JOURNAL OF ASIAN SOCIOLOGY
Volume 50 | Number 3 | September 2021, 513-544
DOI 10.21588/dns.2021.50.3.004

Article

Nationalism and the Representation of National Sport Heroes in 1990s South Korea*

Haenam Park | Wonkwang University
Robert Easthope | Seoul National University

This article analyses the changing representations of three South Korean sport celebrities and explores how this reflects a transition in the dominant form of nationalism in South Korea during the 1990s. Hwang Young-cho, who took gold in the marathon at the 1992 Barcelona Olympics, was considered a "born" hero, and the South Korean media attributed his physical gifts, habits, and background to the excellence of the Korean ethnic nation. We consider this in relation to the concept of ethnic nationalism, which emphasizes shared lineage, language, and history. Representations of baseball player Chan Ho Park and golfer Pak Se-ri focussed on their levels of "effort." They were presented as exemplars of the virtues required in competitive international markets. We argue that the new manner in which these two national sport heroes were represented in the 1990s reflects the movement of South Korean nationalist discourse away from ethnic nationalism and towards market nationalism.

Keywords: *Hwang Young-cho, Chan Ho Park, and Pak Se-ri, Ethnic Nationalism, Market Nationalism, Sports Nationalism, 1990s Korea*

* This article is supported by the National Research Foundation of Korea grant funded by Korea Government (Ministry of Education) in 2017 (NRF-2017S1A6A3A2079082)

Introduction

Sports celebrities may come to represent the characteristics of a specific group (Turner 2014, pp. 117-118; Rojek 2001, p. 37). Although there are many kinds of groups they can stand for, in our world of nation-states it is especially common for them to represent a nation (Hobsbawm 1992, pp. 142-143).[1] The way sports heroes represent their nation changes from case to case, country to country, and era to era. Compare, for example the representation of German athletes from the 1936 Berlin Olympics and the footballers who won the 1998 FIFA World Cup for France: the former were presented in Nazi propaganda as perfect examples of Germany's Aryan racial excellence (Stradling 2009, p. 34); the latter were depicted as representations of the "French" values of solidarity and tolerance (Carrard 2002, p. 65). As this contrast suggests, nationalism can associate nations with very different ideals and, as such, national sporting heroes can come to represent creeds as divergent as racial supremacy and political liberalism.

Smith (1973) has argued that the representation of sport heroes and the ideals associated with them have shifted constantly in response to social change. Within South Korea too, sport has been closely related to several types of nationalism (Lee, 2015), thus athletes have been represented in a variety of ways. For example, Nam and Koh (2014) discuss how Chan Ho Park, active in the 1990s, was often depicted as a "national hero" whilst Hyun-jin Ryu, whose career was at its height in the 2010s, is depicted as being a world citizen. The footballer Park Ji-sung, according to Yang (2012), became a "national hero" and a paragon of South Korea's market-friendly, neoliberal values and increasing international influence.

Any study on how sport heroes are represented within a society is closely related to an analysis of the kind of nationalism predominant therein. This is especially true when it comes to nationalism in contemporary South Korea, where several forms of nationalism have coexisted in a protean manner. Since the 1960s all political ideology and argument in South Korea, whether on behalf of the right-wing developmental-state or the left-wing resistant civil

[1] Sport is not always linked to nationalism. In 1920s Europe for example, a number of competitions sought to distance themselves from the nationalist framework promoted by the International Olympic Committee (IOC) (Kuhn 2015, p. 33). The largest of these was the International Workers' Olympiad, but this period also saw the Women's World Games, hosted by the International Women's Sports Federation, and the Soviet Union sponsored Spartakiad (Chatziefstathiou and Henry 2012, pp. 112-128).

society, has been expressed through the language of nationalism (Jeyeon Oh, 2007).[2]

Analyzing the representation of sporting heroes is a useful way to understand nationalism in 1990s Korea. In this era, after the 88' Seoul Olympiad, South Korea's population noticed the country's international profile beginning to change. Based on the development of popular culture and middle class-based civil society, a third strand of nationalism, not subordinated to that of developmental state or resistant civil society, emerged. This third strand of nationalism, located in the newly emergent middle class, is hard to capture through an examination of documents, but can be uncovered through an analysis of the representation of national sporting heroes. In this article, we shall describe how three key national sporting heroes were represented during the 1990s and identify the nationalism which lay behind these depictions.

This study involves three elements. The first element is an analysis of how three of the most influential sporting heroes of the 1990s—Hwang Young-cho, Chan Ho Park, and Pak Se-ri—were represented.[3] To this end, newspaper articles related to the three athletes were collected by searching the Naver News Library (*Chosun Ilbo, Dong-A Ilbo, Kyunghyang Shinmun, Hankyoreh, Maeil Economic Daily*) and individual newspaper websites (*Joongang Ilbo, Hankook Ilbo*). In addition, books published between 1990 and 2000 that were written by, or about, the relevant figures were searched for and collected through the Korea Education and Research Information Service website (riss.kr).

According to Turner (2014, p. 23), celebrity is both "a media process that is coordinated by an industry" and "a commodity… productively consumed by audiences and fans." The second element of our study thus examines both these aspects of celebrity with regards to the representations of Hwang

---

[2] The developmental state refers to governmental regimes in East Asia that focused on rapid economic development and an improved international profile. These strong, interventionist states planned and took policy measures that focussed all social resources on achieving those objectives. In South Korea, the developmental state emerged after a military coup and accompanied the military dictatorship. To implement economic plans, the South Korean developmental state allied with chaebols and granted them various forms of subsidies, while suppressing the voice of workers and lower-classes in order to maintain competitive export prices. See Cho (2000).

[3] Previous studies of these three athletes have approached them from the perspective of sports nationalism (Nam and Koh 2014; Ko and Lee 2004; Kwon 2006; Cho 2008; 2009), and as sporting heroes (Koo 1998; Ahn 1998; Chung 2001). However, there has not yet been any work which explores how the representation of these national sport heroes reflected changes in nationalism during the 1990s.

Young-cho, Chan Ho Park, and Pak Se-ri. In order to do this, we examine several key moments of social change and best-selling books of the time. These were closely related to the change of nationalism and the consumption of nationalistic discourse.[4]

The final element of the article's analysis addresses how nationalism in South Korea changed during the 1990s.[5] Here, the study utilizes previous studies of nationalism and employs a typology of nationalism which compares between two general types, drawing heavily on the literature regarding ethnic and civic nationalism. (See ch. 2) The distinction between these is one of the most enduring themes in the literature on nationalism and has been regarded as key to understanding the characteristics, political natures, and proponents of nationalism. We also consider whether discourse about globalization supplanted nationalism in 1990s South Korea, as several previous studies have suggested (Park 2006; Park 1998; Kim 2000; Hong 2007).

The article is structured as follows: in the next chapter, we give a brief overview of ethnic and civic nationalism and explain how we utilized this typology. The third chapter examines how Hwang Young-cho, the most popular athlete of the early 1990s, was represented by the media. It explores how this representation was related to a particular form of nationalism predominant in early 1990s South Korea, the consumption of this nationalistic discourse, and the social changes which lay behind it. The fourth chapter unfolds in the same way as the third: the representations of Chan Ho Park and Pak Se-ri during the late 1990s are analysed and related to a certain type of nationalism. We examine how this discourse was consumed by audiences and consider the social factors behind its development.

---

[4] Three key groups of actors emerge as key to the production and reception of nationalist discourse in South Korea during this period: the elites associated with South Korea's developmental state, civil society leaders resistant to the politics and policies of the elites (henceforth, resistant civil society), and a newly emerging middle class. All three have previously been identified by sociologists as key factors for explaining social change in the South Korea since the late 1980s (Koo 1991; Arita 2003; He 2020).

[5] In this article nationalism is used to refer to a nationalist (non-) consciousness that has established itself in everyday life. This is the taken for granted belief that a nation constitutes a complete unit, the idea that there exists a unique set of characteristics that define the homogeneity between members and their difference to nonmembers, and the sense these characteristics are created through shared history, language, lineage, and civic virtues. The nation has an identity within international society, a narrative, and a resulting sense of solidarity between internal members (Billig 1995, pp. 21-24). This definition of nationalist differs from that of scholars such as Gellner (1983) and Hobsbawm & Ranger (1983) who treat nationalism more like a nation-state formation project.

Ethnic and Civic Nationalism

According to Park Myoung-kyu (2004, p. 168) nationalism has been the "core idea" of modern and contemporary history in Korea. But not all nationalist discourse is the same, and the language used to speak about nation and national identity in South Korea has varied over time. In this article we uncover a stark shift in the (nationalist) language and representations of Korean national sport heroes which occurred in the 1990s. It is useful to analyse this from the perspective of one of the most enduring themes in the literature on nationalism; comparisons between two types of nationalism.

