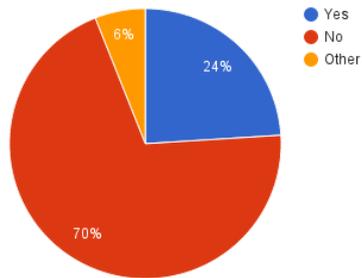
**Are you aware of South Korean politics or political issues?**



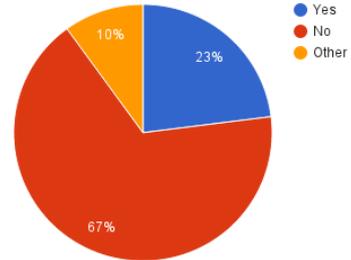
**Have you ever thought of studying in Korea?**



**Have you considered permanently living in Korea?**



**Is there anything the Korean government can do to change your opinions?**



## Bibliography

- Barnes, Alexis. *South Korea's Not So Subtle Racist hiring Practices*. Date Accessed: June 2, 2015. <http://www.vice.com/read/south-koreas-not-so-subtle-racist-hiring-practices-0000313-v21n5>
- Brown, August. *K-pop enters American pop consciousness*, Date Accessed: May 6, 2015 <http://articles.latimes.com/2012/apr/29/entertainment/la-ca-kpop-20120429/2>
- Chaliand, Gerard & Rageau, Jean-Pierre. *The Penguin Atlas of Diaspora*. New York; Viking Penguin. 1995.
- Cheng, Jonathan. *South Korea "To Go Extinct By 2750"*, Accessed May 5, 2015. <http://blogs.wsj.com/korearealtime/2014/08/25/south-korea-to-go-/extinct-by-2750/>
- Chin, Ku Sup & Smith, David. *Global Networks 15. A reconceptualization of state transnationalism: South Korea as an illustrative case*, 2014
- Cho, Sang Heun. *South Koreans Struggle with Race*, Date Accessed: June 3, 2015. [http://www.nytimes.com/2009/11/02/world/asia/02race.html?pagewanted=all&\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2009/11/02/world/asia/02race.html?pagewanted=all&_r=0)
- Choi, Inbom. *Korean diaspora in the making: Its current status and impact on the Korean economy*. Ed. C. Fred Bergsten & Inbom Choi. , *Special Report*. Vol. 15 *The Korean Diaspora in the World Economy*. Washington, DC: Institute for International Economics, 2003.
- Chow, Kat. *How the South Korean Government Made K-Pop a Thing*, Accessed May 3, 2015. <http://www.npr.org/sections/codeswitch/2015/04/13/399414351/how-the-south-korean-government-made-k-pop-a-thing>.
- Chung, Philip. *Discrimination of foreign-born Koreans*, Date Accessed: May 23, 2015. [http://www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/news/opinon/2012/02/137\\_105900.html](http://www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/news/opinon/2012/02/137_105900.html)
- Cumings, Bruce. *Korea's Place in the Sun: A Modern History*. updated ed. New York: W.W. Norton, 2005.
- Fogarty, Edward. *Encyclopaedia of Governance*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, 2007.
- Foucault, Michel. *The Foucault Effect: Studies in Governmentality: with Two Lectures by and an Interview with Michel Foucault*. Edited by Burchell, Graham, Colin Gordon, and Peter Miller. Chicago: University Of Chicago Press, 1991.
- Gamlen, Alan. *2008 Why Engage Diasporas?*, Working Paper No. 63, University of Oxford.
- González Gutiérrez, Carlos. *Fostering Identities: Mexico's Relations with its Diaspora*. *Journal of American History*, Special Issue: Rethinking History and the Nation-State: Mexico and the United States Vol. 86, No. 2 (Sep., 1999) .
- Heo, Anna. *Korea's First Overseas Voting for Presidential Election Closed*, Accessed Date April, 30, 2015. [http://www.arirang.co.kr/News/News\\_View.asp?nseq=141821](http://www.arirang.co.kr/News/News_View.asp?nseq=141821)

