

MEDIA GLOBALIZATION, AUTHORITARIAN POLICY AND SPORT: A SOUTH  
KOREAN PERSPECTIVE

by

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(Under the Direction of Billy Hawkins)

ABSTRACT

Media globalization has transformed traditional sport into a global media sport industry. To understand the revolutionary changes in sport, a new paradigm based on media globalization is now required. However, without proper understanding of global environment South Korean sport is struggling for adjustment.

Two independent but related studies addressed both external issue, media globalization, and internal issue, the authoritarian sport policy of South Korean sport. Exploring the myth of Chan Ho Park, this qualitative case study reveals how global capital penetrates into local media market exploiting sport nationalism. The results display imperialistic practices. Lopsided content flow and revenue flow between the United States and South Korean sport industries constitute legitimate discourse of media imperialism in sport.

Although the need for reform is recognized, the authoritarian sport policy and the pressure to win in international competition deter South Korean sport from applying a new paradigm for the reform. Applying critical ethnography and qualitative interviews, the study makes the strong argument that the South Korean power elite who have established the current state sport system now ignore the issue because they think sport reform might hurt the performance level.

INDEX WORDS: Media Globalization, Media Imperialism in Sports, Sport Nationalism, Chan Ho Park, Korean Sports Reform, Authoritarian Sports Policy, Student-Athlete, School Athletics.

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## DEDICATION

With all my heart and soul, this dissertation is dedicated to my mother, Jungsoon Han; my wife, Kyunghye; my daughter, Seorin; my son, Seojun; and my sisters, Jaeun and Jaehee. Without your love, support, and sacrifice, this work would never have been completed.

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## CHAPTER 1

### OVERALL INTRODUCTION

Once confined by national borders, media globalization has transformed traditional sport into global media sport. Contemporary international sporting events like the Olympics and World Cup Soccer are arguably viewed as the largest instances of mediated sport industry in history. A new paradigm based on media globalization is now required to understand the revolutionary changes in sport that these events represent (Rowe & Lawrence, 1996).

Unlike other global media content such as movies, music, soap operas and news, sport possesses unique traits that reduce cultural resistance: the fact that sport is usually broadcast in real time, the influence of star athletes, and strong association with nationalism make sport much more accessible across multiple cultures (Andrews, 2003; Rowe, 2003). Moreover, the inseparable combination of sport and national identity enables sport to reach global and local audiences simultaneously (Bernstein & Blain, 1998).

The ability of sport to penetrate national borders and reach to the global consumer was quickly recognized by key participants in the international marketplace. Transnational media corporations (TNMCs), including News Corporation and Disney, have strategically exploited sport for market expansion in the global market (Law, Harvey, & Kemp, 2002). This market is overwhelmingly defined by a combination of new media technology and the global advertising system (Levitt, 1983). Using sport as “battering ram” for market expansion, TNMCs have emerged as dominant powers of global media economy and media sport industry (Law, Harvey, & Kemp, 2002).

The oligopolistic practice of TNMCs and some Western countries, led by United States, resulted in the introduction of media imperialism discourse in the global media sport industry. It is through exploring this discourse that an apparent disparity in media contents and revenue flow emerges, constituting media imperialism. Current South Korean sport provides vivid examples of this media imperialism. Since the middle of the 1990s, the South Korean media sport industry has been reluctantly embedded in, if not forced into, the global media sport industry.

Nevertheless, South Korean sport is experiencing difficulties adjusting to media globalization. The authoritarian sport policy established under military government in the 1970s still remains active. Athletes, especially student-athletes, are being exploited by these authoritarian policies because of the practices encouraged by the student-athlete code. Although South Korean society has advanced to democracy since the 1990s, its sport remains authoritarian and student-athletes are being oppressed. As a result, the total number of South Korean athletes is diminishing; and the lack of human resources becomes the biggest threat of the future of South Korean sport (Oh, 2004).

Considering the indivisible association between nationalism and global media sport, the presence of athletes who can represent South Korea in world sporting events and premier professional sport leagues is essential for the endurance of South Korean media sport. It is ironic that the authoritarian sport policy designed by the South Korean government for international competition is now considered as a threat to South Korean sport. However, the very real nature of this situation necessitates a new paradigm of sport and leads to the development of discourse in South Korea about sport reform.

Accordingly, this study is a part of that discourse on reform. Here, the current situation of South Korean sport in the context of media globalization will be analyzed, first, and second, possible obstacles of reform will be examined, with special focus on the authoritarian sport policy mentioned above.

The significance of this study lies on both industrial aspect and humanitarian aspect of South Korean sport. Understanding media globalization in sports industry happens to be finding a way for survival for South Korean sports industry which otherwise would die. Moreover, the health of the South Korean sports industry hangs on discerning hidden barriers to sports reform. By identifying these barriers, the industry can reform in such a way that the human rights of student-athletes will be promoted and the emancipation of student-athletes from the authoritarian system described above will be facilitated.

The purpose of this study is to develop rationale for the new paradigm and the reform of South Korean sport into an industry that supports instead of oppresses the athletes, particularly students, who compete within the industry. Two independent but related qualitative studies address these underlying topics respectively and this study draws on them accordingly.

The first study, *Globalization, Media Imperialism and South Korean Sport*, assists the reader in understanding what has happened in South Korean sport in the context of media globalization and explains why South Korean sport is having difficulty adjusting to recent changes. The second study, *Framing the Authoritarian Policy in South Korean Sport: "Sorry, I'm a Student-Athlete"*, provides an argument for the emancipation of 100,000 student-athletes who are suffering under the authoritarian sport policy of the South Korean government. The

ensuing discussion of these studies below intends to lead to an answer for the sport reform in South Korea.

The elements that connect the current state of South Korean sport to media globalization pique the interests of academic researchers. In turn, these people should work to contribute to the development of possible alternative solutions to the problems that have arisen in South Korean sport because of media globalization and the authoritarian sport policy. Ideally, empirical studies on both South Korean professional sport and media sport industry should follow as well.

The study documented in this paper was conducted under the assumption that the South Korean government's authoritarian policy on sport negatively impacts the country's sport. Since this point has been well argued in academic literature with the overwhelming conclusion that the assumption above has substantial merit (Kang, 1998; Lee & Ko, 1994; Lee & Ahn, 2004), this study moves past this settled point and draws on the supporting literature to develop possibilities for reform within the now-globalized industry of South Korean sport.

## CHAPTER 2

### GLOBALIZATION, MEDIA IMPERIALISM AND SOUTH KOREAN SPORT

#### Introduction

Traditionally, national borders have confined sport and sporting events. However, due to the onset of media globalization in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, a different paradigm is now required to understand sport. It necessitates deconstructing the national boundary of sport (Rowe & Lawrence, 1996).

Sporting events are now considered global entertainment segment of a mediated sport industry. Therefore, it is short-sighted to analyze this industry as a single facet of globalization. The ability of sport to simultaneously reach a global audience and appeal to a local audience makes sport one of the most globalized media contents (Bernstein & Blain, 1998). As a result, it must be analyzed within the greater context of globalization and with regard to the truly worldwide operation of multinational capital. The linkage of nationalism, public policy, the media, and contemporary cultural industrialization must therefore be considered (Miller, Lawrence, McKay, & Rowe, 1999).

The importance of these elements in the analysis of a globalized commodity like sport is seen easily in the case study of Korean sport. Since modern sport was introduced in Korea in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, it has played an instrumental role in Korean politics and economics. This is most notably seen in regards to the following instances: Japanese imperialism, the Cold War, military dictatorship, rapid economic development, and democratization. When one inspects the dialectic existing between these occurrences and the development of Korean sport, the aforementioned linkage of nationalism, public policy, the media and contemporary cultural

industrialization becomes clear through the application of globalization and media imperialism theories. Sport maintained the national identity and pride under Japanese imperialism, sport provided a battlefield upon which the contest for superiority was waged between capitalist South Korea and communist North Korea, and under military dictatorship, sport was exploited for the production of propaganda. Consequently, through the application of globalization and media imperialism theories, it is possible to understand why Korean sport is experiencing such difficulty in adjusting to the new *global* paradigm of media.

Unlike other media contents, global sport is spread and consumed based on a sense of nationality. Consequently, nationalism lends sport a unique definition within global trade. For example, in international sporting events such as the Olympics or the World Cup Soccer, athletes represent their own country and each country broadcasts coverage of the event in its own language. Thus, sport becomes global media content, both produced and consumed with nationalism.

Prior studies of South Korean sport have focused on internal affairs and contradictions instead of on exploring global interaction. When witnessing how the environment of sport industry has been changed along with media globalization, it is necessary to apply a new paradigm so that the current South Korean sport can be reflected as one of global media contents.

The purpose of this research is to understand South Korean sport through the lens of media globalization and in doing so to suggest future direction. Without understanding of sport and media globalization, Korean sport industry will not be able to compete against global capital, and as consequence, it will be marginalized.

The significance of the study can be found in an effort finding a path to survival for South Korean sports industry confronting media globalization in the sport industry. Reflecting on Chan Ho Park case would lead us to clear explanation of what would be the result of media globalization unless local media sport market understood and prepared for media sport globalization. Furthermore, this study would reveal the strategy of global capital to penetrate and dominate local sport market.

In this qualitative case study, two research questions will serve to guide the narratives: 1) how global sport and media are penetrating South Korean sport and media sport industry; 2) what are the impacts of media globalization in South Korean sport and media sport industry.

#### Literature Review

Media technology has facilitated, at least in part, the realization of McLuhan's (1964) prediction of the "global village." The traditional definitions of time and space have been changed through the miracles of new media. Media innovations such as satellite TV, cable TV and Internet provide humans with connectedness that human society has never before experienced. As a result, the traditional borders that separate countries are blurred.

The impact of this shrinking of time and blurring of space on human society has resulted in the study of globalization based on media technology emerging as an academic field. Scholars are reaching a consensus that media globalization will continue, but how the global village will form within the space created by media globalization remains to be seen. In Rogers' examination of possibilities for media in McLuhan's concept of a global village, Rogers concluded that media could fulfill one of two roles. It could either be a promise able to help disadvantaged populations develop or it could be a "potential danger that can broaden the looming gap between the



information haves and have-nots” (Anokwa, Lin and Salwen, 2003, p. 254). Based on new digital technology and the World Trade Organization (WTO), Pelton (2003) predicted that the telecommunication industry would continue to converge and compete for the global market that is and will be growing exponentially.

These predictions of dangers associated with globalism – particularly that associated with media development – are partially in response to the global community’s experience with imperialism. The concept of imperialism arose from Pax-Britannica in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century. Other imperial powers – Western European countries, the United States and Japan – followed the imperialist example set by the United Kingdom and carved Africa, Asia, and Latin America into colonies. The globalization of modern sport was a product of this process (Guttman, 1994).

During the imperial period, sport was manipulated by colonizing countries to suppress resistance of the colonized. It was used as a tool of culture control over the colonized. Specifically, British imperialists used sport as a tool in two ways (Ha, 1996). First, in the education of imperial leaders and secondly as a means of indoctrinating British subjects with British culture and ideology, thus uniting the colonies. Japanese and other imperial powers followed the example set by Britain regarding the dissemination of sport in colonial territory (Guttman, 1994; Ha, 1996).

While traditional imperialism appeared to recede after World War II, the lingering nature of imperialism is apparent due to the continuing marginalization of peripheral countries at the hands of former colonial powers. In fact, as media globalization continues, cultural domination and the associated lopsided revenue flow evokes an encore of anti-imperialist protests and results

in cultural conflict. Huntington (1993) predicted that in the 21<sup>st</sup> century cultural conflict would drive the shaping of a new world.

An early example of this cultural conflict stems from the United States film industry. Hollywood's deep pockets<sup>1</sup> prohibited others from competing, and thus its products emerged as a dominant cultural power. The process of consolidation and setting entry barrier explains there is similar pattern in both American film industry and the current U.S. broadcasting industry (Atkin, 2003).

Uneven media and the accompanying disparity in revenue flows, as seen in the global distribution of American film, support the notion that media imperialism exists today. The foundation of media imperialism rests upon the global media and advertising systems, through which media content can reach the far corners of the Earth. In exploring the emergence of transnational media baronies within these systems such as News Corp., Viacom, Time Warner, Bertelsmann, etc., Hachten (2002) posited that western initiatives still dominate media industries within peripheral countries. One of the concerns regarding the impact of media globalization is that it would reduce cultural diversity and increase homogeneity within a given population. As transnational media corporations (TNMC) control the world media industry, "a global market has replaced their home countries as their natural environment" (Sanchez-Tabernerero, 2005, p.489).