The most common of these comparisons is that between ethnic and civic nationalism. Here, the general argument is that, with civic nationalism, national identity and cohesion comes from adherence and loyalty to certain political values and institutions. With ethnic nationalism, on the other hand, national identity comes from ethnic, organic factors like language and descent. (Zimmer 2003, p.174) This idea that nationalism can be divided into two basic types goes back to Friedrich Meinecke's notion of *Staatsnation* and *Kulturnation* (Smith 1991, p. 8). Many authors have since developed broadly similar comparisons using their own terminology, perhaps the most influential of which (certainly pre-1990s) is found in Kohn's *The Idea of Nationalism* (1944). The different terminologies authors' have used reflect disparate opinions on which aspect/s of nationalism define its nature (Brown 1999, p.281), but since 1989 with the flourishing of nationalism in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union, "ethnic nationalism" and "civic nationalism" has become the most prevalent nomenclature (Özkırımlı 2005).

One of the most influential writers on nationalism, Anthony Smith, described his own distinction between "ethnic" and "civic" nationalism in *National Identity* (1991). He argues that civic nationalism, which developed first, has two key elements. The first is an "historic" territory, and the second is a community united by common laws, institutions, and "a single political will" (Smith 1991, p. 10). It is this community, which should possess a common culture and shared values, to whom the historical territory is thought to rightly belong. Smith believes ethnic nationalism developed later and is mostly found in Eastern Europe and Asia. Like civic nationalism, it emphasizes proper ownership of an historical community. However, the community which ethnic nationalism believes should hold political power in that territory is defined by language, customs, and belief in common ancestry.

In many ways Smith's concept is similar to the framework set out by

Hans Kohn in his 1944 work *The Idea of Nationalism*. Kohn distinguished between a Western, political type of nationalism (which we could call civic) and an Eastern, genealogical nationalism (which we could call ethnic). The former was associated with "liberty" and "rational cosmopolitanism," whilst the latter was "excessive and militant" (Kohn 1944, p. 24). He suggested that these two forms were the result of the different effects that large-scale social transformations had in Germany and Western Europe. According to Kohn, in Western Europe the development of a strong middle-class led to a liberal, civic nationalism, whilst in Germany external developments and the resulting "inferiority complex" produced ethnic nationalism (1944, p. 330).

Kohn's work has been influential; but it is open to several criticisms, many of which also apply to other, later bipolar typologies. First, Kohn's typology overemphasizes geographical location: nationalism of different forms can be found all around the world (Smith 1991, p. 81). Second, Smith argues that Kohn is wrong to associate civic (Western) nationalism with the middle class, arguing that civic nationalisms actually "owe much to earlier monarchical and aristocratic culture and activities" (p. 81). This argument is supported by Greenfeld (1992, p. 293), whose analysis of five cases only turns up a link between the middle class and nationalism in Germany. However, Germany produced the most illiberal form nationalism of these cases and Kohn explicitly associated the middle class with liberal nationalism. It seems that the relationship between class and nationalism is more complicated than Kohn recognized. Brown (1999) argues that an important issue here is the way bipolar analyses have associated ethnic nationalism with more authoritarian politics than civic nationalism. This third line of criticism is also taken by Kuzio (2002), who points out that countries now considered liberal and in possession of a civic nationalism have previously been characterized by ethnic nationalism. Indeed, civic and ethnic nationalisms often coexist at the same time in one territory, with their relative influence waxing and waning. Hutchinson (2005), for example, describes how ethnic (Hutchinson prefers the term "cultural") nationalism often mobilizes when disaffection grows with the official nationalism spread by the state. This is the fourth issue with the way the typology is usually used. Studies of nationalism need to be sensitive to how nationalism and national identity can change. We should avoid what Brubaker describes as "[t]he temptation to treat differences of degree as differences of kind, differences of contextual expression as differences of inner principle" (1992, p. 2).

Despite these important criticisms of the bipolar ethnic/civic distinction, it remains a useful heuristic tool. It is, for example, analytically worthwhile to

be able to ask "under what circumstances have civic and ethnic ideas about national identity become more or less important?" Our brief overview of the literature suggests that the typology can be used most productively if we remain aware of two issues that have affected previous research: (1) it is important to remember that single territories can be associated with both ethnic and civic nationalisms; and (2) the salience of these different conceptions of national identity can fluctuate. Maxim Tabachnik (2019) has argued that although it has become commonplace to include both territory and values in definitions of civic nationalism, these two elements do not always correspond to each other. We can therefore improve the typology by disassociating territory from civic nationalism. This is similar to the approach taken in this article: civic nationalism will be defined by an emphasis on the importance of values for national identity, whereas ethnic nationalism will be characterized by an emphasis on the importance of common descent—i.e., national identity in civic nationalism is a matter of shared values, but in ethnic nationalism it is a matter of shared lineage. It is important that these definitions are broad so that the particularities of individual cases can be addressed.

In the following chapters we will identify a shift from ethnic nationalism to a particular from of civic nationalism in the representations of South Korean sporting heroes. We attempt to explain why this transition occurred in 1990s South Korea by relating it to important moments of social transformation.

Hwang Young-cho and Ethnic Nationalism in the Early 1990s

The "Born" Hero

A number of sporting figures came to fame in the early 1990s. The joint South-North Korean teams that competed in table tennis and youth football in 1991 were prominent, as were several of the athletes who won gold at the 1992 Barcelona Olympics. One of these gold medallists is the first of our three sporting heroes—marathon runner Hwang Young-cho. Born in the fishing village of Samcheok, Gangwon-do, his father was a fisherman and his mother one of Korea's *haenyo*—women who dive to harvest shellfish and other seafood. His first steps towards becoming an athlete were taken in his first year at Samcheok Geundeok Middle School when he joined the cycling club. In high school he became a track and field athlete. Then, after

graduating, he joined the privately run Kolon Sports Team, initially as a 5,000-metre specialist. He started his career with an unexpected 3rd place in the Dong-A Marathon in 1991, before going on to win the Summer Universiade in Sheffield, England that same year. In 1992 he set a new Korean record in Beppu, Japan, before heading to the 1992 Barcelona Olympics. At Barcelona he achieved his biggest success, taking gold ahead of Japan's Koichi Morishita. In the following years Hwang suffered injury-related problems but was able to come back to win the Hiroshima Asian Games competition in 1994. He retired two years later.

Hwang's victory at the 1992 Barcelona Olympics Marathon was ripe for interpretation through a nationalist narrative. Firstly, the marathon was held on August 9, 1992, 56 years to the day after Sohn Kee-chung won the event for the Japanese team at the 1936 Berlin Olympics. Sohn, unable to even compete under his real name had stood on the podium head bowed in "silent shame and outrage" (Large 2007). In 1992 however, Sohn watched Hwang Young-cho cross the finish line at the Estadio de Montjuic ahead of the Japanese long-distance runner, Koichi Morishita. Later, when Hwang won gold again at the Hiroshima Asian Games, the race ended in the Peace Memorial Park, a space replete with World War II associations.

Hwang Young-cho did not become a national hero simply because he was a successful long-distance runner. Rather, Hwang's victory in Barcelona was interpreted within the narrative of a post-colonial Korean nation; on one level his victory was seen as easing Sohn Kee-chung's personal regret (*Han*). On another, broader level, it became part of the narrative of the Korean nation's suffering and subjugation, and the journey from colonialism to post-colonialism. The following news article demonstrates this interpretation very clearly:

> Korea's Hwang Young-cho and Japan's Morishita race to win a marathon from 56 years ago. This is because on August 9th, 56 years ago, Sohn Kee-chung won the Berlin Olympic Marathon in a world-record-breaking 2 hours and 30 minutes. Korean Sohn Kee-chung, flying the Japanese flag, won the marathon, but Korea and Japan both claim the gold medal he won that day. For Korea it was a Korean's victory, for Japan it was the Japanese state's victory. But the medal from 56 years ago belongs to the Korean people. Hwang Young-cho ended this argument after winning the race on Montjuïc Hill and bursting into the stadium without slowing (*Kyunghyang Shinmun* August 11, 1992).

In this interpretation, Hwang Young-cho's medal was not merely his own victory, and it did more than just encompassing Korea's victory over Japan. It is framed as a post-colonial incident that made Sohn Kee-chung, who had Japanese nationality during the colonial period, a Korean. Other newspapers claimed that Hwang Young-cho had not just relieved Sohn's regret (*Han*), but that of the Korean nation's. They lauded him for "breaking a link in the chains of Japanese Imperialism (*Dong-A Ilbo* August 10,1992)." Hwang Young-cho's victory was also regarded as a transformative event for the character and identity of the nation. Speaking at the time, President Roh Tae-woo called the victory "a feat that showed the excellence of our nation (*Chosun Ilbo* August 11, 1992)." Ko Un, a poet famous for representing the perspective of resistant civil society wrote:

> What a country we are! What a country we are! What a country we are!
> I cried at dawn when twenty-year old Hwang Young-cho entered the Olympic stadium (*Hankyoreh* August 11, 1992).