- Hong, Euny. *The Birth of Korean Cool: How One Nation Is Conquering the World Through Pop Culture*, New York Picador, 2014. Kindle.
- Howe, Neil, Jackson, Richard, & Nakashima, Keisuke. *The Aging of Korea Demographics and Retirement Policy in the Land of the Morning Calm*. Date Accessed: May 28, 2015. [http://csis.org/files/media/isis/pubs/070321\\_gai\\_agingkorea\\_eng.pdf](http://csis.org/files/media/isis/pubs/070321_gai_agingkorea_eng.pdf) 7.
- Hu, Elise. *How Asian-Americans Found a Home in the World of K-pop*, Date Accessed: May 22, 2015. <http://www.npr.org/sections/codeswitch/2015/04/14/398255011/how-asian-americans-found-a-home-in-the-world-of-k-pop>
- Hu, Elise. *The All-Work, No-Play Culture of South Korean Education*, Date Accessed: May 25, 2015. <http://www.npr.org/sections/parallels/2015/04/15/393939759/the-all-work-no-play-culture-of-south-korean-education>.
- Hugo, Graeme. *Migration and Development: A Perspective from Asia*, Date Accessed: May 15, 2015. [http://www.childtrafficking.com/Docs/hugo\\_iom\\_2003\\_\\_migration\\_an.pdf](http://www.childtrafficking.com/Docs/hugo_iom_2003__migration_an.pdf).
- Jang, Gunjoo & Paik, Won. *Korean Wave as a Tool for Korea's New Cultural Diplomacy*, Accessed May 22, 2015. <http://file.scirp.org/Html/22229.html>.
- Kim, Jae-heun. *BIGBANG sweeps music charts in comeback*. Date Accessed: May 14, 2015. [http://www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/news/culture/2015/05/201\\_178163.html](http://www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/news/culture/2015/05/201_178163.html)
- Kim, Jeong. *Jeong Kim: A return to South Korea, thwarted by nationalism*, Date Accessed: May 28, 2015. [http://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/jeong-kim-a-return-to-south-korea-thwarted-by-nationalism/2013/03/29/fa674336-97f8-11e2-814b-063623d80a60\\_story.html](http://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/jeong-kim-a-return-to-south-korea-thwarted-by-nationalism/2013/03/29/fa674336-97f8-11e2-814b-063623d80a60_story.html)
- Kim, Regina. *South Korean Cultural Diplomacy and Efforts to Promote the Rok's Brand Image in the United States and Around the World*, Date Accessed: June 2, 2015. <http://web.stanford.edu/group/sjeaa/journal111/Korea2.pdf>
- Kim, Stella. *A Dreaded Rite of Passage: Korea's Mandatory Military Service*, Date Accessed: May 7, 2015. <http://www.brownpoliticalreview.org/2013/12/a-dreaded-rite-of-passage-koreas-mandatory-military-service/>
- Kim, Youna. *Korean media in a digital cosmopolitan world in The Korean Wave: Korean Media Go Global (Internationalizing Media Studies)*, New York: Taylor and Francis. 2013. Kindle.
- King Seijong Institue Foundation. Date Aessed: May 28, 2015. <http://eng.ksif.or.kr/business/locSejong.do>
- Korean Culture and Information Service. 2011. *Contemporary Korean No. 1 Birth of the Korean Wave*. Korean Culture and Information Service Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism
- Lee, Geun. *A Theory of Soft Power and Korea's Soft Power Strategy*.

Lee, Ji Eun. *Survey: only 5.5% of foreigners in Seoul say they've never experienced discrimination*, Date Accessed: May 27, 2015.  
[http://english.hani.co.kr/arti/english\\_edition/e\\_international/692693.html](http://english.hani.co.kr/arti/english_edition/e_international/692693.html).