However, the global media companies need to develop and maintain local markets in addition to maintaining their presence in the global market. Frith (2003) stated that, for emerging global advertising agencies to be successful, they must apply both global and local campaigns.

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<sup>1</sup> Media conglomerates armed with huge financial resources

He predicted as globalization goes on, different cultures and values will be standardized to a certain point while trying to protect its indigenous culture. Thus, the global advertising agencies should “appeal to the universal consumption needs and the unique cultural differences of different people around the world.” (Frith, 2003, p. 202)

In media sport, national products become international. If a country competes against another country in international sporting event such as the World Cup, people from each country watch the game because the event is of national interest. The sporting event automatically engages at least two countries, taking products beyond the borders of the native country.

Unlike other media products such as soap opera or news, media sport products rely less on “cultural proximity” (Straubhaar, 1991), drawing huge audiences driven by a national allegiance. In media sport, local, national, and international borders are blurred due to the virtually inherent involvement of two or more groups with separate collective identities. Because overt nationalism from each participant is naturally accepted – even expected – and the event is typically broadcasted in local languages to viewers largely cheering for their own compatriots, cable and satellite networks who are seeking global expansion must build elaborate strategies based on the ability of media sport product to penetrate new markets and cross national borders with ease (Rowe, McKay, & Miller, 1998). Consequently, it is no wonder that sport has evolved into one of the most global media products.

This evolution is the result of TNMCs applying different strategies in different markets. Hollifield explains that “media organizations manage themselves, their products, and their business environment in different settings” (2001, p. 140). By applying a generic strategy that adjusts content for different regions, sport has become one of the most efficient vehicles for the

TNMCs' expansion into global markets. Andrew (2003) explained how TNMCs utilize sport to enter, operate, and develop structure within different national contexts. He discussed three aspects of a News Corporation's use of sport: first, the cultural and economic rationales behind utilizing sport as a core content of a global TV market entry strategy; second, News Corporation's use of sport to enter and manage local media markets; third, the organizational adjustment that must occur within News Corporation to focus its global sporting orientation. Andrew's research provides evidence that sport has been used by TNMC as an expansion strategy. As an example, News Corporations successfully penetrated the American, British, and Australian media markets by exploiting sport and applying a country-specific-programming-strategy (Andrews, 2003).

Rowe, McKay and Miller (1998) analyzed the integration of sport, nationalism and the media. They determined that nationalism produces both intra-nations and trans-nations through multifarious sporting organizations based on nationalism. Media, sport, and nationalism are powerfully associated with international competitions such as the Olympics and the World Cup.

The unique combination of media globalization and nationalism in media sport requires a different paradigm from that used in the analysis of traditional understandings of sport. As globalization continues, the traditional conceptual framework of sport research where sport was perceived as national culture faces conflict with emerging global trends (Rowe & Lawrence, 1996). Globalization's compression of time and space pushes the traditional and national cultural sporting formation to an international level. Rowe and Lawrence (1996), however, argued that even though global conceptual framework is necessary, nationality and nationalism

of sport remains effective. Sport has emerged as a global phenomenon, but its idiosyncratic development in different countries should be counted.

The traditional nationalism lingers if not in the media, in the sport and media consumer. Rowe, in his work (2003), concluded that nationalism plays a major role in driving the media sport consumer to demand access to a global media sport event such as World Cup. He then challenged the basic notion of totalization in globalization – that can conflict with localized traits of national sport (Rowe, 2003). Rowe's argument surrounding the role of nationalism within Straubhaar's (1991) concept of cultural proximity, centers almost wholly on sport as spectacle. Both Rowe and Straubhaar suggested that the discourse of alternative possibility in globalization should be left open despite having accepted the phenomenon of media globalization and associated cultural concerns.

Those who have conducted audience research of media sport reach similar conclusions. Whannel (1998) observed that sport possesses a unique ability to draw large audiences around the world. Despite predictions that global sport would decrease diversity of sport, television remains as an example of how media sport is able to cross border lines to reach a global audience while continuing to appeal to local, nationalistic audiences. This is seen readily in the domination of the United States. American professional sport organizations, such as the National Basketball Association (NBA), Major League Baseball (MLB) and the National Football League (NFL), are emerging as transnational sport corporations. Other than U.S. professional sports organizations, the International Olympic Committee (IOC) and the Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA) – the world governing body of soccer – can be viewed as

transnational sport organizations which promotes globalization and transnational capitalism in sport (Sugden & Tomlinson, 2003).

The NBA provides a compelling example of U.S. sport globalization. Its unprecedented success of developing new global audiences and markets has proven the power of sport as global media content. LaFeber (2002) argued that new technologies, like satellite and cable TV, have set the foundation of the information revolution. Transnational media conglomerates such as CNN have built global information highways. Transnational corporations like Nike and the NBA have used these highways to open world markets and create global myths like that of Michael Jordan. Global information highways continued to be exploited at the hands of these transnational corporations as Jordan and Nike teamed up to deliver the Nike Air Jordan to the far corners of the Earth, generating more than a \$10 billion for the U.S. economy. The cultural and the economic impacts of the NBA, Michael Jordan and Nike were criticized and presented as evidence of cultural imperialism (LaFeber, 2002). After Michael Jordan retired, the NBA recruited international athletes from various countries and used them as a marketing tool to appeal to their home audience's nationalism. Yao Ming opened the Chinese market for the NBA and Manu Ginobili did the same for the Argentine market (Wang, 2004).

Like many other countries, South Korean sports industry is on the verge of becoming part of media sport globalization since Chan Ho Park's MLB contract. Lee (2001) analyzed inter-Korean TV media coverage of the Chan Ho Park TV contract with the MLB in an attempt to develop a strategy for the Korean sport media industry.

The first World Baseball Classic (WBC) is another instance that demonstrates the dialectic that exists between sport nationalism and media sport globalization. WBC was designed

to test the possibility for global expansion. Recognizing the power of sport nationalism as a global marketing tool, the MLB created a new world tournament in which each country may compete under its own flag.

The impact of globalization on Korean sport cannot be ignored. In this global era, as in other countries, sport in South Korea is viewed as more of cultural product than as a mere cultural force. Song (2001) discussed the historical shift of sport arguing “sport is no longer just a physical activity; it becomes a product combining culture and economy.” In 1999, sport industry in South Korea was estimated to produce 2.3 percent of the South Korean GDP.

Song (2001) then explored the changing value of media sport in South Korea. He determined that from 1980 to the present, media sport has shown different emphasis: the simple source of news and program; an advertising avenue as business; media content as property; and a future business opportunity. The media, especially TV, has emerged as a dominant power of sport. Without media, Song (1993) observed, sport is hardly the same sport anymore. In other words, sport depends heavily on media and media converts sport to media product in this global communication era. Through global media, sport is a cultural product traveling all over the world. Sport cannot be explained without giving proper attention to ideology, culture and media. It should be treated as a product, and consequently, Song (1993) argued that the cultural media product approach could explain current sport better than an ideological approach. This is a particularly applicable theoretical approach in analysis concerning South Korea due to the strong tradition of nationalism in Korean Sport – a tradition defined by imperialism, ideology and globalization.

The influences of imperialism, cold war ideology and military dictatorship have shaped modern Korean history. Western and Japanese imperialism forced Korea, once known as 'Hermit Kingdom', to open its border in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. After 36 years of Japanese oppression, Korea became an independent country. The country failed to establish a unified Korean government and divided into the North and South. North Korea went under Soviet communism influence while the south went under the capitalist influence of the United States. Again, North and South Korea were forced to adopt the ideology and social system of the dominant powers: the Soviet Union and the United States, respectively. Through the 1950s and 1960s, South Korea was plagued by extreme poverty and chaos. Like many other peripheral countries, South Korea endured a military dictatorship from the early 1960s to the late 1980s. However, South Korea is unlike most former colonies in that its economic growth and adoption of democratic modes of government have been relatively quick and bloodless. By the late 20<sup>th</sup> century, the South Korean economy not only became one of the rising powers in the global economy, but the country has achieved full scale political democracy and media freedom as well (*History of Modern Korea*, 2004).

Lee, in his work (2001), interpreted South Korean sport in the context of Korean history – a history also shaped by imperialism, ideology, and globalization. To facilitate this contextual analysis, it is helpful to divide Korean history into three stages: first, the imperialism era that is defined from the opening of the Korean borders in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century to the end of Japanese-driven oppression in 1945; second, the Cold War era that is defined from 1945 to the Seoul Olympics in 1988 and the collapse of the USSR in the early 1990s; and third, the media



globalization era that stretches from the early 1990s to the present. It should be noted that nationalism has been a pervasive element in both Korean political history and that of sport.

The last Korean emperor, Ko-Jong, put as much value on educating peoples' bodies as he did on their minds and souls. Sport and physical education acquired value in Korean culture because Ko-Jong thought sport could help make stronger Koreans and protect them from imperial influence. However, this wholistic concept of education was still stymied by bureaucracy and nobility. Deterred by Japanese intervention, the Korean educational movement for modernization and enlightenment led by Ko-Jong never fully developed (Jeong, 2000).

During Japanese oppression (from 1910-1945), the Japanese implemented a colonial education system in Korea. Physical education and sport were exploited by the Japanese to expand their political and cultural influence over the Korean people by using sport and physical activity to show Koreans the "inherent" superiority of the Japanese. Consequently, the nationalistic tradition in Korean sport evolved under Japanese imperialism.

Reluctant to accept Japanese oppression, Koreans viewed physical education as a means of raising stronger Koreans and sport as overcoming Japanese people (Lee, 2003). The socio-political climate during the colonial period resulted in Korean national leaders being driven by nationalism to support sport. A notable example of this is Yeo Woon-hyung, the national leader under Japanese imperialism, set his primary goal to be the recovery of Korean national identity and pride through physical education and sport against Japanese (Joo, 2003).

In the Cold War era, ideology joined nationalism as a driving force behind Korean sport. At the end of World War II, Korea became an independent state and South Korea quickly adopted the American sport and physical education system, which emphasizes freedom and

liberty based on individuality (Choi, 2002). South Korean sport became further ensconced in ideology during the Korean War, which was fought against communist North Korea. After the Korean War in 1961, a military government took control and sport became a tool for producing political propaganda.

The South Korean military government led by Park Chung-hee, the former president of Korea, was driven by anti-communism influenced by Cold War and economic development. For the first time in Korean sport history, Park supported physical education and sport as one of the national interests as well as exploiting it for political propaganda. Park's legacy still remains strong. Administration systems, laws and national facilities such as training centers that Park established continue to play a major role in South Korean sport today.

The ideas of Yeo Woon-hyong and Park Chung-hee were connected in Joo's (2003) comparative study exploring national leaders' legacy in national sport programs. Even though Yeo and Park supported sport for different reasons, they both utilized nationalism. Joo (2003) argued that the sport and physical education system Park established needs to be adjusted as globalism takes hold. Joo also warned that Park's authoritarian approach might conflict with the emerging global approach to sport.

Military dictatorship and its exploitation of sport continued during the Chun Doo-hwan government that followed Park's assassination in 1979. Chun took control of Korean government through a coup in 1980 and exploited sport in his quest for political stability. The Chun régime made preparation for the 1988 Seoul Olympics a national priority and supported sport in every aspect. Consequently, South Korea achieved unprecedented success in 1988, but the

contradiction in South Korean sport has deepened because of the authoritarian administration and policy (Park, 2002).

After the Seoul Olympics, the South Korean political climate has improved dramatically in addition to the economy. South Korean sport, however, has experienced a more difficult transition. Even though Korean society has enjoyed broad economic and political progress recently, the paradigm of Korean sport has not undergone the same transformation from authoritarian practices to more globalized media sport industry practices. The Korean government sport policy remains authoritarian while world sport industry has evolved through media globalization. The discrepancy between governing policy and practices in the world sport industry and that of South Korean sport is a major deterrent to South Korean sport reform.

Korean sport history can be compared with other former colonies due to the existing dialectic between nationalism and globalization in sport. Bairner (2004) observes that sport rarely responded to or followed American influence – in other words, globalization – in countries like Ireland or Scotland that were colonized by the British. Those countries have embraced soccer – a sport developed by their colonial rulers – and recognized the potential of a competitive arena in which they could challenge and even triumph over a colonial power like the English. However, these colonies rejected most American sport with the exception of basketball (Bairner, 2004). Thus, it becomes clear that the globalization of sport is checked by nationalistic tendencies, particularly in former colonies.