Ko Un also suggested that it is possible to define the identity (and the "excellence") of the nation through Hwang Young-cho. The idea that Hwang Young-cho represented the nation is embodied in statements about how Korean his mannerisms and customs are. One novelist calls him a "real Korean" who eats Korean food:

> He is Korean. He eats seasoned herbs and drinks water. Instead of meat he eats raw grains and vegetables, pine nut rice porridge, and sticky rice. This Korean flew the *Taegukgi* at the final Olympic stadium … his feet were always rooted in this land. One day, his face suddenly appeared in front of us like a comet, and I can't forget that while running one hundred *li* in two hours he was smiling the whole time. That was the face of a Korean, tenacious and enduringly vital. That fierce heart was confirmed once again in the morning of victory (*Chosun Ilbo* August 11, 1992).

Other media sources saw the white sand of Samcheok beach, where he played when he was young, as one of the driving forces behind the gold medal (*Kyunghyang Shinmun*, August 11, 1992; *Maeil Economic Daily* August 10, 1992). In a book published three months after his victory Hwang Young-cho himself said that his "hometown *Sancheok*" was a "blessed natural environment" that made him (Hwang 1992, p. 125).[6] He believed his cardiorespiratory function improved because he was always swimming and

playing in the seaside village. The simple lifestyle that Hwang Young-cho experienced during his upbringing recreated the general lifestyle of Koreans. This lifestyle was regarded as the basis of national excellence embodied in his gold medal.

The idea that Hwang represented the nation also bought attention to the body he had inherited through Korean ethnic lineage. As mentioned, Hwang had originally joined the Kolon Sports Team as a 5,000 and 10,000 metre runner, but took part in the 1991 Dong-a Ilbo Seoul Marathon as a pacer to assist his teammates over the first twenty-kilometre section. Instead of only running his section Hwang continued to finish third. That summer, he competed in the Universiade in Sheffield, England, and won the marathon with a new games record. In November he set a new South Korean record at the Beppu Marathon in Japan. Six months later he won Olympic gold. That a 5,000 and 10,000 metre runner could switch events and win gold was a surprise at the time.[7]

Hwang's unusual career path can be interpreted in a variety of ways. In general, the performance of sporting heroes are interpreted as the result of their own efforts, the effect of sports science, and the work of coaching staff. However, in the case of Hwang Young-cho, it was his "born" physical ability that was highlighted. Much of the media focussed on his superior cardiopulmonary function, and a connection was quickly drawn between this ability and his *haenyo* mother (*Joongang Ilbo* August 13, 1992; *Kyunghyang Shinmun* August 12, 1992). The assumption was that he inherited his physical advantages from his parents, and Hwang Young-cho himself expressed this belief in his autobiography (Hwang 1992, p. 157). However, for some commentator's Hwang's physique—short legs and stature—was typically "Korean" and perfect for long-distance running. Within this logic Hwang's

[6] It is worth noting that celebrity autobiographies tend to be ghost-written. It is a possible that the ghostwriter's thoughts are more heavily reflected that the athlete's own. The ghostwriter may also be interested in capturing the public's attention.

[7] There are now a good number of athletes who have been able to set strong marathon times after transitioning to the event from shorter distances such as the 3,000 meter; 5, 000 m; or 10,000 meter. Emil Zátopek, known as the "Czech locomotive," won a gold medal at the 1948 London Olympics for the 10,000 meter, and then three at the 1952 Helsinki Olympics: for the 5,000 meter; 10,000 meter; and the marathon. His gold medal winning marathon run was his first ever attempt at the event. Ethiopia's Haile Gebrselassie, who took gold in the 10,000 meter at the 1996 and 2000 Olympics, took up marathon running in the 2000s and was able to set consecutive world records. Eliud Kipchoge, who won bronze and silver in the 2004 and 2008 Olympics for the 5,000 meter, became the best marathon runner of the 2010s. In 2019 he became the first person to run the marathon in less than two hours.

gold-medal winning body was inherited, not only from his mother, but from "the Korean people."

This was why Hwang Young-cho became a national hero. It was not because Hwang won Olympic gold in the marathon. He became a hero because his triumph over a Japanese athlete on the 56th anniversary of Sohn Kee-chung's bittersweet victory seemed to fulfill the nation's post-colonial narrative and sooth wounds from the colonial era. But Hwang was not represented as being different from ordinary Koreans. Instead, he encapsulated the excellence of Korean bodies and customs. Gifts that he inherited from the Korean nation. In a word, Hwang Young-cho was considered a born hero.

The Middle Class, National Growth, and the Great Past

To understand why Hwang Young-cho was represented in such a particular way we need to examine (1) a number of social transformations that began in the late 1980s and (2) South Korean nationalism as it existed in the early 1990s.

The late 1980s in South Korea was a period of significant social change. Indeed, the constitution and basic elements of political order which were established after democratization in 1987 continue to this day. The term "the 87 Regime" was coined to explain this political order (Kim 2010). This time also corresponded to an economic boom that heralded the emergence of a new "middle class" (Park 2009, pp. 240-243). This group were neither part of the developmental state or resistant civil society, and as such their responses to many political and social issues were distinctive. The three groups' respective discourses surrounding the Seoul Olympics demonstrate this very clearly. The developmental state sought to use the Olympics to publicize its success in leading the country to economic growth, whereas resistant civil society concentrated on the number of people displaced during preparations for the games and the idea that the Olympics would further cement the division of the Korean peninsula. The middle class, meanwhile, focussed on the success stories and extraordinary efforts of the people who participated in the games as athletes and staff (Park 2018, pp. 232-253). Since the middle class's response to the Olympics was related to nationalism, it may be possible to identify a third form of nationalism, distinct from that of the developmental state or resistant civil society.

National identity is an important element of nationalism and the new middle class showed a different approach here when compared to resistant

civil society or the developmental state. In the wake of colonialism and post-colonial poverty, both the developmental state and resistant civil society identified the "nation" as still being underdeveloped. However, the middle class focussed on what the nation had already achieved and the potential for further economic development by the mid-1980s. The members of the middles class identified themselves as those who had escaped from poverty and achieved what they had once only dreamed of (Lee 1983, p. 238). Because they believed they were now citizens of a middle-income country, they took middle-class life as a given (Oh 2017, pp. 69-70). This sentiment is also suggested by the number of people who felt they belonged to the middle class—a number which far exceeded even the developmental state's already optimistic calculations (*Kyunghyang Shinmun* January 9, 1991; *Maeil Economic Daily* November 22, 1992).

Unlike the developmental state and resistant civil society, the middle class associated Korean national identity with "growth." Their confidence that growth would continue led to a high evaluation of the "nation" itself and a positive evaluation of, and interest in, the traditions and language that played a key role in the formation of the Korean people. Optimistic attitudes toward reunification (Kim 2016), favourable attitudes toward Soviet and Chinese ethnic compatriots after diplomatic relations improved in 1989, support for the joint South-North Korean table tennis and youth football teams of 1991, advertisements with the slogan "our things are precious," and songs lauding *Shintoburi*—the idea that the best foods are from the soil of fatherland—all set the scene in this period.

This era also saw a preference for "pure" Korean words. Student clubs began to be called "*dong-ari*" rather than "*seokeul,*" the latter being derived from the English word "circle." The word "*bang*" began to replace the Chinese-derived "sil" (室) and English derived "*rum*" (room). Karaoke was no longer "*garaoke,*" now it was "*noraebang.*" Meanwhile novels describing the heroism of historical figures began to sell well. *Dongui Bogam, Mokminsimseo, and Tojeongbigyeol* ranked among the top 10 annual bestsellers from 1990 to 1992. *Seopyeonje,* a film about Korean traditional music, was the highest grossing film in 1993. The book *My Exploration of Korean Cultural Heritage* (or *The Smiles of Buddha*) had people crowding the highways to visit historical sites and one famous writer said it made her see the land of Korea itself as a museum. In the following year (1994), *No Japan* was the best-selling book and *American, or Yankee* also sold very well. This points to how people had begun to re-evaluate the customs of the Americans and Japanese. From the point of view of the developmental state, the United

States and Japan seemed advanced and admirable, but for resistant civil society leaders these two wealthy countries were colonizers and quasi-imperialists. Yet these two groups did have something in common in the way they assessed Japan and America—both groups felt America and Japan were on a level somehow beyond Korea's reach. The new middle class, on the other hand, displayed a sense of rivalry with these nations (Park 2020b, pp. 489-493). In short, South Korea's increasing international profile and economic growth inspired the new middle class to consume and practice a discourse of ethnic nationalism that focussed on their common descent, language, and history.

Ethnic Nationalism in the Early 1990s

The widespread focus on language and history is reminiscent of the way authors such as Hans Kohn (1944) and Anthony Smith described ethnic nationalism. As we saw in chapter two, Kohn drew a distinction between nationalism based on civic virtues and values such as freedom, equality, and fraternity, and nationalism that emphasized "organic" factors such as lineage and language. We termed the former "civic" nationalism and the latter "ethnic" nationalism.