Lee, Tae Hoon. *Dual Citizenship to be Allowed*, Date Accessed: May 17, 2015.  
[http://www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/news/nation/2010/04/116\\_64629.html](http://www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/news/nation/2010/04/116_64629.html)

Ministry of Trade and Foreign Affairs. Accessed April 23, 2015.  
[http://www.index.go.kr/potal/main/EachDtlPageDetail.do?idx\\_cd=1682](http://www.index.go.kr/potal/main/EachDtlPageDetail.do?idx_cd=1682)

Ministry of Trade and Foreign Affairs . Accessed April 15, 2015.  
[http://png.mofat.go.kr/webmodule/htsboard/template/read/engreadboard.jsp?typeID=16&boardid=10297&seqno=677056&c=&t=&pagenum=1&tableName=TYPE\\_ENGL EGATIO&pc=&dc=&wc=&lu=&vu=&iu=&du=](http://png.mofat.go.kr/webmodule/htsboard/template/read/engreadboard.jsp?typeID=16&boardid=10297&seqno=677056&c=&t=&pagenum=1&tableName=TYPE_ENGL EGATIO&pc=&dc=&wc=&lu=&vu=&iu=&du=)

Min, Pyong Gap. *Koreans' "Immigration to the U.S: History and Contemporary Trends"*, Accessed April 3, 2015.  
<http://www.qc.cuny.edu/Academics/Centers/RCKC/Documents/Koreans%20Immigration%20to%20the%20US.pdf>.

Monocle. Accessed Date: May 22, 2015. <http://monocle.com/film/affairs/soft-power-survey-2014-15/>

Mundy, Simon. *South Korea faces dilemma over conscientious objectors*, Date Accessed: June 2, 2015. <http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/3e898098-f868-11e4-8e16-00144feab7de.html>

Nye, Joseph. *Soft Power: Bound to Lead: the Changing Nature of American Power*. New York: Public Affairs, 1990.

Nye, Joseph. *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics*. New York.: Public Affairs, 2004.

Nye, Joseph & Kim, Youna. *Soft power and the Korean Wave" in "The Korean Wave: Korean Media Go Global (Internationalizing Media Studies)* New York: Taylor and Francis. 2013. Kindle.

Park, Jung Sun. *Negotiating identity and power in transnational cultural consumption Korean American youths and the Korean Wave in The Korean Wave: Korean Media Go Global (Internationalizing Media Studies)*, New York: Taylor and Francis. 2013. Kindle.

Petski, Denise. *'Make It Pop' Renewed For Season 2 by Nickelodeon*, Date Accessed: May 25, 2015. <http://deadline.com/2015/05/make-it-pop-renewed-season-2-nickelodeon-1201420443/>

Rannveig Agunias , Dovelyn. *How to improve diaspora engagement*, Date Accessed: June 1, 2015. <http://www.theguardian.com/global-development-professionals-network/2013/feb/20/improving-asian-diaspora-insitutions>

- Russell, Mark. *The Gangnam Phenom*, Date Accessed: May 7, 2015.  
<http://foreignpolicy.com/2012/09/27/the-gangnam-phenom/>.
- Seabrook, John. *Factory Girls*, Date Accessed: April 23, 2015  
<http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2012/10/08/factory-girls-2?currentPage=all>
- Song, Changzoo. “Engaging the diaspora in an era of transnationalism”, Accessed June 2, 2015. <http://wol.iza.org/articles/engaging-the-diaspora-in-an-era-of-transnationalism.pdf>.
- Song, Sang Ho. *Overseas Koreans get voting rights*, Date Accessed: May 6, 2015.  
<http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=200902060042>
- The Asian Population: 2010. Accessed May 12, 2015. “2010 Census Briefs”  
<https://www.census.gov/prod/cen2010/briefs/c2010br-11.pdf>.
- Yang, Sung Hee. *Lee Young-ae could return to iconic series*, Date Accessed: May 17, 2015.  
<http://koreajoongangdaily.joins.com/news/article/Article.aspx?aid=2986743>
- YouTube. *Girls` Generation(소녀시대) “Gee”*, Date Accessed: May 23, 2015.  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U7mPqycQ0tQ>.
- YouTube. *PSY Gangnam Style (강남스타일)*, Accessed June 3, 2015  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9bZkp7q19f0>
- Zong, Jie & Batalova, Jeanne. *Korean Immigrants in the United States*, Date Accessed: May 26, 2015. <http://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/korean-immigrants-united-states>