Military dictatorship that has plagued most former colonies after independence proves, in part, that the impact of imperialism and colonialism lingers. Like countries in Asia and Latin America, numerous countries in Africa have suffered coup d'etats at the hands of despots seeking

to overthrow the fragile governments established after decolonization. In this tumultuous period, media have become one of the most valuable tools of radical groups (Hachten, 2002). After political upheaval, the authoritative media system adopts the developmental media model so that the media can contribute to nation building. Nevertheless, the characters within the media in former colonies typically remain authoritative.

Media globalization has been scrutinized in various approaches. The majority of the researchers addressing this question have reached a consensus that the U.S. influence in media and culture is dominant and unidirectional, much like the associated revenue flows. The presence of colonial practices in the world media system is supported in the literature. Salwen (2003) investigated colonial practices in news reporting through several case studies. He concluded that the vivid evidence of colonial discourse shown in Italian invasion of Ethiopia in the 1930s could be found in today's practice: Robert D. Kaplan's "Ends of the Earth." He determined that current colonial practices are disguised in more subtle and sophisticated expression. According to Salwen's discussion, "colonial discourse in the news is not confined to the past." Salwen observed that, "Even today, modes of colonial discourse creep into news reports" (Salwen, 2003, p. 166).

Theories related to media imperialism are, like other critical theories, rooted in Marxism. Communication and culture are seen as an ideological tool of capitalist economic expansion (Straubhaar, 2003). The application of associated political economy paradigms helped to understand the influence of the United States, Europe, and Japan over the non-central world (Baran, 1957).

Dependency theory views the world in the dichotomy of non-central countries and the industrial countries wherein peripheral countries become dependent on the industrial world - comprised of core and rich countries - for capital, technology and manufactured goods. While peripheral countries are only able to export some raw material or low cost products, core countries continue to expand into new markets. Cultural dependency theory explains the role of culture in the context of media globalization. It explains that the cultural influence of media is both economic and ideological (Hamelink, 1983). However, cultural dependency theory lacks relevancy to the Korean sport media situation because it fails to account for the South Korean economic growth that has occurred while the development of the domestic media sport industry has languished.

This incongruence may be overcome by using development theory, which some scholars have applied in an optimistic approach to explain world communication. Neher (2003) explored the reality of one of the main tenants of development theory: the possibility that new media technology would help economic and social development within peripheral countries. He concluded that in many African countries this was not the case. After decolonization, many experts and scholars incorrectly predicted that mass communication or mass media would help African countries to develop economically and socially. Neher (2003) pointed out that this optimism was based on a western perspective, one blind to the circumstances that gave rise to indigenous communication systems. Thus, Neher concluded, earlier optimism about mass media was overstated and the fundamental importance of local self-reliance and the value of preserving traditional cultural elements should be recognized (Neher, 2003).

Expanding upon dependency theory, world system theory puts countries on a continuum according to the calculated degree of dependency. This continuum ranges from peripheral countries that are poorest, semi-peripheral countries, and core countries such as the United States and those in Western Europe (Wallerstein, 1976, 1979). Within this paradigm, South Korea would be placed among the semi-peripheral countries. However, this theory fails to explain why and how semi-peripheral countries such as South Korea should be located in the semi-core mantle (Straubhaar, 2003).

This element of economic determinism is a common thread in imperialism, dependency theory, and world system theory. Similarly, cultural issues of media have been discussed within each of these political economy frameworks. Recent approaches of media globalization recognize the complexity of factors and argue that the forces of political economy are powerful but not determinant (Mosco, 1996). Theories of cultural imperialism and media imperialism both put heavy emphasis on cultural forces and economics. The difference is that media imperialism demands a more specific comparison between two countries while cultural imperialism is more appropriate in analyzing a broader instance of media interaction.

Cultural imperialism focuses on economic power in the service of cultural domination and vice versa (Tomlinson, 1991). Its hypothesis suggests that in many parts of the world indigenous culture is being eroded by overwhelming media flow from core countries – mainly from the United States (Tunstall, 1977). The main criticism of cultural imperialism is that capitalism – a mainstay of core-country hegemony – reduces cultural diversity, increases cultural homogeneity and reproduces a culture of consumerism (Tomlinson, 1991).

Conversely, media imperialism focuses on narrower elements of the dialectic present between core and peripheral countries, primarily the unbalanced import and export of media between nations. Lee (1980) applied theories of media imperialism in an attempt to define the phenomenon that are more easily empirically measurable: the financing or ownership relations between corporations in core countries and media in peripheral countries; the adoption and use of media models from core countries; the uneven flow of media contents; and the impacts of imported media models and contents on peripheral countries (Lee, 1980). Media imperialism might not provide a complete explanation of such complex international media interaction, but it can provide specific benchmarks to see how these key aspects of media imperialism apply to specific countries (Straubhaar, 1991). Atkin (2003) applied media imperialism theory to investigate how the United States has exploited and gained through the global media system. He argued that the United States' media imperialism contributed \$60 billion to the U.S. economy. Furthermore, Atkin emphasized that many countries criticize how U.S. multinational corporations exploit the weaker countries' local cultures and implant American cultural products in order to stimulate consumption of US goods and services (Atkin, 2003).

Media imperialism constitutes a legitimate framework to analyze South Korean media sport industry because it is able to appropriately address the nuances of such a specific element as sport while maintaining a critical perspective that recognizes powerful economic factors in the example of theories like imperialism, dependency, world system, and cultural imperialism. Moreover, theories of media imperialism can also provide space for a specific comparison between South Korea and the United States. Such a comparison is important given the uneven flow of media content and revenue between the two countries and the difficulty South Korean

sport is experiencing in adjusting to the new paradigm of sport media in the context of globalization.

### Methods

This study was conducted in the scope of a qualitative case study to research and evaluate how South Korean media sport, as an industry, interacted and responded to media globalization. Multiple methods for data collection, including interview and document collection were used. Additionally, this case study draws significantly on Chan Ho Park's story, exploring and reflecting upon it.

Focusing on the Park case, the ways in which South Korean media sport industry interacted and responded to media globalization were explored through the use of expert interviews. An expert can be categorized as a person who possesses heightened knowledge and professional experience in a given field. In the context of this study, an expert is one with professional experience in South Korean sport and heightened knowledge thereof. In this study, most of the experts selected for interview participated Chan Ho Park negotiation. Top class executives of Korean media sport were interviewed, as well as world-class executives of global media sport corporations. The identities of the interviewees have been kept confidential in order to protect against any criticisms of their professional decisions made in their corporate capacity.

Interviewees were selected for participation in this study based on the following criteria:

- 1) former or present executives of Korean national networks who have substantial experience and knowledge in media sport;
- 2) former or present executives of sport marketing corporations who have substantial experience and knowledge in media sport;
- 3) must have experience involved with Chan Ho Park negotiation;
- 4) must be at least 20 years old. In order to learn the



most accurate and authentic data about Chan Ho Park story, a purposeful sampling strategy was employed.

Expert Interviews were held for about 45 to 60 minutes each. Face-to-face interviews were conducted with each individual expert, usually in the interviewee's office. Some of the interviews were conducted in isolated restaurants. All of the interviews were conducted in Seoul, South Korea and in Korean language, later translated into English. Using a semi-structured interview questionnaire, different participants were asked similar questions so that answers from various perspectives could be compared. To assure the accuracy and validity of the data, follow up interviews were conducted through e-mail and telephone. The data gathered in the interviews were peer reviewed so that external reflection and input can be appropriately included in the study.

Finally, through member check with the participants, interview transcripts and final drafts were used to ensure that the study properly represents participants' experience and ideas accurately.

Experts' profiles are as follows:

- Korean Expert 1: a former executive of sport department from a national network
- Korean Expert 2: a former executive of sport department from a national network
- Korean Expert 3: a former executive of sport department from a national network
- Korean Expert 4: an executive from a sport marketing corporation
- Korean Expert 5 from University
- Korean Expert 6 from University
- Korean Expert 7: an executive from Korean professional sport league

- American Expert 1: an executive from American professional sport league
- American Expert 2: an executive from a transnational media corporation
- American Expert 3 from University
- American Expert 4 from University

The personal journals and professional work records of the participants in the study were analyzed as meaningful data. A variety of documents were used to provide data for this study, including documents associated with the TV contract of Chan Ho Park, negotiation records, final drafts of TV contracts, internal agreements among Korean TV networks, and, lastly relevant TV reports and media articles. Any possible quantitative data was collected, if available, and analyzed. This included TV ratings of a given sporting event and advertisement selling records. Additionally, contents and revenue exchanges between South Korean and US media were compared as quantitative data.

Finally, the researcher's professional experience and knowledge was applied for data collection and interpretation. The researcher has been working in media sport industry for 13 years and has done hundreds of news reports and several documentaries on the research topic. A TV documentary on the effects of media globalization on South Korean sport entitled *Chan Ho Park and Michael Jordan*, produced by the researcher, was used as secondary data as well. The interview scripts and the reporting scripts of this documentary support the primary data drawn from the experts interviewed. Many of these experts were included in decision making regarding Chan Ho Park TV rights negotiations and internal conflicts among Korean media.

In evaluating all of this information, a narrative analysis was primarily used. The narrative that emerged explored how the myth of Chan Ho Park was created, how it was

manipulated by global capital and how it affected Korean media sport industry. Use of a narrative analysis enabled the researcher to reflect on the Chan Ho Park story, putting global and local perspective together.

The field work, including data collection, data analysis, and writing, was conducted in 23 months, starting in September 2006 and finishing in July 2008. “Data collection” consisted of preparing invitation letters, lay summary and consent form, contacting possible participants, setting up the interview schedule, conducting interviews, and gathering supplementary data.

#### Findings and Interpretation

The goal of this study is to explore South Korean sport through the lens of media globalization and, in doing so, suggest future direction for South Korean sport industry. Unless the industry understands the dialectic between media globalization and sport, it cannot compete against global capital. This study, stemming from the myth of a young athlete’s prowess, investigates this dialectic.

#### *The Myth of Chan Ho Park in the Words of the Experts*

A retired executive interviewed for this study is the former head of the sport department at a South Korean media outlet. The primary question posed was, “based on your experience, what would be the meaning of Chan Ho Park story to South Korean sports?” Without hesitation, he responded as follows:

(Korean Network Expert 1)

“Korean sport can be divided into two time periods: before Chan Ho Park and after Chan Ho Park. Before Park, sports were something to watch and enjoy but, after Park, sports became pure business. Seeing American company making a lot of money from it, Koreans recognized different aspect of sports”

This study is about to explore the myth of the mighty player who has conquered Major League Baseball, the world premier league: Chan Ho Park. Park has made his American Dream come true arising from nowhere to the top of the world. The image of Chan Ho Park is inscribed in the heart of Korean fans as a national hero who has given the Korean public a new hope to overcome the economic disaster (the “IMF<sup>2</sup> era”). Park was the first Korean baseball player to ever throw a pitch in Major League Baseball (MLB), the first Korean player selected as an MLB all star, and the one who won the battle against Japanese players in the field of MLB. Although Park is one of the best athletes in Korean sport history, his athletic prowess is somewhat exaggerated by the media. This qualitative case study explored how the myth of Chan Ho Park emerged from the interactions of global capital, Korean media, and global sport industry in the context of media globalization and media imperialism.

### *Exploding Media Globalization and Sport*

By mid-1990s, inspired by new media technology and the unprecedented global marketing success of Michael Jordan, American sport industry, including the MLB, National Basketball Association (NBA), and National Football League (NFL), has quickly recognized the global market as a new possibility of market expansion. Along with American sport, transnational media corporations (TNMC) and transnational corporations (TNC) have found sport to be the battering ram for them to penetrate national borders that dictate sport nationalism. (American Expert 3)

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<sup>2</sup> IMF era: South Korean economy went financial crisis in 1997 and International Monetary Fund (IMF) provided South Korea with financial aid. Since the crisis happened, South Korean economy went through hard recovery.

“...Rupert Murdoch mentioned he wants to “batter” into other media market with sport and movie. I once talked with the president of Sky B, owned by News Corporations, and he told me that “battering ram” was not exactly what Murdoch meant; it was exaggerated. But I think that is exactly what they are. It is imperialism.”

Unfortunately, Korean TV networks had no idea how the landscape of the Korean sport media market would change when global capital was introduced. In mid 1990s the Korean media industry was on the verge of a new wave: media globalization. This was to lead Korean media to multi-media and multi-channel era. However, at the time, the big three networks, Korean Broadcasting System (KBS), Munhwa Broadcasting Company (MBC) and Seoul Broadcasting System (SBS), were enjoying an oligopoly – ultimate control over Korean media-sport market.