Ethnic nationalism in South Korea can be identified in the nationalist discourse of the resistant civil society that emerged in the 1970s (Kang 2013). The developmental state had blamed "Korean" habits for South Korea's perceived underdevelopment and sought to persuade the population to imitate Japanese and American habits. Resistant civil society however, depicted these countries as colonizers. For them the solution to underdevelopment was the reunification of the Korean nation—shared lineage, language, and history. They thought that empires—the United States and Japan—caused the division of Korea and allowed military dictators to rule and exploit the people of Korea. In their minds reunification would end the military dictatorship and Korea's domination by empires. These elements became particularly important for representations of the nation in resistant civil society's nationalist discourse from the 1980s (Park 2020a, pp. 195-198).

Popular nationalist discourse in the 1990s mirrored this focus, but the motive was different. Unlike resistant civil society, which was based on the sense of underdevelopment and victimization, the ethnic nationalism exhibited by the public in the 1990s began with confidence in the development of Korean society (development which became visible after the late 1980s). Based on the belief that their excellence was formed through

language, history, and lineage, they showed an interest in the excellence of Korean cultural heritage and heroic historical figures. This confidence also bred a spirit of competition with the great powers of Japan and the United States, which were regarded as "advanced countries," and this drove the consumption of books critical of the customs in these nations.

Therefore, the background to Hwang Young-cho's representation as a born hero was the popular discourse of ethnic nationalism. The attention paid to the quality of Hwang Young-cho's habits and physique was linked to interest in the Korean nation as a whole, as this was from where he was ultimately assumed to have inherited the gifts that led him to success. In this discourse, Hwang Young-cho's gold medal was not the result of personal effort. Rather, the gold medal represented the nation's ethnic identity and "excellence" (*Hankyoreh* August 11, 1992; *Dong-A Ilbo* March 25, 1993).

Chan Ho Park, Pak Se-ri, and the New Civic Values of the Late 1990s

Chan Ho Park, a Self-Made Hero

In South Korea, Chan Ho Park is one of the most famous men in sports, and in the second half of the 1990s his influence spread beyond sports and into South Korean society as a whole. He is even numbered among those considered to have contributed to national integration and the formation of the modern Korean nation-state.[8] This makes him one of the country's principal national heroes, and for our purposes he is particularly interesting because there is a striking difference between the way he was represented before and after 1997. To understand this, it is worth giving a brief overview of his career.

Park Chan Ho was born in Gongju, a small town in Chungcheongnam-do Province in 1973. He started playing baseball when he was nine years old and became a pitcher five years later. He must have been considered a good prospect since, as a high school student, he travelled to the United States with the national youth team. However, while he was a student at Hanyang University, Chan Ho Park did not stand-out among what was an

[8] According to Naver Library Search the term national hero (gugmin-yeong-ung) was initially used to describe famous figures from other countries, such as Aung San and Sukarno. The first time the term was used to refer to a Korean was when the *Kyunghyang Shinmun* applied it to Chan Ho Park on October 2, 1997.

exceptionally strong crop of young Korean baseball players. His generation were dubbed the "Golden Generation of 92" after the year they entered university, and, perhaps because of how talented this group as a whole was and because of Park's fairly mediocre showings in youth competitions, there was not a great deal of competition for his signature. The Los Angeles Dodgers, however, who had scouted him at the Asian Games and World University Games recognised his potential and signed him in 1994 as an amateur free agent. Park became the first South Korean born player in Major League Baseball and, when he came on as a "reliever" on April 8, 1994, only the 17th to debut straight into the Major League. After that debut he spent two years assigned to minor league teams before beginning to play regularly for the Dodgers from 1996. The following year saw him become his team's starting pitcher. He was soon a star back in South Korea, and the prospect that he might be required to do military service was much discussed—even by politicians. Chan Ho Park went on to record more than ten wins a season for three years in a row until moving to the Texas Rangers in 2002 on a contract worth $65 million. From this point forward, however, Park began to decline as a player. After leaving Major League Baseball in 2010 he spent one year in Japan with the Orix Buffaloes and one year in South Korea with the Hanwha Eagles before retiring. Park's peak came between the years 1997 and 2001.

When Chan Ho Park first joined the LA Dodgers—for a down-payment of about $1.2 million—much of the discussion in the South Korea media was focussed on his talents. Newspapers headlines such as "157km fast ball breaks open Major League" identified his fastball as the reason behind his move to the Major League (*Dong-A Ilbo* January 14, 1994). When he performed well in spring training games, articles appeared calling for him to move directly into the LA Dodger's Major League team. According to these articles Chan Ho Park had the talent to succeed in the Major League straight away. Headlines included: "American Baseball isn't a big deal for him" (*Kyunghyang Shinmun* March 9, 1994), "Becoming and MLB player is just a matter of time" (*Dong-A Ilbo* March 9, 1994), "American Baseball is lucky to have Chan Ho Park" (*Kyunghyang Shinmun* March 19, 1994), and "the Field of Dreams isn't a dream for him" (*Kyunghyang Shinmun* April 3, 1994). The South Korean media also began to refer to Chan Ho Park as the "Yellow Express" and the "Korea Express." The origin of these monikers is uncertain. We know that the American magazine *Sports Illustrated* magazine had nicknamed Chan Ho Park and Mac Suzuki "Orient Express" after the famous train service (Mayeda 1999, pp. 206-207), but "Yellow Express" and the "Korea Express"

were not used in America—they never appeared in the pages of *The Los Angeles Times*, for example.[9] In fact, it seems certain it was the South Korean media, as Choi (2020) suggests, who chose to directly emphasize race and nation by replacing "Orient" with "Korea" and "Yellow."

As already mentioned, Chan Ho Park was sent to a minor league team shortly after the 1994 season began. If the South Korean media were correct this was at least partly because he lacked control over the ball—an aspect of his play that he had long been criticized for.[10] After two seasons playing in Minor League teams he began to play for the LA Dodgers in the Major League during the 1996 season. 1997, however, was a turning point; this was when Chan Ho Park was used as a starting pitcher throughout the year, racking up 14 wins and becoming a star player in the process. It was also in this year that the way he was being represented in South Korea changed.

The post-1997 representation of Chan Ho Park differed markedly from the representation of Hwang Young-cho in the early 1990s. Unlike Hwang Young-cho, Chan Ho Park was not seen as somebody who had inherited national customs and body. The media focused on what Park had acquired through his own endeavors rather than what he inherited. His improved English, for example, attracted a great deal of media attention (*Kyunghyang Shinmun* February 25, 1997), as did his "patient effort and sincerity" (*Maeil Economic Daily* July 31, 1997). Above all else, however, it was the early years of his development that were most widely discussed. He was not seen as a pure representation of a "Korean" or an "Asian," rather he was depicted as the son of a poor electronics shop owner—an example of how far hard work could propel a "second-class talent" (*Hankyoreh* August 2, 1997; *Chosun Ilbo* August 2, 1997). The following quote from the 1997 book *Heroes of Our Time* (*Urisidaeui Yeongungdeul)* demonstrates how Chan Ho Park was typically represented in the late 1990s:

> So, you could say Chan Ho Park was a late bloomer. He was not born with everything he needed to succeed, but steadily refined what natural talent he did have through hard work, improving his position step by step. In this way he was a quintessential effort-type player (Choi and Ji 1997, p. 227).

[9] The Orient Express was a passenger service train that, in its original form, stretched from Paris to Istanbul. It began operation in 1883 and linked the two cities until 1977.

[10] The Korean media also pointed out that Chan Ho Park was not rated as highly as others in the same age group because, although his fastball was rapid, he lacked control and command (*Dong-A Ilbo* January 14, 1994).

Once personal endeavour became an important aspect of the way Chan Ho Park was discussed, his background began to be represented differently. For instance, when Chan Ho Park returned to Korea in late 1996, he published an autobiography about his childhood and teenage years. The original 1996 version was called *Hey Dude! The Dream Chan Ho Park Threw at the World*. A year later, however, the title and contents of the book changed. The new title, *Strike for Chan Ho Park's Dream: The Touching Story of How the Second Son of a Poor Electronics Repair Shop Owner Overcame Adversity and Hardships to Become a Top Pitcher in Major League Baseball*, emphasized Chan Ho Park's background and hard work (Park 1997). And where the 1996 version began its section on Chan Ho Park's childhood by describing him as the "second son of an electronics repair shop owner," the 1997 version calls him the second son of a *poor* electronics repair shop owner" (emphasis added).

There are also significant disparities between the way Chan Ho Park and Hwang Young-cho are represented post 1997. The clearest difference was that ethnic identity was not a saliant element in discourse about Chan Ho Park. For instance, there were few articles suggesting that Chan Ho Park represented "the excellence of our nation" or "the strength of the nation." Indeed, our search through the Naver News Library (newslibrary.naver.com) identified 13 articles from 1992 alone that described Hwang Young-cho as a representation of "national strength" and three articles where he was seen as a representation of "national excellence." In the case of Chan Ho Park however, between 1997 to 1999 there was only one article which stated that the baseball player represented "the excellence of the nation" and zero that said he represented the "potential power of the nation." Three articles did express the notion that he represented "the potential of *Koreans*" (emphasis added). Compared to Hwang Young-cho, Chan Ho Park was less strongly associated with the concept of "potency" or "excellence" and more strongly associated with *Koreans* than the Korean *nation*. This suggests that representations of Chan Ho Park were less influenced by ethnic nationalism.

Rather than demonstrating the *innate* excellence of the Korean nation, Chan Ho Park, after 1997, embodied the values and virtues that members of the Korean nation *should* possess. He was not destined to succeed in the Major League because of innate talent—he had to overcome a series of obstacles through hard work and dedication to become a top player. Samsung, the largest South Korean conglomerate, was actively engaged in issuing neoliberal discourse at that time, and their portrayal of Chan Ho Park in the following statements clearly demonstrates the tendency to associate

Chan Ho Park with the virtues of “competition” or “professional spirit.”

> As he passed through Gongju High School and Hanyang University on his way to becoming a pro, he was labelled a second-class player. Nobody paid him any attention. In 1995 he crossed the Pacific Ocean and joined the Dodgers but dropped down into the minor leagues because of his loose ball control and one key pitching. He had to spend two years mired in solitude, frustration, and racism… He is in the top 10% of major league players but considered unrivalled when it comes to competitive spirit. Japan’s Hideo Nomo, the first Asian to cause a stir in the baseball world, used an interpreter, but generally Chan Ho Park communicates on his own in English. This was possible because of an indomitable and professional spirit. He learned that the professional world is a harsh one and performance is the only weapon. (Samsung Human Resource Management Committee 1997, pp. 138-139)

In 1998 President Kim Dae-jung said Chan Ho Park showed “the potential of Koreans.” This, Kim Dae-jung explained, was the potential “to dare and succeed with courage and an indomitable will, all without bending under any hardship” (*Hankyoreh* September 26, 1998). Chan Ho Park was portrayed as a figure possessing the virtues of “courage” and “will,” and it is worth comparing Kim Dae-jung’s statement with Roh Tae-woo’s from six years earlier about Hwang Young-cho. In 1992 it was enough to simply state that Hwang represented “the power of the nation” without further elaboration (*Chosun Ilbo* August 11, 1992); in 1998 Kim Dae-Jung needed to define what Koreans could do.

The virtues that Chan Ho Park acquired seem to be linked to a form of market logic. For instance, there was a great deal of attention paid to his monetary value. Samsung claimed that Park Chan Ho had become more than just a baseball player and was now “a private diplomat representing Korea” who was predicted to earn $60 million to $90 million by the age of 34. They described him as “the first person in the history of Korean sports to dream of becoming a sports conglomerate” (Samsung Human Resource Management Committee 1997, p. 139). This link with industry was also made when President Kim Dae-jung awarded the Order of Sports Merit to Chan Ho Park and requested that “culture emerge as a key national industry in the twenty-first century,” so that “the sports industry can become an important resource for national economic development” (*Chosun Ilbo* November 3, 1998).

Pak Se-ri: a Replicable Heroine

This kind of market logic is also evident in discourse about professional golfer Pak Se-ri. Pak Se-ri began to be considered a national hero from 1998 and, like Chan Ho Park, was also represented in terms of ideal virtues rather than ethnic identity. As noted by Koh and Lee (2004, p. 126), one particular characteristic of the discourse surrounding Pak Se-ri was the detailed discussion about how she had acquired virtue.

Born in Daejeon in 1977, Pak Se-ri trained as a track and field athlete from the age of ten. She began playing golf as a hobby when she was 11 and by the age of 14 golf became her primary sport. Training from morning to evening, Pak began winning competitions organised by the Korea Ladies Professional Golf Association (KLPGA) when she was still just 14. In fact, while still a high school student she won no less than five professional tournaments. In 1996, aged 19, she went professional. That year she won four of the 11 tournaments she entered. After moving to the United States in 1997, she began to compete in Ladies Professional Golf Association (LPGA) tournaments in 1998 and in her first year won four competitions, including two majors: the McDonald's LPGA Championship and the U.S. Women's Open. The latter provided a memorable moment when Pak Se-ri took off her shoes and played out of the water hazard to set up her win. That year the scene was used as a model of can-do spirit in a government advertisement. The moment was also named the third most acclaimed moment in Korean sport history by *The Korea Times* (October 28, 2010). In Gongju City, where Pak attended high school, the scene has been memorialised in a statue. Over the course of her career Pak Se-ri secured 25 LPGA victories. In 2007 she was inducted into the World Golf Hall of Fame at the age of just 29. She retired in 2016.

The *JoongAng Ilbo* newspaper, owned by the Samsung family, began a series of 45 articles about Pak Se-ri soon after her victory. Later published as a book and heavily based on interviews with the athlete herself, the articles described a variety of the training activities she employed; according to the series she trained in a cemetery to develop courage, at reservoirs for bunker shot practice, visited dog fighting arenas to cultivate a fighting spirit, and used stair climbs to develop her lower body (Pak 1998). Pak Se-ri's mentality, cool head, English ability, concentration, crisis management ability, and grit were identified as her key strengths and discussed in detail by the media (*Maeil Economic Daily* July 8 to 11, 1998). The aspect of her training regime

that attracted most attention, however, was her father's prominent role in it—one sports newspaper, *Sports Seoul*, even serialised a book about Pak Se-ri written by her father. The media also reported on coaching sessions by the well-known golf instructor David Leadbetter and the sponsorship Pak Se-ri received from Samsung Group (*Kyunghyang Shinmun* July 30, 1998). This focus on male involvement in Pak Se-ri's career may have been the result of gender biases.

The detailed analysis of the process through which Pak Se-ri acquired ideal virtues made her achievements seem replicable. Indeed, a number of commentators argued that by using Pak Se-ri as a model her success could be reproduced. In one article Pak was likened to "a great domestic product that could be presented to the world" and that the "model" which produced her should be expanded throughout South Korean society (*Joongang Ilbo* July 10,1998). In another piece the author insisted that Pak Se-ri was "the product of perseverance in discovering talent early and devoting corporate and social support," and that this path could be duplicated to nurture a second and third generation of global Korean superstars (*Dong-A Ilbo* July 9, 1998). In short, the argument was that investment would cultivate people like Pak Se-ri. The notion of "Pak Se-ri kids" was discussed much more than "Hwang Young-cho kids" or "Chan Ho Park kids," possibly because the secret of Pak Se-ri's success was so closely scrutinized and felt to be "replicable" in a way that the success of previous sporting celebrities was not.

Globalization, Middle-Class Anxiety, and Future Tasks

How can we explain why Chan Ho Park (post 1997) and Pak Se-ri were represented differently to Hwang Young-cho? It could be argued that this was due to the different sports and competitions that the athletes were involved in. After all, Park and Pak played in professional leagues where their performance and income were related, while Hwang was an amateur athlete who competed at the Olympic Games. However, research on the representation of Park Tae-Hwan and Kim Yuna—the most influential amateur athletes of the late 2000s—suggests the media paid much more attention to their endeavour and sponsorship deals than their inherited gifts (Cho 2015, p. 230; Nam, Kim and Koh 2010, pp. 68-73). If the representations of Kim Yuna and Park Tae-Hwan were closer to that of professional golfer Pak Se-ri than fellow amateur Olympian Hwang You-cho, we should probably look elsewhere for our explanation.

A more likely answer lies in the shifts in globalization and nationalism

experienced by South Korea in the mid-1990s. "Globalization" was an important slogan for the Kim Young-sam administration from late 1994 and served to justify a series of national projects in the mid-1990s. In December 1993 the president decided to allow imported rice into the country, despite having pledged not to lift the ban during his election campaign (*New York Times* December 9, 1993). This removed one of the key obstacles in the Uruguay Round of talks on the General Agreement on Trade and Tariffs (GATT). In 1995 and 1996, South Korea joined the World Trade Organisation (WTO) and OECD, respectively. The decision to join the "Washington Consensus" and its support for neoliberal policies such as the liberalization of capital markets and the removal of trade barriers and restrictions on foreign capital required justification at home, and the concept of *segyehwa* (globalization) was utilized for this purpose.