While global capital was armed with a planned strategy to penetrate the Korean market, these three networks and the rest of the Korean media-sport industry was not ready for the upcoming globalization. All of the Korean network executives expected that the local market oligopoly could last, even though Korean athletes’ migration to world premier sport leagues had started.

(Korean Network Expert 1)

“... to be honest with you, we thought MLB imported Asian players including Chan Ho Park because they wanted to save money, I mean low file players with cheap salary...”

(Korean Network Expert 2)

“... KBS started broadcasting MLB games. Back then, MLB was not recognized by the Korean public and Chan Ho Park was not even a famous player. Therefore, MLB was seeking publicity for national networks. In terms of globalization, that was the starting point for MLB to come into the Korean market.

Actually, none of the Korean media executives anticipated what really happened. We did not even have any strategy while they have established strategy along with product content. We were destined to such a fiasco. Not only MLB made it happen, but also English Premier League (EPL) is following the same path.”

*The Revolution Has Begun*

In 1994, the foundation of Korean media sport industry was about to be shaken when a young collegiate baseball player went to the MLB. However, none of Korean media sport experts immediately recognized the meaning of Chan Ho Park’s joining MLB. Neither did Park.

(Chan Ho Park in *Chan Ho Park & Michael Jordan*)

“I wondered if MLB really wanted me. It was just a dream for me to pitch in MLB mound just once... When my agent asked, “How much would you pay,” the LA dodgers said half million dollars for signing bonus. My agent was surprised that a Korean player got that much money. Then, he was shocked when Dodgers said they would consider even 2 million dollars. We were so excited.”

(Korean Network Expert 1)

“As Park began to win, people paid more and more attention to see him. Then all of Korean national TV networks started bidding for MLB TV rights. Seeing what is happening in the Korean market, I recognized this was a business strategy but it was too late. Although Korea saw the effect of Nomo Hideo in Japan, the Korean industry did not understand the consequence of what really happened.”

(Korean Network Expert 3)

“MLB International approached us and made an extremely cheap offer, only ten thousand dollars per game. All they wanted was national exposure for the long term plan to penetrate Korean market exploiting Chan Ho Park. We recognized it later.

As a result of it, the better Park performed, the higher the price of MLB TV rights skyrocketed – more than fifty times of the original price. The old Korean oligarchic market collapsed because of it.”

Korean media, as well as the public, were simply proud of Park. Park signed a contract with the Los Angeles Dodgers, the franchise with the biggest Korean population in the United

States. When Park arrived in Los Angeles, the Korean community in the United States did not even know who he was, none had seen him pitch, but they welcomed him from the bottom of their hearts simply because he was Korean. People's interest of Park's playing spread out among the Korean public even though Park was not the best player, not even a famous player in Korea. What the Korean public wanted to see was a Korean player competing and winning against the world's best athletes.

This dialectic between the Korean public and the media market is called *glocalization*. This is a typical strategy for most holders of global capital looking for a way to expand their market and describes a process of using local athletes to facilitate global market expansion. To penetrate a local market in South Korea, the MLB needed a local hero who could break the invisible barrier that comes from sport nationalism. This strategy of using a local player to open the media market has been proven in other markets. For example, Nomo Hideo opened the Japanese market for the MLB. It is important to note, however, that the American companies were aware of what was going on while Korean companies were not.

(American Expert 1 from Professional League)

“[Bringing foreign players is] a marketing strategy, business strategy and a player development strategy because we have seen that. That's a proven strategy. We've seen that the impact of Nomo had when he came....

A foreign player can [open the market] for you in the country; can get you that broad exposure, [like] when [they] brought up Chan Ho Park. Having Chan Ho Park, we've seen that the development of TV exposure since....

We have Chan Ho Park on the mound or other Korean players making impacts... you see the same thing recently, say when the Yankees played. Wang is pitching, the interest of the fan, they want to see the local player...”.

(Korean Network Expert 1)

“At first, it was not a big deal – public interest was not high, no sponsors paid attention, even private stations were not interested. KBS did it because it was cheap and Chan Ho Park looked OK then. It was really experimental... experimental...”

(Korean Network Expert 2)

“We did not anticipate the consequences. I have to admit that I was naïve. I just thought this would be all right somehow without any plan.”

Park has become a rising star in MLB, striking out world class hitters. In addition, Park was compared to Nomo Hideo, the famous Japanese pitcher who was playing with Park for Los Angeles Dodgers. The better Park performed, the more he was exposed to the Korean public and the more sport nationalism was stimulated.

Through Korean media, Park was viewed as the one who represents Korea despite the fact he was not on a national team. Korean media started calling him “the Korean Express” and pitted Park against Japanese players, personifying a historical fight between Korea and Japan. With historical memory of Japanese colonization in 20<sup>th</sup> century, Koreans wanted Park to be superior to Japanese players. Moreover, Korea was experiencing painful economic rebuilding controlled by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and people were seeking a hero who can give hope back to regain the pride of Korea. Park became a national hero who conquered Japan, as well as the world. In 1997 Korean media gave him special nick-names such as “Korean Hero” and “the Pioneer of MLB.”

#### *The First Chaos*

As Park’s popularity rose in 1997 and knowing Park’s success had become a national interest, the big three networks of Korea made a pact called “the Korean Pool” (KP) in 1997.



They let KBS alone negotiate for the MLB TV rights and then share it to keep the price down instead of allowing intense competition among the networks to drive the cost of the TV rights higher.

The MLB, however, was aware of changes in the Korean media market and knew the local oligopoly would no longer exist. Since local networks, cable TV, and satellite TV were launching, competition for survival among Korean media had started. It was natural that the value of sport surged because sport would be the legitimate weapon for brand management of TV stations, especially for the local networks who were relatively new to the market.

In-cheon TV (I-TV) recognized the power of sport content and beat Turner Broadcasting System (TBS) and Fox network (Fox) in United States at their own game. The strategy of I-TV was simple: as a new-comer to the local market, I-TV used sport as *killer content* to maximize the brand power of the station. Launched in 1997 as a local networks, I-TV, a pioneer ignored by big three networks, bought MLB's TV rights. For the first time in Korean media history, a local station, other than big three national networks, outbid those giant networks and acquired global sport content for the next three years. I-TV and the MLB reached an agreement for one million dollars in 1998, one-and-a-half million in 1999, and three million dollars in 2000, respectively.

(Korean expert 4 from Marketing Corporation)

“I-TV studied TBS. Although TBS was not a network in Korea, TBS content was driven by sport content, [such as coverage of the Atlanta Braves, and delivered all around the country as national coverage]. . . . I-TV also saw Fox grow from a small station to a national network because they have major sport content such as the NFL or the MLB World Series”

(American Network Expert 2)

“Fox network was founded in the 1980s but it was not really until Fox acquired an NFL contract at 1994 that Fox became a true national broadcaster. Everyone suddenly became aware of the fact that Fox network exists simply because of that...”

Big three networks of the Korean Pool were shocked and furious by I-TV’s purchase of the MLB rights. They criticized I-TV for spending too much money and for breaking the local market orders.

“Question: Do you think Korean media executives were aware of the MLB’s business strategy when all of these started?”

(Korean Network Expert 1)

“Completely not. Later we thought there was something when I-TV bought MLB rights, paying huge amount of money. And then we recognized this was a real business opportunity we lost. That was why all three national networks, including us, intentionally criticized I-TV, saying they wasted Korean money. We denounced [the purchase] as problematic: a local station, I-TV, cannot serve the whole Korean public and I-TV is responsible for the unreasonable price.”

(Korean Expert 4 from Marketing Corporation)

“Looking back [at] the negotiation, Korean networks made a consortium called Korean Pool (KP) and thought there were no other major players who could deal with the MLB unless one of big three broke the pact. Therefore, KP told the MLB they would pay only one million dollars because the Korean economy was bad and that was the last offer. Actually, it was not a negotiation. It was a “take it or not” situation. KP then played with Korean media, leaking information that the MLB was trying to rip-off Korea. KP thought the pressure was on MLB. Ironically, I-TV saw the papers, [saw] there was opportunity for I-TV, a small local company, and contacted MLB to get the rights. That is how it happened.”

### *The Second Chaos*

The “rebellion” of I-TV turned out to be a huge success. As Park pitched like a rising star, I-TV became the leading local network in Korea and advertisement was sold out. Even

though I-TV can only reach In-cheon and Gyeong-gi do, all of the MLB games Park pitched were delivered all around the country through cable stations. I-TV, however, was hit by financial difficulty by the end of the contract. Unlike other countries, Korean TV advertising is controlled by Korean Broadcasting Advertising Corporation (KOBACO). Under KOBACO's control, ad prices are fixed. If I-TV pays more than three million dollars per year, I-TV would lose money even if all advertising time sold out.

(Korean Expert 4 from Marketing Corporation)

“The first three years was pretty good for I-TV. But the problem was the regulation of TV advertisement that fixed TV ad price. Sports advertisement was sold with a fixed price on an annual basis. At first it was good because the regulation guaranteed a certain amount of money but when the cost of the MLB TV rights skyrocketed, the annual income of sports ads did not change along with it. After three years, the income could not match the fast market growth. If the price kept going up, I-TV would get no benefit. We had to check those numbers while it was inevitable the price would go higher.”

Seeing local TV companies such as I-TV excluded, Korean national networks made another pact to control the price of the MLB. It seemed that the MLB did not have any other options but to deal with the Korean Pool until MBC, one of the KP members, broke the pact and bought exclusive MLB rights for next four years. Again, prices skyrocketed; six million dollars for 2001, seven million for 2002, eight million for 2003, and nine million for 2004.

(Korean Network Expert 1)

“Executives of big three networks dealt with the MLB rights as a team because the price was too much. We all agreed to work together in dealing with important sporting event such as the Olympics, World Cup Soccer or Chan Ho Park. Based on the agreement, we had CEO's of three networks who signed it.

By that time, we were aware of the MLB's strategy. The MLB, however, also was aware of what the [KP] was trying to do it. Instead of dealing with the

[KP], the MLB decided to make an individual offer to break the [KP]. They brought an offer to KBS, MBC and SBS respectively. Finally MBC bought it.”

The reason behind the breach of the pact was that MBC wanted to use Park’s popularity to enter and dominate the Korean cable TV market. At the same time, Entertainment and Sport Programming Network (ESPN), an American media company owned by Disney Group, was looking for market expansion in Asia. As a result, new sport cable TV, MBC/ESPN, was established as joint venture between the local network (MBC) and a transnational media corporation (ESPN). Entering the local market as a joint venture is a typical strategy many TNMCs have already applied.

Again, Korean networks which once were allied, started criticizing each other. KBS and SBS denounced MBC as they did to I-TV three years earlier. Korean experts admitted a lack of understanding of media globalization as a critical element of the chaos while global capital was armed with a proven strategy.

(Korean Network Expert 2)

“The CEO of MBC had a lot of interest. First of all, MBC/ESPN was launching. They needed content for that. Next, the MLB with Chan Ho Park was perfect for a strong start along with a national network. The problem was the price. I was surprised. It was too much; actually beyond our anticipation. We should have done better negotiation but we were not experienced. The price could have been lower than that....”

(Korean Network Expert 1)

“Things went as the MLB intended. They wanted to avoid dealing with the [KP]. The MLB successfully get MBC seduced and the [KP] was broken. The MLB won the game and the [KP] lost.”

(Korean Expert 4 from Marketing Corporation)

“MBC felt threatened. That’s why MBC decided to establish joint-venture with ESPN/STAR. MBS was thinking satellite TV initiatives as well...”

For transnational media corporations including News Corporations and Disney Group, it was the type of market expansion they wanted. However, the Korean market within the Asian market was not fully developed. Therefore, instead of competing with each other, the News Corporations and the Disney Group decided to cooperate until the market was fully-grown. Both companies successfully came into the Korean market as MBC/ESPN was established. This was because in the Asian region ESPN was cooperating with STAR, which was owned by News Corporations. ESPN was actually ESPN/STAR. This example demonstrates that global media capitals try to establish a league of their own as a global oligopoly and Korean market was just part of it.

“Question: something hard to understand is that ESPN, from the Disney Group, and STAR, from the News Corporations, were competing with each other... Why cooperate with each other in the Asian market?”

(American Network Expert 2)

“It is simple. The Asian market is still developing. The Korean market is growing. However, except for the Japanese market, other markets are not fully developed yet. These markets such as China or India have huge potential, though.

The audience for professional sports isn’t as great, let’s say as Japan. So it’s making sense rather than bidding each other over the head to cooperate...”

(American Expert 3 from University)

“as far as ESPN/STAR, [it] is one way of doing this [market expansion] as much as they can dominate the Asian market by combining and stopping third potential upstart company coming in...”

*The Third Chaos*

MBC invested more than thirty million dollars, the biggest contract in Korean media sport history, for exclusive MLB rights. The investment turned out to be a partial success. MBC/ESPN has become the leading cable TV company with the highest market share. However, it stumbled as Park struggled with unexpected injury and a long slump. Park's performance declined after he won 15 games in 2001 but MBC was obligated to broadcast Park's game for national exposure because of the terms of the contract. TV ratings were lower than it used to be and national popularity of Park quickly declined as his *flash stuff* slowed down.

(Korean Network Expert 2)

“The first and second year was OK, MBC benefited from the contract. But the last two and a half years MBC lost a lot of money. Chan Ho Park got into a long slump, TV ratings went low and advertisement was unsold as consequence. Then nobody took responsibility....”

By that time, MBC was being punished by two other big three networks, KBS and SBS, for the breach of the agreement. KBS and SBS acquired and shared all of Korean professional TV rights including baseball, soccer, and basketball. KBS and SBS did it to oust MBC from the local sport market. MBC was literally excluded from Korean sport for enjoying exclusive MLB rights.

In 2004, considering ultimate competition for bidding sport content would lead them financial disaster, KBS, MBC and SBS made a third alliance to cooperate for upcoming MLB contract. It seemed there would be no other competitor since local stations, satellite TV, or cable TV could not afford a multi-million contract unless big three networks supported it.

(Korean Network Expert 2)

“The MLB came here for the last negotiation but price was different. [KP] made the final offer that was 20-25% lower than the last contract. That was what present ads market could generate at the max under KOBACO’s control. We wanted renewal but we couldn’t afford more than what we offered. If the MLB insisted more than that, we had no other choice but going the other direction. KBS and SBS all agreed with MBC. All three networks couldn’t take the price. We offered eight million dollars but MLB insisted twelve million dollars per year. We were on the same page maybe for the first time. MLB was seeking other counterpart with no avail.”

The prediction turned out to be wrong again. In January 2005, a new-comer came in to the Korean media sport market: IB sport. This was a newly founded sport marketing company, interrupted the negotiation with the big three Korean media outlets and bought MLB TV rights, paying approximately twelve and half million dollars per year from 2005 to 2008.

(Korean Expert 4 from Marketing Corporation)

“At the renewal negotiation, MBS said they did not make money, but it was MBC/ESPN who earned money. From the MLB’s perspective, even though it was MBC who signed the contract, MBC/ESPN supposed to be considered as part of the MBC media group and the results showed ESPN was successfully launched, becoming top cable company in Korea. The KP wanted [to] pay less while MLB wanted more money.

When the negotiation between the MBC and the MLB finally [failed], IB sports came in and took the MLB TV rights, adding DMB<sup>3</sup> option. If business grew bigger, you have to share the benefit with the property owner. IB sports would do it for the mutual benefit paying little bit more than KP offered.”

(Korean Network Expert 1)

“It was strict business decision for IB Sport snatching [the MLB rights]. Although Chan Ho Park’s performance was inconsistent, IB knew it was too attractive for Korean networks to ignore. By that time it was not just Chan Ho Park. Other Korean players like Kim and Seo were playing in the MLB. IB knew they could sell the product.

Korean networks agreed [to not] purchase MLB rights, knowing IB Sport was not able to afford unless they resold them. [However], this time it was KBS who bought MLB rights despite the huge controversy.”

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<sup>3</sup> Digital Multimedia Broadcasting

Odds show dramatic price changes of the MLB TV rights over the last decade from less than \$300,000 per year to more than twelve million. As the Table 1 displays, the annual price went up more than forty times. Ever since Park joined the MLB and global capital of media sport came into the Korean market, the foundation of Korean market was totally shaken up. The rule of the market was changed. The local oligopoly was gone and the new global competition market occupied the void.

Table 1

*MLB TV Rights Contracts in Korea*

TV rights holder	Term	Price
KBS	1996, 1997 annual basis	\$ 10,000 per game
I-TV	1998-2000 three years	\$ 5.5 million for three years
MBC	2001-2004 four years	\$ 30 million for four years
IB-Sports	2005-2008 four years	Approximately \$ 48 million for four years

Despite the environmental changes, KP kept applying the same strategy that could only be effective in the outdated oligopoly of the Korean media outlets, not the new globalized environment. What caused this chaos was the emergence of a different environment within the market. Korean market was no longer an oligopolistic one but a competitive one. The narratives show that still Korean networks were not fully aware of the reality. Maybe they were denying it instead of admitting it.

(Korean Expert 4 from Marketing Corporation)



“For the business, you have to cooperate and make alliance, but KP thought as long as big three networks stick together they could do whatever they wanted. The other thing was that KP observed cable TV stations struggle, so they thought cable would not be a real threat to the market. But when Korean government allowed cable to reach bigger advertising market, things were different. KP did not adjust to the market change.

Now, I think these traditional players (KBS, MBC and SBS) had a chance before those new media or new-comers took it but they [networks] did not take it. They thought it would be easier than it actually was. That’s what they missed...”

The conflict between KP and IB sport did not last long. KP thought if they stuck together, there would be no outlet for IB to sell MLB TV rights in Korea. For short period of time, it seemed KP was right; but there was no trust between these allies. In May 2005, IB signed a contract with the Asian Football Confederation (AFC). IB acquired exclusive rights until 2012. That contract included rights ranging from the Asian regional round to the World Cup Soccer Tournament, the most popular sporting event in Korea and in the world. Then, IB created a package deal of TV rights with both the MLB rights and the World Cup Regional included.

Peddling soccer along with MLB was powerful enough to shake KP. Without trust of each other, KBS, MBC and SBS were all afraid of ending up with nothing. As it did before, competition for global sport content overpowered the local oligopoly. This time, it was KBS that finally bought the package from IB sports in February 2006.

(Korean Network Expert 2)

“IB took the MLB TV rights but they did not have outlets to feed. That’s why they established cable X-sports. The real problem was that they did not have national network coverage unless one of big three networks agreed with them. IB sports was desperate to find the way to the national coverage because national coverage was included as a mandatory term in the contract.

What IB sports has done was that buying Asian Football Confederation TV rights that covers national soccer team match and make it a package combining with MLB. They brought the package to national networks,

respectively. National soccer matches are the most popular content in South Korea and finally KBS took it...”

*Media Imperialism in Sports*

After Chan Ho Park, it is impossible for the industry to return to the old time oligopoly with no competition. Park was the turning point of Korean sport history. All of the Korean Experts agreed with the same conclusion.

(Korean Expert 5 from University)

“The Chan Ho Park case was a symbolic incident. Whether it wanted it or not, Korean sport industry was embedded as part of sport globalization process. Korean people recognized how big sports industry is and how fast globalization is happening through sports.”

Over the last ten years, what Korean sport has experienced follows the footprints of imperialism in late 19<sup>th</sup> century. In the Chan Ho Park case, it was sport, media global capital and nationalism that were exploited rather than military power. The lopsided revenue flow and content flow between Korea and the United States constitutes legitimate media imperialism. The results of this research show that the Korean sport market is marginalized since global capital came into the local market along with Chan Ho Park.

In terms of revenue flow, the total revenue of MLB TV rights generated through Chan Ho Park totaled approximately ninety million dollars. During the same period, no Korean sport content was exported to the United States. Therefore, there was no revenue generated by Korean sport within the global media market. While an MLB game was broadcast on Korean TV and all Korean media companies cover the MLB on a daily basis, not one Korean baseball game was exposed to American media.

Table 2 and 3 highlight this, showing how media coverage between Korea and United State is polar opposite from one another. The MLB is being covered in Korean media as daily basis while Korean sport is completely ignored in American media.

Table 2

*Annual Coverage of MLB in JoongAng Ilbo*

1990	91	92	93	94	95	96	97	98	99	2000	01	02	03	04
21times	27	28	37	188	304	244	362	330	341	438	339	265	388	220

Table 3

*Comparison of Media Coverage between U.S. and Korea (from November 15, 2004 to November 14, 2005)*

MLB in JoongAng Ilbo(Korea)	KBO in USA Today(U.S.)	KBO in LA Times(U.S.)	KBO in NY Times(U.S.)	KBO in Washington Post (U.S.)
246 times	0 times	0 times	0 times	1 time

The unprecedented media exposure of the MLB to Korean media is direct impact of Chan Ho Park. Every single game Park pitched on the mound was broadcasted on Korean TV while the exposure of Korean baseball plunged. During the same period, none of the Korean baseball games was exposed on American TV.

The lopsided content and revenue flow support strong argument that there is an imperialistic practice in the media industries that overlap the United States and Korea. All of the

expert participants on global media sport industry and interviewed for this study agree on this point.

(American Expert 3 from University)

“It is exactly what they [transnational media corporations] are about – it is blatant, it is imperialistic the fact that they would batter into other media markets”

(Korean Expert 6 from University)

“Korean sport industry is becoming a consuming market of foreign sport product. As it keeps going on, maybe it’s the time to give serious thought of being culturally dependant...”

(American Expert 4 from University)

“It is imperialism to certain extent, one of [the] commissioners of American professional sports said that players go where the money is and it is pretty clear that most of the money particularly baseball and basketball that money is in United State[s]....”

In addition to revenue and content flow, Korean baseball now can be considered as one of the MLB’s farm systems that raises athlete and send them to United States. Watching Park’s American dream realized, the exodus of Korean star players to United States has become common practice. The popularity of MLB and star players’ migration threaten the popularity of Korean Baseball Organization (KBO).

(Korean Expert 7 from Professional League)

“At first Chan Ho Park gave young Korean athletes a dream. But there was no system to control player migration. As a result, unorganized player migration hurt both Korean baseball players and baseball business. Actually, KBO had to get through serious setback: one of the reasons is that star athletes leave for the MLB, along with fan’s interest.”

More concerning for KBO, to a certain degree, the MLB replaced KBO’s status as daily consumer media sport content. That means the Korean market is being marginalized, making

way for the consumer market of the MLB. At the same time, KBO is becoming a farm system for the MLB. All of the Korean experts also agree on this point:

(Korean Expert 7 from Professional League)

“Frankly I am disappointed. Sometimes when I see sports news, we have a very important game tonight but media put foreign games on top of Korean sports. I don’t understand why...”

(Korean Network Expert 3)

“Chan Ho Park started breaking down Korean sport market, I think. Demand for sport content rose as market competition got heated and foreign content where Korean athletes are playing became the best product in Korean market.”

This study explored how the myth of Chan Ho Park was created and the process has shown us how holders of global capital have exploited sport as “battering ram” for their market expansion. The results lead to the discourse of media imperialism. During a discussion of media imperialism, it is imperative to remember that a driving force thereof is sport nationalism.

#### *Power of Sport Nationalism*

The following narratives are from sport media experts the researcher interviewed. What was said about sport nationalism displays how it is being manipulated in the context of media imperialism in sport. The reality Korean sport is facing and the underlying impact of sport nationalism is reflected in the discussion above regarding the techniques of using a local player to facilitate glocalization and in the narratives below.

(Korean Network Expert 1)

“Chan Ho Park was a hero for the Korean public”

(Korean Network Expert 2)

“It was not just ‘Chan Ho Park,’ it was ‘*our* Chan Ho Park,’ the Korean media and the public said. We are Korea. Park was not just an individual player. Korean’s perspective toward the MLB has transformed the league [into *our* MLB]. How good is it for American sport in terms of business?”

(American Expert 1 from Professional League)

“One foreign player can [trigger national media exposure] for you; they want to see the local player....”

(American Network Expert 2)

“Sport is tribal [game]; they want to see their nation playing....”

(Korean Network Expert 2)

“Now I have to admit that everything was planned. At first all the MLB wanted was exposure with extremely low price....”

(American Expert 1 from Professional League)

“That’s a proven strategy, we’ve seen that when Nomo [Hideo] came to MLB, Wang is the same...since Chan Ho Park, MLB is getting more national TV exposure.”

(Korean Network Expert 3)

“The MLB TV rights suddenly skyrocketed more than forty times from the first year price and the traditional Korean market was completely broken.”

(Korean Expert7 from Professional League)

“As a result of indiscreet player migration, players got hurt and the business of Korean professional baseball got hurt as well”

(Korean Expert 6 from University)

“It’s the time that Korean sports should be worried for being culturally dependant”

(American Expert 3 from University)

“It is imperialism to a certain extent...”