The drive to join the Washington Consensus and introduce neoliberal policies did not originate from the government. Instead, it was chaebol companies who began the push. By early 1993, when the Kim Young-sam administration was inaugurated, a number of chaebol companies appeared to have judged that it would be impossible to continue to accumulate profit through the export of low-priced product; their new approach would an export strategy based on improving "technology" and "quality" (*Chosun Ilbo* March 11, 1993). This is evident in the goals and slogans they set. Choi Jong-hyun, the founder of SK Group and the then president of the National Federation of Entrepreneurs, had been using the term "globalization" since 1991 (*Maeil Economic Daily* February 25, 1991). Then, in early 1993, Samsung announced that it aimed to become the "World's 10th largest company for the 2000s," Lucky-Goldstar (LG) set the goal of becoming a "world-leading company" (*Dong-A Ilbo* January 15, 1993), and Daewoo declared their goal to create "world-class products" (*Maeil Economic Daily* March 22, 1993), beginning an advertisement campaign with the slogan "Who manages the world?" That same year Hyundai made their slogan "Hyundai of technology, Hyundai of the World" while Doosan went with "becoming the vanguard, becoming first-class, becoming global: a top company leading the twenty-first century." Dongbang Group followed suit with "enterprise facing the world." This was a sign that the companies would aggressively expand their businesses. They each raised their sales targets and drastically increased their investment in equipment and facilities (*Maeil Economic Daily* December 27, 1993). Samsung's entry into the automobile industry too, was justified in terms of globalization (*Maeil Economic Daily* December 3, 1994).

"Globalization" in this sense was more than just a simple government policy or a corporate management objective. It meant reforming the alliance between the state and the chaebols that formed during in the developmental era, and, as another echo of that period, attempting to reconfigure and govern the populace's customs through nationalist ideology. The government appointed 50 government officials and private experts to a new Globalization Promotion Committee and tasked them with pursuing "globalization" via the establishment and adaptation of systems and laws in areas such as administration, the economy, diplomacy, science and technology, information technology, education culture, legal order, and social integration. Within three years the committee had established a total of 169 new laws (Globalization Promotion Committee 1998, p. 40).

One major aspect of the globalization project was the state and chaebols' request for members of society to acquire the skills necessary to secure competitiveness in a global marketplace. A public service advertisement starring the actor Lee Deok-hwa put the developmental alliances' point of view like this:

> I was treated as a star in Korea. But I was like a frog at the bottom of a well. I won an award at the Moscow Film Festival, and only then was I treated a little better. The global market is the same thing. We can't be satisfied with technology and products that are the best in Korea. If they are not the best in the world, we cannot survive. Doing your utmost in your field, that is the shortcut to becoming the world's best. Now let's all run together (Bureau of Public Information 1994).

The focus on being able to compete globally meant it made sense to strengthen English language education. And indeed, this was one of the committee's key policies—they made English listening test scores a more important part of the state-run university admission test, established English as part of the elementary school curriculum, and institutionalized the hiring of native English speakers to teach in schools (*Maeil Economic Daily* February 25, 1995).

These kind of globalization projects were well received by the public. In late 1995, 70% of respondents to one survey said they were interested in globalization, and over 85% agreed with its aim (Kim 2006, p. 67). A new thirst for English education was also reported across the media (*Dong-A Ilbo* February 16,1995; *Maeil Economic Daily* March 30, 1995; *Hankyoreh* August 24, 1995).

In 1992 conglomerates made their confident ambition about becoming world-class companies very plain. But at the same time the prospect that conventional export methods would fail to generate sufficient profit meant there was a sense of crisis in the air. On the one hand, behind the use of globalization discourse there seemed to be a sense of confidence, especially in the way the general public interpreted globalization as a challenge. Yet as early as the late 1980s the wage gap between large corporations and SMEs had already begun to widen (Ee-hwan Jung 2013, pp. 284-290) and from 1992 companies began layoffs and job cuts (*Maeil Economic Daily* October 30, 1993). The second bestselling novel in 1996 was *Father*, a story about a father forced into early retirement. Its success reflected widely shared anxieties about job insecurity (*Kyunghyang Shinmun* December 21, 1996; *Dong-A Ilbo* December 19, 1996).

Globalization and middle class anxieties encouraged South Korea's population to focus on what they should do rather than what they had inherited from their forebears. The consumption and practice of nationalist discourse became more focussed on evaluating the Korean nation's worth and discussing the tasks that lay ahead rather than reflecting on its Korea's great past. By the late 1990s, several books critical of Korean habits became best-sellers. These included *The Nation Lives Only when Confucius Dies,* which criticized Korea's past. Other typical examples include *18 Reasons why Korea Cannot Catch up with Japan* and *Criticism of Korea and Koreans,* both of which were written by Japanese writers. The young middle class, at home with PCs and the internet, continued to consume the world's evaluation of Korea as they translated and shared American media articles about Park Chan Ho and Pak Se-ri.[11] Notably, manuals for economic success and books about the successes of individual entrepreneurs became best sellers. *It's a Big World and There's Lots to be Done* by Kim Woo-Choong, *There is no Myth* by Lee Myung-bak, and *There Are Trials, But There Are No Failures* by Chung Ju-yung, Typical titles included *7 Habits of Successful People*, *50 Things You Must Do in Your Twenties*, and *Super Learning Method*. Another example was *Study was the Easy Part* which dedicated significant parts to explanations about study methods and became another manual for success (Park 2020b, pp. 501-502).[12]

[11] This is evident in an in-depth interview with Choi Min-kyu on August 26, 2019. Choi was a sport journalist who had experience working on an online baseball forum during the late 1990s.

[12] Even historical TV series that gained popularity during this period, such as *Heo Jun* and *Dae Jang Geum*, were about self-made historical figures.

New Civic Virtue and Market Nationalism in the Late 1990s

Nationalist discourse and practices that focused on what Koreans should do rather than what Koreans inherited is more closely linked to civic nationalism than ethnic nationalism. As mentioned above, civic nationalism emphasizes shared values and virtues rather than common descent. Indeed, we can specify further than this and identify the civic nationalist discourse that emerged in late 1990s South Korea as market nationalism. Civic nationalism emphasizes the values and virtues thought important to form a modern political community, generally identified as freedom and equality, but in 1990s South Korea it was the market values of individuals and the nation's competitiveness in a global market that were singled out.

> "Now everyone must compete in the workplace, on the street, and at home and at school. We must not forget that each and every citizen is the subject of international competition. And you must win." (Kim 1994)

Market nationalism is a useful concept to help us understand the new aspects of nationalism that form in conjunction with globalization (Krampf 2018a, p. 218).[13] It is often claimed that, theoretically, globalization should promote post-nationalism. However in reality, globalization is closely connected to nationalism (Harvey 2005, p. 85) and as globalization progresses new forms of nationalism develop.

Market nationalism is distinct from economic nationalism, which refers to protectionism aimed at improving the state's position in an internationally competitive market, and market liberalism, which places importance on the rational choices individuals make in competitive markets. Market nationalism refers to when emphasis is placed on market friendly and neoliberal values and virtues by actors seeking to improve a nation's position in international competitive markets (Krampf 2018b, p. 232). Since the emphasis is on values rather than descent, we consider this a form of civic nationalism.

Behind Chan Ho Park and Pak Se-ri's representation as hard-working heroes lies the market nationalism encouraged by the state and chaebols that

[13] The term "neoliberal nationalism" has been used by Joppke (2020) to refer to a different phenomenon. Joppke uses "neoliberal nationalism" to describe the anti-immigration sentiment and populism which, he argues, forms through the coalescence of neoliberalism and nationalism.

was largely accepted by the public in the late 1990s. That is why Samsung and their newspaper engaged in disseminating a nationalistic discourse about the two sporting heroes. They were not discussed in terms of the lineage, language, or the historical characteristics of the nation or its members. Instead, they were held up as people who took advantage of the market-friendly virtues members of the nation should possess. And so, their physical excellence was not emphasized, their customs were not shown to be the same as those of ordinary Koreans. In their representation, the emphasis was on the virtue of their extraordinary efforts and the resulting income (market value). They did not represent the present excellence of the nation, but a future possibility.

Conclusion

This article analysed the representations of three national sports heroes from the 1990s—Hwang Young-cho, Chan Ho Park, and Pak Se-ri—and linked changes in the discourse surrounding them to changes in nationalism. Hwang Young-cho, a distance runner who became one of the most famous men in South Korea during the early 1990s, was considered a born hero. His physical gifts, habits, and background were emphasized and presented by politicians and the media as attributable to the excellence of the Korean ethnic nation. We considered this in relation to the economic confidence of the South Korean population after the late 1980s and the concept of ethnic nationalism, which emphasizes lineage, language, and history.

The next athlete, baseball player Chan Ho Park was also depicted as a born hero during the early 1990s. After 1997, however, discussion about his ethnic inheritance was suddenly replaced by a new focus on his level of effort. From this point on, he was presented as an exemplar of the virtues required in competitive international markets. The shift in the way he was depicted suggests that the different way athletes were represented after the mid-1990s cannot be explained by the characteristics of the athletes themselves or the sports they were engaged in.

Pak Se-ri's efforts were thoroughly analysed in the media and presented as if they were a manual for success. These later representations were shaped by the spread of globalization discourse from the mid-1990s, the market nationalism that was formed in response, and the economic anxiety of the public. They were characterized by and emphasized virtue and market value. The analysis suggests that the nationalism prevalent among the South Korean

public in the 1990s, shifted from ethnic nationalism to market nationalism.