(Korean Expert 5 from University)

“Korean sport will not survive unless it adjust itself to media globalization”

#### Conclusion

Korean sport will never be the same as it was before Chan Ho Park’s heroic performance. Park was the turning point of Korean sport, driving it to be embedded in globalized sport, whether Koreans wanted it that way or not.

It would be reasonable to reach a conclusion that Chan Ho Park’s “myth” was created and exaggerated by global capital and media. Using sport as battering ram to penetrate into local media market and manipulating sport nationalism is common practice for global media capital. Unfortunately, Korean media sport industry did not predict what would be the consequences and was not prepared at all.

Korean media lost the control power of sport content – an expensive loss – and as competition came in, it became obvious that the traditional market structure had been completely shattered. The result: Korean media sport market has become an open market for global capital. Following the MLB’s success, the England Premier League (EPL) brought Ji-sung Park to England and Nippon Professional Baseball (NPB) brought Seung-yeop Lee to Japan, applying the same strategy of glocablization. Thus, Korean media sport is facing the biggest challenge ever and simply survival is at stake.

(Korean Expert 5 from University)

“Korean sport is kind of a critical patient in intensive care room relying on air supplying tube. Korean sports have no future unless it copes with sport globalization”

The characteristics of sport has made sport, arguably, the most globalized media content since media globalization exploded in the 1990s. Results of sport globalization appear differently in many countries. Some benefit from it while others lose from it.

From the South Korean perspective, sport globalization turned out to bring unprecedented chaos. Chan Ho Park's "myth" instigated a whole new structure and market order in South Korean sports industry. Exploring what really happened through the Chan Ho Park case, this study found a huge disparity in the content and revenue flow between South Korea and United States. Sport content flows from United States to South Korea and the revenue flows from South Korea to United States. It is safe to say that this constitutes media imperialism.

Based on the findings from this study, the next step is to understand why South Korean sport is experiencing such difficulty in adjusting to sport globalization. It is also critical to the industry to, in future research, identify and understand the substantial barriers that block possible changes. To understand media globalization, an external issue, researchers should look at the connection between the industry's environment and an internal issue, like the authoritarian policy applied to South Korean sport. In studying this connection, the practical resolution for South Korean sport reform would be revealed and student-athletes trapped by the authoritarian policy will be freed.

As part of the legacy of the Japanese imperialism, the Korean War between North and South, and the dictatorship of military government, authoritarian policy and practices were deeply inscribed in South Korean sport. These historical experiences are holding back South Korean sport from humanization and industrialization. Moreover, those authoritarian policy and



practices are adjusting media globalization harder. However, proving the connection between media globalization and the authoritarian policy would be a task beyond the scope of this study.

After evaluating the research carried out in this study, we now know that the global capital has penetrated South Korean market using local athletes and sport nationalism and that South Korean sport market has been embedded as part of global sport industry. This expensive lesson will help South Korea avoid the pitfalls of another Chan Ho Park.

## CHAPTER 3

### FRAMING THE AUTHORITARIAN POLICY IN SOUTH KOREAN SPORT: “SORRY I’M A STUDENT-ATHLETE”

#### Introduction

It was not the scorching sun of the summer or the soaked body or the pounding heart or the deadly tired legs. It was the fear and isolation that constrained the 12-year-old boy’s innocent dream to cease.

The boy had a dream of becoming a South Korean national soccer player and bringing the World Cup Soccer championship to his country for the first time in history. He never stopped chasing the ball he loved. He was always happy when he was playing. So, he tried out for the soccer team and became one of the varsity team members with a scholarship as a student-athlete. What seemed to him to be the happiest time in his life, unfortunately, was when the boy’s dream started withering away. The boy did not recognize this.

He had to practice at least three times a day -- morning, afternoon, and evening. He almost never attended any classes. He spent most of his time resting in the team dormitory when he was not practicing. The coach yelled at him whenever he made a mistake and beat up the boy badly in his face and all over the body. The boy could not complain about anything like other boys on the team. The boys and his teammates just took for granted that this was the student-athlete’s life. They knew they had to win the game. If they lost the game, they would lose the scholarship, their parents would be disappointed, the coach would get fired, and, most importantly, they knew they had nowhere to go because they could not go back to class and compete with others academically. Winning was everything.

The boy was separated from his friends and felt isolated. The only world he knew was soccer and the team. As time went by, the boy became frustrated and anger piled up in his mind. Not knowing where his life was heading, he went out to the street and caused trouble. He lost his love and zest of athletics, and nowhere could he find his dream. The boy was lost and scared.

The boy's teacher and his mother never gave up on him. The teacher kept suggesting to the boy's mother that he should stop participating in athletics before he ruined his life. One day, the mother told the boy, "Son, you started playing because you wanted to; if you do not want to play, just tell mom – you can always stop. I will help you." At that time, the boy was injured in the game. His rib cage was broken. For the first time since he started playing soccer, he had the chance to attend class for a whole day, and he simply recognized that he had found where he should be, even if he had gone so far astray.

Recovering was not easy. Indeed, it was harder than he expected. One year of participation in athletics cost him two to three years to get back to academic competency. His teachers, friends, and mother helped him back to the non-athletic world. When he was accepted for college, to understand why the innocent dream had to be shattered, he chose his majors: Physical Education & Sports Studies and Mass Communication,. He started thinking whether he could change anything about school sports. Despite the horrible experience, his love of sports from the bottom of his heart never completely went away.

Becoming a sports reporter for the Korean Broadcasting System (KBS) was the boy's choice to bring some impact on the sports world. Expecting some changes, the reporter, who once was the boy with the troubled dream, kept writing critical stories about the South Korean

sports system. He participated as a co-producer of a documentary production for South Korean school sports. Rather unsatisfied, he was disappointed because of the lack of change he observed.

The reporter made the decision to leave his work for a while and to research why South Korean sport was in trouble and how to change things. Thousands of student-athletes are suffering in South Korea, not knowing why they have to endure the unreasonable pain. They need help as the boy did.

He spent almost four years in the United States to find the answer to his critical inquiry. He gradually reached the thought that the status quo of South Korean sports possesses a historical, political, economical, and cultural context, all combined in the authoritarian sport system and the student-athlete code. Now the critical researcher, who is also a journalistic practitioner, is determined to contribute to South Korean sports reform by connecting his academic research and journalistic fieldwork. He recites what Paulo Freire stated for himself, “Reflection without action is empty verbalism” (Crotty, 2003, p. 147).

Prior studies about the authoritarian sport policy in South Korea have focused on criticizing external issues such as lack of academics or physical abuse instead of exploring internal causes. Furthermore, researchers paid more attention to the oppressed, mostly student-athletes, than the oppressors who make and administer the policy. As a result, despite a substantial amount of criticism, the South Korean sport policy maintained authoritative practices.

Academic inquiry needs to shift to the investigation of the concrete structure and power relationship among decision makers of South Korean sport. In doing so, this study will examine current issues in the light of considerable changes.

Therefore, the purpose of this study is to explore what invisible factors sustain the policy and deter South Korean sport reform rather than to criticize without change. The focus is on the power elite<sup>4</sup> of South Korean sport.

Reform of the authoritarian sport in South Korea is not about a power game between the oppressor and the oppressed; rather, the key is to find out ‘how’ to reform. It is already well-known that the South Korean sport system has a problem and it must be reformed. Who would step up and take responsibility and how to lead the Korean sport society with clear vision are what matter at this point. This research is to investigate why the authoritarian sport system has not changed in order to find out how to make it change.

In this qualitative critical research study, three research questions will be addressed: 1) how the authoritarian sport system is constructed in school athletics to dehumanize student-athletes; 2) how the Korean sport elite perceive the current sport policy and its practices; and 3) what the invisible forces deter possible changes in the authoritarian sport policy.

#### Literature Review

What was once believed to be true could be false in the future or in a different context. In his monumental essay, Kuhn (1996) explained how a new paradigm is accepted struggling against an old paradigm. The significance of Kuhn’s analysis of scientific revolution is that it brought the demise of the traditional logical positivism. Questioning that the objective truth exists led the scientific argument to the emergence of a new epistemology. In the paradigm of constructivism, meaning is not discovered, but rather constructed in the social context (Crotty, 2003).

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<sup>4</sup> Group of people who have authority or substantial influence for sport policy and administration

Just as things and human knowledge change in a different time or context, the traditional definition of *sports* has changed as human society has changed. To deconstruct the traditional meaning and reconstruct a new meaning of *sports*, the post-modern approach is suggested (Rowe & Lawrence, 1996). What did change traditional sports and create a new concept of media sports is media globalization. Therefore, media globalization provides an adequate context that can explain the global media sports industry.

In the late twentieth century, new media technology made McLuhan's (1964) prediction of a global village possible. As media globalization continues, the whole world is connected as a single global market (Levitt, 1983). During the unprecedented competition to expand the global market over the last two decades, the transnational corporation (TNC) and transnational media corporation (TNMC) emerged through a series of consolidation (Frith, 2003; Pelton, 2003; Sanchez-Tabernerero, 2005).

Sports as a global media content has shown a strong advantage to penetrate a national boundary largely because of nationalism (Andrews, 2003; Rowe & Lawrence, 1996; Rowe, McKay, & Miller, 1998; Whannel, 1998). TNMC quickly embraced the power of sports nationalism and utilized it to nullify 'cultural proximity' (Straubhaar, 1991) and to expand the global market (Frith, 2003; Hollifield, 2001). As a result, the global sports mass media oligopoly was established and run by the TNMCs: News Corporations, Disney/ABC, and Time Warner etc. (Law, Harvey, & Kemp, 2002). In this media globalization era, traditional sports has transformed into one of the most powerful and globalized media contents.

The dominant influence of U.S. TNMC brought about serious concerns of media globalization (Boyd, 2003; Hachten, 2002; Huntington, 1993; Rogers, 2003; Salwen, 2003).

Those concerns were linked to the critical perspective that stemmed from the Marxist tradition, and the critical approach, to a certain degree, makes a legitimate argument for capitalistic expansion.

To protect humanity from the capitalistic exploit, Karl Marx (1818-1883) synthesized his philosophy, history, and economics into real life and dedicated his life for real change (Crotty, 2003). Although Marx failed to realize his dream for the complete human society, his legacy remains influential. Imperialism is one of the branches that inherited Marx's critical perspective (Straubhaar, 2003).

In media imperialism, capital combined with global media creates an uneven exchange of media content flow, revenue flow along with lopsided cultural influence between countries. As TNMCs take dominant control of the power over the global sports oligopoly (Law, Harvey, & Kemp, 2002), the sports industry has become an exemplar of media imperialism.

Media globalization and media imperialism make a compelling argument that the S. Korean sports industry is experiencing difficulties adjusting its policy and practice to the global standard, and that it is somewhat marginalized. Recent incidents including those involving Chan-Ho Park and Major League Baseball (MLB), the 2002 Korea/Japan World Cup TV rights negotiation, the National Basketball Association (NBA), and the first World Baseball Classic (WBC) provide the evidence that the S. Korean sports industry is vulnerable because of media globalization (Lee, 2001; Song, 2001).

Based on the belief that media globalization is not a choice but a given reality, the discourse of South Korean sport reform, in order to survive in this media globalization era, gains legitimacy. While media imperialism explains what is going on in South Korean sports,

analyzing the authoritative sports policy of the South Korean government leads to the exploration of why South Korean sports is having such a difficult transition.

To explain the current issues in South Korean sport, the authoritative sport policy of the South Korean government cannot be ignored. As with any other industry, government policy set the foundation and direction of sport; exploring the impacts of sport policy would lead us to a clear explanation of why the South Korean media sport industry had difficulty in adjusting to media sport globalization.

Japanese imperialism, ideology, the Cold War, the military government, and nationalism have been major factors that made South Korean sport. The current South Korean sport policy, however, inherited the legacy of the military government. Most of the South Korean sport policy was established by the military government in the early 1970s. During the cold war era, the exploitation of sport for political propaganda was witnessed in many countries, including South Korea, the former Soviet Union, and the German Democratic Republic (Houlihan, 1994).

Jung-hee Park, the former South Korean president who ruled from 1960 to 1979, recognized that international sport could be a powerful instrument for political propaganda. He used international sport competitions, such as the Olympics, to boost national identity among Koreans, to prove capitalistic S. Korea's superiority to communist North Korea (Joo, 2003; Lee, 2001). Park's legacy still remains strong. The administration system, laws, and national facilities, such as national training centers that were established by Park, still play critical roles in current S. Korean sport.