In its content, ethnic nationalism in the early 1990s South Korea shows some similarities with the resistive nationalism characteristic of the period from the 1960s to the 1980s, whilst market nationalism is related to the developmental nationalism of the same period (Park Haenam, 2020). In this way, the change from ethnic nationalism to market nationalism moves in the opposite direction to the political change in the 1990s, which saw a move from conservative government to progressive government. Therefore, the trend of nationalism in the 1990s, seen through the lens of representations of national sport heroes, indicates that mass nationalism in the 1990s was "uncoupled" from the political fate of progressives and conservatives.

This finding is not in line with existing studies on nationalism in 1990s South Korea, which have argued that nationalism decayed in the face of globalization during the 1990s (Park, 2006; Park, 1998; Kim, 2000; Hong, 2007). When seen in terms of the nationalism expressed by the public and middle-class-based civil society, which we have analysed through the representations of national sport heroes, a linear movement from ethnic nationalism to market nationalism can be drawn. From this perspective nationalism changed rather than declined.

Our findings align with those of scholars such as John Hutchinson (1987), who found that the character of nationalism within a nation may change across time depending on the pressures faced by those utilizing it. In 1990s South Korea, the economic confidence of the new middle class made them receptive to a new kind of Korean nationalism propagated by the state and chaebols as a way to respond to new economic pressures. This market nationalism had more in common with the civic side of the ethnic/civic distinction; rather than fate and a once glorious past, it emphasized virtue and the potential for future success.

The article aimed to analyse representations of national sport heroes in the 1990s. It only showed the possibility of revealing a linear narrative of change in nationalism during the 1990s. A full-fledged analysis of this will be conducted through future research.

(*Submitted*: May 13, 2021; *Revised*: August 23, 2021; *Accepted*: August 23, 2021)

References

Chosun Ilbo, Dong-A Ilbo, Kyunghyang Shinmun, Hankyoreh, Maeil Economic Daily, JoongAng Ilbo.

Ahn, Min Seok. 1998. (In Korean) “Seupocheuyeongunguigujogineungnonjeongjeopgeun [The Sport Hero Based on the Structural—Functionalism].” *Hangukseupocheusahoehakoeji* [*Journal of Korean Sociology of Sport*] 10: 157-178.

Arita, Shin. 2020. “The Growth of the Korean Middle Class and its Social Consciousness.” *The Developing Economies* 41(2): 201-220.

Bureau of Public Information. 1994. (In Korean) “Kwukkakyengcayngnyekkanghwa [Strengthening National Competitiveness].” *e-Yeongsangyeoksagwan* [*e-history archives*]. Retrieved December 5, 2020 (http://ehistory.go.kr/page/view/movie.jsp?srcgbn=AL&mediaid=0&mediadtl=67&quality=W).

Billig, Michael. 1992. *Banal Nationalism*. London: Sage.

Brown, David. 1999. “Are there Food and Bad Nationalisms?” *Nations and Nationalism* 5(2): 281-302.

Brubaker, Rogers. 1992. *Citizenship and Nationhood in France and Germany*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Carrard, Philippe. 2002. “‘L’Equipe de France du monde’: Sport and National Identity.” *French Cultural Studies* 13(37): 65-82.

Chatziefstathiou, Dikaia and Ian Henry. 2012. *Discourses of Olympism: From the Sorbonne 1894 to London 2012*. Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan.

Cho, Hee-Yeon. 2000. “The Structure of the South Korean Developmental Regime and its Transformation–statist Mobilization and Authoritarian Integration in the Anticommunist Regimentation.” *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies* 1(3): 408-426.

Cho, Younghan. 2008. “The Glocalization of U.S. Sports in South Korea.” *Sociology of Sport Journal* 26: 320-344.

______. 2009. “The National Crisis and De/Reconstructing Nationalism in South Korea During the IMF Intervention.” *Inter-Asian Cultural Studies* 9(1): 82-96.

______. 2015. “Sport Celebrity in South Korea: Park, Tae-Hwan From New Generation to Fallen Angel.” *Asia Pacific Journal of Sport and Social Science* 4(3): 223-236.

Choi, Yeomi. 2020. “Major League Baseball and Racialized Masculinities in Korean Digital Media.” *Communication & Sport* 8(2): 168-187.

Choi, Yeonhong and Sukhwan Ji. 1997. (In Korean) *Urisidaeuiyeongungdeul* [*Heroes in Our Times*]. Seoul: Saeam Publishing.

Chung, Hee Joon. 2001. (In Korean) “Seupocheuyeongunguijogeon [What Defines Sport Hero].” *Hangukseupocheusahoehakoeji* [*Journal of Korean Sociology of Sport*] 14(1): 257-272.

Gellner, Ernest. 1983. *Nations and Nationalism*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

Globalization Promotion Committee. 1998. (In Korean) *Segyehwabaekseo* [*Globalization White Paper*].

Greenfeld, Liah. 1992. Nationalism: Five Roads to Modernity. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Harmes, Adam. 2012. "The Rise of Neoliberal Nationalism." *Review of International Political Economy* 19(1): 59-86.

Harvey, David. 2005. *A Brief History of Neoliberalism.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

He, Tian. 2020. "Transforming the East Asian Developmental State: Democratic Mobilisation and the Role of the Middle Class." Asian Journal of Comparative Politics. Retrieved March 16, 2021 (https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/2057891119897854).

Hobsbawm, Eric J. 1992. *Nations and Nationalism Since 1780: Programme, Myth, Reality, Second Edition.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Hobsbawm, Eric and Terence Ranger. 2012. *The Invention of Tradition.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Hong Seuk-ryule. 2007. (In Korean) "Minjokjuuinonjaenggwasegyecheje, hanbandobundanmunjee daehandaeeung [The Debates on Nationalism and Responses to the World-System and Korea's National Division]." *Yeoksabipyeong* [*Critical Review of History*] 79: 149-172.

Hutchinson, John. 1987. "Cultural Nationalism, Elite Mobility and Nation-building: Communitarian Politics in Modern Ireland." *The British Journal of Sociology* 38(4): 482-501.

______. 2005. *Nations as Zones of Conflict*. London: SAGE Publications Ltd.

Hwang, Young-cho. 1992. (In Korean) *Nauikkumeunirueojijianatda* [*My Dream Has Not Been Realized Yet*]. Seoul: Ilbit.

Joppke, Christian. 2021. *Neoliberal Nationalism—Immigration and the Rise of the Populist Right* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Jung, Ee-hwan. 2013. (In Korean) *Hangukgoyongchejeron* [*On the Employment Regime in Korea*]. Seoul: Humanitas.

Kang, Jinwoong. 2013. (In Korean) "Daehanmingungminjongseosasi [The Epic of the Republic of Korea's Minjok: The Development of Ethnic Nationalism and Its Faces]." *Hanguksahoehak* [*Korean Journal of Sociology*] 47(1): 185-219.

Kim, Dong-Choon. 2000. (In Korean) *Geundaeuigeuneul* [*Shadow of Modernity: Korean Modernity and Nationalism*]. Seoul: Tangdae.

Kim, Jong-yeop. 2010. (In Korean) "87nyeonchejeronuigwanjeomeseobonsahoecheje nonjaeng [The Debate on the Korean Societal Regime and '87 Regime Theory]." *Minjusahoewa jeongchaegyeongu* [*Democratic Society and Policy Studies*] 17: 53-90.

Kim, Min Hwan. 2016. (In Korean) "Pereseuteuroika, Bukbangjeongchaek, Geurigo Imsugyeong [Perestroika, Nordpolitik and Lim Su-kyong]." *Hangukyeondaesaenghwalmunhwasa 1980nyeondaepyeon* [*History of Everyday*