Park needed to train strong national athletes who could compete in the international sporting events, such as the Olympics and World Championships. Park enacted three core



policies to attract better talents to an athletic career: the student-athlete code, the national athlete pension, and the military service exemption (Lee et al., 2000). Park also created an administrative system that could focus on international sport competition and completed the legislation to support it. The sport policy based on authoritative nationalism needs to be adjusted as the global world emerges (Joo, 2003).

The student-athlete code has been criticized as the most problematic sport policy in South Korea. It came into reality in 1972 as an educational bylaw. After the student-athlete code was enacted, it became legal that among the applicants of high schools or colleges, up to 3% of the total admission shall be allowed to student-athletes regardless of academic test scores. Lee (2001) asserted that considering the vicious competition for college education in South Korea, the student-athlete code is a huge privilege attracting many student-athletes. From 1982 to 1992, the number of middle school student-athletes grew from 3,899 to 6,569. In high school, the number grew from 4,585 to 6,772 and in college from 1,580 to 2,206 (Lee, 2001).

The focal point of criticism is that the student-athlete code marginalizes education. Because of the student-athlete code, student-athletes are evaluated by their athletic performance with no academic enforcement and if the performance meets certain standards, the athletes are allowed to play in college. Consequently, winning becomes everything, not only for the student-athletes but also the parents, the school, and the coach.

Many research studies found that the majority of the student-athletes are not attending class regularly (Lee & Ahn, 2004), are socially separated from the normal student body (Choi, 2003; Kim, Cho, & Jeon, 2002; Kim & Kang, 2002; Lee, 2003, 2004; Lee & Ko, 1994; Seo & Kim, 2005; Yu & Yi, 2004), and are exposed to an abusive environment, such as the coach's

violence (Hahm, 1997; Kang, 1998; Kim, 2001; Sim & Won, 2005). The environment of student-athletes is sometimes shockingly abusive. Yu and Yi (2004) focused on the student-athletes' marginalized culture. They examined various aspects of this culture, including enforcement, violence, deviation, physical abuse, and absence of academics. The results showed that student-athletes are separated from the normal student body and are marginalized in every aspect.

Lee (2003) took the educational problems of the student-athlete code into the area of human right issues. He claimed that the South Korean government and society have not paid adequate attention to student-athletes while their human rights are abused for the sake of athletic competition.

The desocialization process of student-athletes has been examined (Kang, 2003). Student-athletes who cannot make a professional career because their athletic ability is not superior would have to deal with significant desocialization. Without proper academic education, it is almost impossible for these student-athletes to transfer back to non-athletic life unless they make a professional career in athletics.

Lee (2004) has offered a philosophical inquiry of life and death, criticizing that Korean society is forcing student-athletes to move toward a dead-end situation instead of a human life situation. He asserted that under no circumstances could student-athletes resist the coach's order because only the coach can give them playing time without which the student-athlete can never obtain college admission. The student-athlete code definitely exploits the privilege of college admission by attracting many students to participate in athletics. Kim (2001) surveyed student-

athletes to find out why they participated in athletics. The results showed that more than 70% participated in athletics to seek college admission.

However, despite numerous critical research studies of the student-athlete code and authoritarian policies, the focus remained on revealing the harsh reality of student-athletes. Some of the researchers tried to suggest alternative solutions for S. Korean sport policies (Lee & Ko, 1994; Lee & Ahn, 2004), but most efforts were only superficial, mainly because the researchers' suggestions were based on social norms displaying the needs of general education, careful consideration of teachers and coaches, better game schedules, or self resistance of student-athletes to protect their rights. The questions of what the constructing structures of authoritarian sport policies are and why they remain unchanged have rarely been discussed.

Despite growing criticism, the South Korean government's approach to sport remains the same due to the consistent focus of international competition. For the 1988 Seoul Olympics, the authoritarian sport policy was reinforced even more under Chun Do-Hwan's military government following Park's regime (Park, 2002).

After the Seoul Olympics, South Korean politics achieved even more democracy, while the economy continued to grow. In every aspect of South Korean society, authoritarian practices have been reduced. In sport, however, the authoritarian policy never changed. As South Korean society proceeds to full-scale democratization, some efforts to change the authoritarian sport system have been observed. The Kim Young-Sam administration (1993-1998), the first civilian regime since 1960, put emphasis on recreational sport for the public good. Nevertheless, the authoritative sport policy remained the same, and the government budget for sport was spent in a

similar manner. Approximately 70-80 percent of the sport budget went for the international competition, as had been the case during the previous administration (Yu, 2001).

The Kim Dae-Joong administration (1998-2003) tried to apply the market system in the sport industry for the first time. However, Kim did not change the student-athlete code and gave strong support for international sport competition to raise national pride (Lee, 2002).

The situation that South Korean sport faces is that there is a consensus that the authoritative policy needs to be changed, but in what direction and how is not thoroughly discussed. The researcher suggests that the American system should be considered as a model of South Korean sport reform. In the United States, more students participate in athletics than in any other country while the balance between athletics and academics is protected. The competition level varies. The top level of school athletics is strongly connected with the professional sport industry functioning as a farm system. Although there are many concerns, including excessive commercialism, racism, academic abuse, and gender issues, the eligibility rule of the NCAA is what keeps the overall balance between academics and athletics.

The impact of collegiate athletics on American society has been explored by scholars. Smith (1988) researched the creation of college sports and defined its characteristics: freedom and commercialism. He explained that U.S. college sport started with seeking freedom from the stifling academics, and commercialism and sponsorship was part of it.

Efforts to protect academic integrity were examined by Falla (1981). Since the NCAA was created in the early twentieth century, mainly because of the urging of U.S. President Theodore Roosevelt, the educators and scholars who control the organization set priority on academic standards.

The entrance eligibility of the NCAA affects high school athletics as well. The National Federation of State High School (NFHS), the governing body of public high school interscholastic athletics, applies academic standards in association with the NCAA's entrance eligibility requirements. If a student-athlete does not meet the academic standard, he or she will not be allowed to participate in athletic competition. With the balanced athletics and academics, American student-athletes can transfer back to non-athletic life when athletics is not a career option. In contrast, South Korean student-athletes have no transferability.

Robst and Keil (2000) found that in NCAA Division III institutions, student-athletes' grades and graduation rate are similar to or higher than those of the non-athletes. The notion that student-athletes' academic performance is impaired by athletic participation should not be generalized without contemplation.

Not only are U.S. student-athletes as competitive as the non-athletes in academics, but also the student-athletes enjoy their sub-culture as much as non-athletes do. Committing to almost 20 hours in athletics every week, the student-athletes' sub-culture does not display a significant difference (Aries, McCarthy, Salovey, & Banaji, 2004).

Some scholars warned that even though the graduation rate of student-athletes turned out as high as that of non-athletes, it should be scrutinized (Ferris, Finster, & McDonald, 2004). The graduation rate alone is insufficient and could be misleading unless the NCAA accounts for the widely varying constituencies served by different universities.

Scholars have addressed the imperfection of NCAA eligibility rules as well (Hishinuma, 1999). Although the NCAA eligibility rule helps student-athletes keep the balance between academics and athletics, various groups such as female and ethnic minorities are in need of more

careful attention. Hishinuma (1999) criticized that NCAA's freshman academic requirement policy did not pay enough attention to the student-athletes with learning disability, and in doing so had a negative impact on them.

From a broader perspective, the fact that American college athletics, administered by the NCAA, is stained by commercialism cannot be ignored. McMillen (1992) denounced the NCAA corruption of commercialism. He argued that the NCAA has become a business entity preaching amateurism but practicing professionalism.

Along with commercialism, racial issues have been raised (Hawkins, 2001). While the NCAA put more emphasis on business, it exploited black student-athletes' physical ability for commercial benefit without providing adequate support for academic achievement.

#### Methods

This study was conducted in the scope of critical ethnography and expert interviews. Multiple methods for data collection including interview, participant ethnography, and document collection were applied. Through expert interviews, I explored how the South Korean power elite perceive sport industry and sport policy. Participants' personal journals and professional work records were analyzed as meaningful data, when available. Documents associated with student-athletes such as the student-athlete code, the guidelines for running school athletics, the letter of intent, and the participants' school grade sheet were used as data as well. Some of the quantitative data such as the graduation rate of student-athletes and the increase or decrease in the total number of student-athletes was gathered and analyzed.

As an instrument of the research, the researcher used his own life experience, professional experience, and knowledge for data collection and interpretation. The researcher has

been working as a sport reporter for 14 years and has done hundreds of news reportings and several documentaries on the research topic. During the process, the researcher has interviewed high-ranked government officials, lawmakers, politicians, principals, coaches, parents, and student-athletes. The researcher has produced documentaries, *Sorry I'm a student-athlete*, with the same topic of this research in 2007. The field note and the interview script were used as data as well.

For the critical ethnography and the documentary production, the researcher has lived for six months at the student-athletes' dorm as part of the collegiate basketball team. The president of the university, the athletic director, the head coach, and the 17 student-athletes all agreed with the observation. All of the student-athletes have been participating in school athletics at least five years. The majority of them started in elementary school and for most of them, attending class in the classroom has been a rare event ever since.

The researcher stayed at the team's dorm for six months (from March 2007 to August 2007). The researcher observed not only their practice but also every aspect of their life. The researcher ate with them, traveled with them, talked with them, and sometimes practiced with them to establish a close relationship. Those hundreds of formal and private interviews and chats, field notes, team meetings, and their official records of the athletics and academics created deep and thick data for better understanding.

Narrative analysis was applied as the primary analytic frame. The narratives explored what the actual practices at school athletics are, how Korean power elite understand the reality of school athletics, and why things are not changed despite the obvious problems.

Multiple session interviews were administered. For most of the expert interview participants, 45-minute interviews and a complementary 15-minute interview were administered. Face-to-face interviews were conducted with individual participants. To assure the accuracy and validity of the data, follow-up interviews were conducted through e-mail and telephone. The data gathered in these sessions were put under peer review so that external reflection and input could be embedded. The interview transcripts and the final draft were tested to determine whether the study represent the participants' experience and ideas accurately.

Purposeful sample selection was chosen so that the researcher could garner inside data among the Korean power elite involved in policy making. All of the expert participants were deeply involved with policy making and administering South Korean sport. The researcher's professional networking and private relationship along with an official invitation were utilized to contact the power elite of South Korean sport.

The sample selection criteria for this study were as follows: 1) present legislators who have substantial experience and knowledge in sport policy; 2) former or present government officials who possess substantial experience and knowledge in administering sport; 3) former or present college athletic directors; 4) involvement with Korean sport policy making and administration; 5) a minimum age of 20.

Sites of research were the participants' office and some of the interviews were conducted in isolated restaurants. Participant ethnography was conducted in one of the universities located in Seoul for spring semester 2007. The university is running one of the finest athletic programs in South Korea and the team is one of the best performing clubs in the country.



The fieldwork was conducted in 23 months including data collection, data analysis and writing. I began my fieldwork in September 2006 and completed it in July 2008. The experts' interview data were collected by the following, preparing the consent form and lay summary, contacting possible participants, setting up the interview schedule, and conducting the interviews and the follow-up interviews. During those periods, gathering supplementary data was conducted at the same time. All of the interviews were done in the participant's mother tongue, which is Korean, and later the data were translated into English for the writing.

Although all of the participants agreed to be interviewed, I assigned numbers to identify individual participants in order to protect their privacy.

### Findings and Interpretation

#### Sorry I'm a Student-Athlete

I still remember the complicated feeling that I had back in March 2007. I was producing a documentary featuring the student-athletes' life of a collegiate basketball team to find out why athletics always came first while academics was being completely ignored in South Korean school sport. I was about to live in the student-athletes' dorm for the next six months so I could film everything happening in their lives. That night, student-athletes were talking about taking exams and we discussed the mixed feelings about class.

(Student-Athlete 1)

“I came to this university because of basketball, academics was not my concern at all.”

(Student-Athlete 2)

“I've never gone to class. All I have done is nothing but basketball since I participated in basketball. I started when I was at elementary school.”

(Student-Athlete 3)

“...everything was OK as long as I performed on the court. At the class, there is nothing I can do for exam. Nothing.”

(Student-Athlete 4)

“I feel ashamed for being a fool or something. When nobody is watching me, I write “Sorry, I’m a student-athlete” and run away. That’s just about it.”

(Student-Athlete 1)

“I feel empty and void. Don’t know why...”

(Student-Athlete 2)

“I know I’m not guilty but I feel like I’m guilty.”

(Student-Athlete 5)

“I hate to think if anybody recognizes me and say he does this ‘cause he’s an athlete.”