Life in 1980s Korea]. Paju: Changbi.
Kim, Sooja. 2006. (In Korean) "Minjuhwaihuhangungminjokjuuidamnonuijeongae [Development of Discussion About Korean Nationalism After the Democratization]." *Sahoegwahagyeongu* [*Social Science Studies*] 14(2): 44-80.
Kim, Young-sam. 1994. (In Korean) "1994nyeonsinnyeonsa [1994 New Year's Address]." *Daetongnyeong girokgwan* [*Presidential Archive of Korea*] Retrieved December 6, 2020 (https://www.pa.go.kr/research/contents/speech/index).
Koh, Eunha and Woo Young Lee. 2004. (In Korean) "Bakseriedaehangieomminjokjuuireultonghaebon hangukyeongseupocheusellebeuritiuijogeon [The Condition of Korean Sport Celebrityhood: Se Ri Pak and Corporate Nationalism]." *Hangukseupocheusahoehakoeji* [*Journal of Korean Sociology of Sport*] 17(1): 121-137.
Kohn, Hans. 1944. *The Idea of Nationalism: A Study in Its Origins and Background.* New York: Macmillan.
Koo, Chang-mo. 1998. (In Korean) "Hyeondaesahoewaseupocheuyeongung [Sport Hero in Modern Society]." *Hangukseupocheusahoehakoeji* [*Journal of Korean Sociology of Sport*] 9: 43-64.
Koo, Hagen. 1991. "Middle Classes, Democratization, and Class Formation." *Theory and Society* 20(4): 485-509.
Krampf, Arie. 2018a. *The Israeli Path to Neoliberalism: The State, Continuity and Change*. London: Routledge.
_______. 2018b. "Israel's Neoliberal Turn and its National Security Paradigm." *Polish Political Science Yearbook* 47(2): 227-241.
Kuhn, Gabriel. 2015. *Playing as if the World Mattered: An Illustrated History of Activism in Sports.* Oakland: PM Press.
Kuzio, Taras. 2002. "The Myth of the Civic State: a Critical Survey of Hans Kohn's Framework for Understanding Nationalism." *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 25(1): 20-39.
Kwon, Sun-yong. 2006. (In Korean) "Bakseri, Golpeu, Geurigo Minjokjuui [Seri Pak, Golf and Nationalism: Unnatural Articulations in the Context of IMF]." *Hangukseupocheusahoehakoeji* [*Journal of Korean Sociology of Sport*] 19(1): 101-116.
Large, David Clay. 2007. *The Nazi Games: The Olympics of 1936*. London: W. W. Norton & Company.
Lee, Jung Woo. 2015. "Examining Korean Nationalisms, Identities, and Politics through Sport." *Asia Pacific Journal of Sport and Social Science* 4(3): 179-185.
Lee, Si-hyung. 1983. (In Korean) *Jasinitgesaneunyeoseong* [*Woman Living with Confidence*]. Seoul: Jiphyeonjeon.
Mayeda, David T. 1999. "From Model Minority to Economic Threat: Media portrayals of Major League Baseball pitchers Hideo Nomo and Hideki Irabu." *Journal of Sport and Social Issues* 23(2): 203-217.
Meinecke, Friedrich. 1970. *Cosmopolitanism and the National State*. Princeton:

Princeton University Press.

Nam, Sang-Woo and Eun-Ha Koh. 2014. (In Korean) "Minjogyeongungbakchanhowasegyesimin ryuhyeonjin [National hero Park Chan Ho vs. Cosmopolitan Ryu Hyun-Jin: Globalization, Nationalism and the Meaning of Sport Star]." *Hangukseupocheusahoehakoeji* [*Journal of Korean Sociology of Sport*] 27(4): 243-259.

Nam, Sang-Woo, Han Joo Kim and Eun Ha Koh. 2010. (In Korean) "Gungmin yeodongsaengeseogungmin yeongungeuro: gimyeonayeongungmandeulgiwami dieouidamnonjeollyak [From National sister to National Hero: Media Discourse on the Rise and Success of Kim Yuna]." *Hangukseupocheusahoehakoeji* [*Journal of Korean Sociology of Sport*] 23(2): 61-85.

Oh, Ja-eun. 2017. (In Korean) *Pakwansesoselenathanancwungsanchunguycengcheysenghyengsanghwa yenkwu* [*A Study of Figurations of the Identity of the Middle Class in the Park Wan-Seo's novel*]. Doctoral dissertation. Seoul National University.

Oh, Je-yeon. 2007. (In Korean) "1960nyeondaechobakjeonghuijeonggwongwahaksaengdeuruiminjokjuui bunhwa [Nationalism Separation Between Park Chung-Hee Regime and University Students in early 1960's: with Focus on Nationalistic Democracy]." *Kiekkwacenmang* [*Memory & Vision*] 16: 285-323.

Özkırımlı, Umut. 2010. *Theories of Nationalism: A Critical Introduction 2nd Edition*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Pak, Se-Ri. 1998. (In Korean) *Pakseyliuykulinswuki, Maynpaluythwuhon* [*Barefoot Fighting Spirit: Memoir upon Green*]. JoongAng Ilbo Publishing.

Park, No-young. 1998. (In Korean) "Segyehwawaminjokgukga [Globalization and Nation State]." *Sahoegwahagyeongu* [*Journal of Social Science*] 9: 21-40.

Park, Myoung-kyu. 2004. (In Korean) "Segyehwawagungmingukga: Dongasiajeongsigak [Globalization and Nation State: East Asian in Perspective]." *Hwanghaemunhwa* 42: 163-176.

______. 2006. (In Korean) "Bundancheje, Segyehwa, Geurigo Pyeonghwaminjokjuui [Divided System, Globalization and Peaceful Nationalism]." *Simingwasegye* [*Citizen & the World*] 8: 416-430.

______. 2009. (In Korean) *Kwungmin, Inmin, Simin* [*Nation, People, Citizen: Political Subjects in Korea from the Perspective of Conceptual History*]. Seoul: Sohwa.

Park, Chan Ho. 1996. (In Korean) *Hey, Dude! Seykyeylulhyanghayteoncinpakchanhouykkwum* [*Hey Dude! The Dream Chan Ho Park Threw at the World*]. Seoul: Durebak.

______. 1997. (In Korean) *Pakchanho, kkwumulhyanghayteoncinsuthulaikhu* [*Strike for Chan Ho Park's Dream: The Touching Story of How the Second Son of a Poor Electronics Repair Shop Owner Overcame Adversity and Hardships to Become a Top Pitcher in Major League Baseball*]. Seoul: Durebak.

Park, Haenam. 2018. (In Korean) *Sewulollimphikkwa1980nyentayuysahoycengchi* [*1988 Seoul Olympic Games and Social Politics in 1980's Korea*]. Doctoral dissertation. Seoul National University.

______. 2020a. "The Interaction between Civil Society and the State in the History of Inter-Korean Sports Dialogue, 1988-2018." *Mincwucwuuywainkwen* [*Democracy and Human Rights*] 20(3): 191-233.

______. 2020b, (In Korean) "1990nyeondaeuigukjehwatwisegyehwawadaejungminjokjuui [Internationalization, Globalization and Popular Nationalism in the 1990s]." *Hangungminjongmunhwa* [*Journal of Koreanology*] 77: 469-513.

Samsung Human Resource Management Committee, 1997, (In Korean) *21 segisingyeongyeongripoteu* [*Report on New Management for 21st Century*]. Seoul: Samsung.

Seo, Dongjin, 2009, (In Korean) *Jayuuiuijijagigyebaruiuiji* [*The Will to Self-Managing, the Will to Freedom: The Self-Managing Ethic and the Spirit of Flexible Capitalism in South Korea*]. Paju: Dolbegae.

Smith, Anthony D. 1991. *National Identity.* London: Penguin.

Smith, Garry. 1973. "The Sport Hero: An Endangered Species." *Quest* 19(1): 59-70.

Stradling, Jan. 2009. *More Than a Game: When Sport and History Collide.* Crows Nest: Murdoch Books.

Tabachnik, Maxim. 2019. "Untangling Liberal Democracy from Territoriality: from Ethnic/Civic to Ethnic/Territorial Nationalism." *Nations and Nationalism* 25(1): 191-207.

Turner, Graeme. 2014. *Understanding Celebrity 2nd edition*. London: Sage.

Yang, Eun Kyung. 2009. (In Korean) "Seupocheuseonsuuichogukjeongidonggwayuyeonhan minjokjeongcheseonguihyeongseong [The Transnational Movement of Athletes and the Formation of Flexible National Identity: Discourse Analysis on 'Ji-Sung Park as National Competitiveness]." *Hangugeollonhakbo* [*Korean Journal of Journalism & Communication Studies*] 56(4): 80-104.

Zimmer, Oliver. 2003. "Boundary Mechanisms and Symbolic Resources: Towards a Process-Oriented Approach to National Identity." *Nations and Nationalism* 9(2): 173-193.

Haenam Park is a HK+ Research Professor at Wonkwang University, South Korea. His research interests are sociology of sport, sociology of culture and urban sociology. He is currently working on how nationalism and developmentalism have closely related to social politics and urban politics, and how these politics have influenced on the (re)construction of 'the social' in contemporary Korean society. His related works include Football and Hegemony Competition during the Period of Colonial Korea (Journal of Korean Studies, 2020) and The Interaction between Civil Society and the State in the History of Inter-Korean Sport-Diplomacy, 1988-2018 (Democracy and Human Rights, 2020). [*E-mail:* parkaenami@daum.net]

Robert Easthope is a Ph.D. candidate at Seoul National University. His current research focuses on the changing nature of citizenship, political identity and nationalism in East Asia. He is also interested in the history of social thought and has written accessible introductions to two cornerstone-works: An Analysis of Emile Durkheim's On Suicide (Routledge, 2017) and An Analysis of C. Wright Mills's The Sociological Imagination (co-authored with Ismael Puga; Routledge, 2017). [*E-mail:* r.j.j.easthope@gmail.com]