Their words reminded me of being a student-athlete in junior high. In 1985, I felt exactly the same as they do today. Therefore, nothing has changed. Watching their empty eyes and the faces, I was feeling sympathy and anger from deep inside my heart. It has to be stopped. This practice will ruin their lives at the end.

In February 2007, two weeks before the participant observation started, I organized an expert conference to talk about the critical issues in school athletics with a special focus on the student-athlete code. Experts invited to the conference consisted of two legislators, two government officials, a former head coach of the Korean national basketball team, and two college professors. All of them possessed a strong influence over Korean school athletics.

I did it with intention. It was my strategy to discuss the topic and to see if they perceive the current situation in the same perspective. Participating as a conference leader, I am convinced that the problem is crystal clear and everyone knows about it but no one seems to know how to begin changing it. The student-athlete code causes the imbalance between athletics and academics. All of the participants mentioned that the core issue is involved with the student-athlete code, in other words, college admission.

(Expert 1)

“...The very origin of the problem lies on college admission. If entering eligibility rule (the student-athlete code) changed, then everything will be changed.”

(Expert 2)

“...all of the secondary school athletics is screwed because it is all tied with college admission (the student-athlete code).”

(Expert 3)

“...more than 97.8% of student-athletes remain lower than 80% of the class.”

(Expert 4)

“...seeing human rights of student-athlete is being abused, people close their eyes for college admission (the student-athlete code) is at stake.”

(Expert 5)

“...it’s not those kids to be blamed, when 99% of student-athletes never study then the system should be held responsible (the student-athlete code).”

(Expert 6)

“...there would be no future if this academic issue of student-athletes remains the same.”

(Expert 7)

“...when they stop participating in athletics, all the responsibility of the system goes to those innocent kids.”

Then I questioned myself, why? It does not make sense to me that nothing changes even though everyone who can make the decision over the issue is aware of the existing problem. To find the hidden factors, I contacted one of the most famous collegiate basketball teams in Korea. After a series of intensive discussions, the president, the athletic director, the coach and the student-athletes all agreed to allow me to observe everything about the team for six months to discern what was really going on in collegiate athletics.

The agreement was as follows:

1. For the spring semester 2007, from March to August 2007, all of the student-athletes who are registered on basketball team will attend class as all students do.
2. The Korean Broadcasting System (KBS), represented by me, will film the whole process with no limit, produce a documentary, and air it on KBS with national exposure.
3. The university will establish a new academic policy for student-athletes based on the observed data.

It was the first time in Korean sport history since the student-athlete code was enacted by the military government in 1971. I was excited and wondered if this kind of immersion journalism would work. On March 6, the day the university and I reached a mutual agreement, my field note reads:

“Finally we set out for change. I’ll have to make this project successful and helpful for the student-athletes no matter what. No changes will come easily. Jaeyong, remember that.”

I was right. Somebody has to sacrifice for the change and it was, unfortunately, the student-athletes. Working out 26 hours per week, attending class was no easy duty, especially for the student-athlete who never went to class for years. There is no doubt it was physically and mentally draining.

Literally, they fear academic work:

(Student-Athlete 6)

“...lack of academic experience I mean none, I don’t think I can understand what the professor says, and exam? No way would I make it, I guess.”

(Student-Athlete 5)

“We simply don’t have time for class work. I wonder I can get enough time to do it.”

Following is the weekly time schedule for the basketball team:

Monday thru Friday

06:00 - 07:00 am	Practice
08:00 - 09:00 am	Breakfast
09:00 am - 16:00 pm	Classes
16:00 pm - 19:00 pm	Practice
19:30 pm	Dinner
21:00 pm - 23:30 pm	Practice

Saturday

10:00 am – 12:00 pm	Practice & Off
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Sunday	Off
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Team practice hours reach 34.5 hours per week, almost five hours per day. For weekdays, it adds up to more than six hours per day. An unrealistic amount of practice hours itself explains why student-athletes cannot attend classes. Shockingly, this is common practice for most of the student-athletes on the team since they have participated in school athletics. I recall the fatigue I felt every night when I was in the eighth grade. It is physical abuse for young athletes. Moreover, it is not productive. It just breaks young athletes' body and love of sport. Everyone knows that but reality tells us all coaches end up doing this dehumanizing practice like this team. I felt sadness and pain in my heart.

On March 29, all of the student-athletes disappeared. They could not endure the stifling work out so they simply ran away. Nobody came back to the dorm that night. The whole team was missing. I followed their tracks and found them staying at a motel in Cheon-an. When I visited and opened the door, they were frightened and panicked, wondering if I brought the coach with me. I was alone and the coach was not even aware I was there. These kids have done it before and running away from dehumanized environment was common practice for them since high school. The reason was simple. They were seeking freedom and rest.

(Student-Athlete 5)

“...hadn't run away, I would've gone crazy. I couldn't stand it anymore.”

(Student-Athlete 7)

“...we did nothing but sleep and eat. We needed fresh air.”

That night, I had a long conversation with these scared athletes. During the conversation, I was confused if it was me, the boy, back in the 1980s to whom I was talking. All of them were lost and isolated as I had been. They did not even know where to go. All they could think of was

that basketball was the only option for their life and they had to go back to the court. Why? They had never studied for a long time and it was too late for them to get back to academics. To be successful in athletics or to be nobody was the reality they faced. What a tragedy.

What made me felt useless was that the kids were aware of the consequences of their behavior. Student-athlete 9 told me that he, like other friends, had done this in high school saying running away is common practice for most athletes. When they come back, they are physically penalized, most of the time violently, and their hair is cut short to help make them focus on practice.

The day after, they decided to go back to the team so that they can participate in the upcoming tournament. On the bus, nobody said anything but slept like dead bodies. Their eyes were looking away, mostly staring into the distance.

I was concerned if attending classes put too much burden on their shoulder. The answer was no. Really? I asked again.

(Student-Athlete 8)

“...attending class actually makes me little bit more tired for I don't take nap but if we don't go to class we will have a practice anyway. Besides, I really like to go to class so I can learn and make friends who aren't athletes.”

On the other hand, there was a different voice.

(Student-Athlete 9)

“To be honest with you, I don't like attending class. I don't know, I don't understand and most importantly it's useless. I would practice basketball if I got some free time so I can be selected at Korean Basketball League (KBL), the professional basketball league in Korea.”

The biggest challenge was coming in June – both the final exam and the game against the most hated rival.

Student-Athletes 2 and 4, juniors, were close friends to each other. As the exam and the big game were approaching, they were rather confused about doing both athletics and academics. The day before the exam, the two friends visited the assistant coach's room and asked to be waived from working out so that they could prepare for the next day's exam. It was part of the agreement. Therefore, for the first time in their athletic life, they studied that night instead of going to practice.

This is the dialogue between the two friends and me right before the exam.

Researcher: Have you really studied?

(Student-Athlete 4)

“I've read three times but I don't know if I understood the material.”

Researcher: At least, you might write something today?

(Student-Athlete 4)

“I hope. At least, I ain't going to write sorry I'm a student-athlete anymore.”

(Student-Athlete 2)

“...as long as it's open book test, I'll try to do something.”

Dialogue after the exam.

Researcher: How was it?

(Student-Athlete 4)

“...yeah, I wrote the answer that I've never done before. One of the questions was the same topic I wrote a report. I'm excited. The feeling is so



different than when I wrote ‘sorry I’m a student-athlete’. I’m not humiliated this time. I’m proud of myself, I expect A for this.”

(Student-Athlete 2)

“...hell no, that’s ridiculous (both laugh)”

What I found was that they did what they never thought they would and they were happy for trying. The smile on their faces was not the one I had observed from practice. Actually, I never did.

No student-athletes would say anything during the practice. Happiness and passion is hardly witnessed on the court. Many of them confessed to me that they would do almost whatever it took if they could be waived from practice for just one day. They were sick of practice but forced to do it, and the worst thing was that they were used to being treated like that.

Student-Athletes 4 and 2 were sitting on the ridge looking down at the recreational outdoor court, where a bunch of students were playing basketball. The short conversation followed.

(Student-Athlete 4)

“...how come they like basketball so much? They do it every single day.”

(Student-Athlete 2)

“I guess they do. Otherwise they wouldn’t play when nobody told them to do.”

(Student-Athlete 4)

“...we started because we loved hoops as much as they do.”

(Student-Athlete 2)

“...exactly.”

(Student-Athlete 4)

“...if they practice like we do, for three months caged at the dorm. All of them will run away.”

(Student-Athlete 2)

“...three months? hell no, I bet a week would be more than enough.”

They watched for a couple of minutes with silence.

(Student-Athlete 2)

“Have you ever played like them? just for fun.”

(Student-Athlete 4)

“No time for that since I joined varsity team.”

(Student-Athlete 2)

“I’ve done it once. At 9th grade, on the street, it was a lot of fun.”

(Student-Athlete 4)

“Sure, no pressure, no yelling, play as you want to, then it should be fun.”

What was going through their minds? I did not know. Did they look sad? Yes. One week before the rival game, the head coach 1 and I had a brief conversation in his office. He was assigned head coach of the basketball team six months ago. Had he not agreed to this project, it would not have had started. With his strong belief in the balance of academics and athletics, he made the final decision to join this adventure for the reform of Korean sport. However, the reality is cruel. If the team should not perform, he would take all the responsibility on his own shoulders. That was how the system was built.

He knew the meaning of this rivalry. The former coach was fired after he had lost two years in a row in the annual contest against the traditional rival. Winning was the only option here. No excuse would be accepted. Expectations were high and alumni of the university were putting huge pressure on this team for the victory. Some of the alumni members criticized the coach for his sacrificing practice in exchange of a ridiculous academic project. That was the reality.

(Coach 1)

“I feel I’m really sensitive recently. The opponent practices whole day while we go to class. That makes me nervous. People don’t care whatever we do for academics, win or lose that’s what matters. Period.”

June 23, the day before the rival meeting, the air was intense at the final practice. Suddenly, student-athlete 10, the only inside presence of the team got injured. The game plan was largely dependent on him. If he was not going, the game plan should be adjusted right away.

After five minutes, the coach stopped the practice. He was furious at the players for not showing urgency and he left the practice, calling it a day. Only silence filled the gym.

That night, assistant coach 2 told me that he physically punished some of the student-athletes to push them to the limits. He knew it was wrong, but he said he did not have any other options. Under this kind of emergency situation, that was how he was treated when he was an athlete. Now he reproduced the distorted practice. I thought wrong is wrong; you have to fight against this, but I swallowed the words and remained silent until the game was over.

June 24, somehow the team came out with a dramatic victory. I was confused that night, and I wrote in my field notes:

“It was a great achievement for them to win participating in both academics and athletics. That is for sure. However, there was foul play. Physical punishment cannot be tolerated under any circumstance. Saying ‘everyone else does it too’ cannot justify this foul behavior. Should I give them credit or not?”

June 25, the team checked grades for the spring semester. From March to June, they did what they never thought they would: doing both academics and athletics. They all got together and looked at their grades on the computer. Observing this, I thought it was like the judgment day for them.

(Student-Athlete 10)

“For the first time in my athletic life, I am nervous to see my grade. I’ve never paid attention to it but this semester I really tried to do my best.”

The result was beyond my expectation. The team averaged a GPA of over 2.6 out of 4.3. It was the best academic achievement ever. Student-athlete 10, student-athlete 4, and student-athlete 2 got more than 3.0.

(Student-Athlete 4)

“I am proud of myself. This is the best ever I got. Last semester I got two Fs but this time I got three A’s. I was thrilled when I saw my grades. I thought I have achieved something big and I would do this in the future.”

(Student-Athlete 2)

“I used to sleep most of the class time but last semester I really tried to go to class. I will print this academic report and keep it at home. For the first time in my life, I studied at a library with friends. I would never forget the feeling.”

(Student-Athlete 10)

“I have to keep this record I will. At high school, academic reports were thrown directly in the garbage can. I didn’t even give a look. This one I would love to show my mom. Fear or anxiety? I doubted myself. What can I do in the class? I have not done it for a long time. Meeting new friends was important.

Once you go to class and make friends to talk and ask, then you feel you can do it. Making friends is what really matters.”

At the end of the project, the university developed a new policy that can support both athletics and academics based on the observation data. In March, the university organized a task force team to research the American collegiate athletic system. The Division I manual of the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) was consulted. The task force team had weekly seminars throughout the semester and submitted a final report to the university at the end of the semester.

July 25, the university established a new policy. The new policy included the following:

- Eligibility Rule
- Academic Advisor
- One-on-One Tutoring System

I was sitting in professor 1’s office one night. He was in charge of developing the new policy. We both agreed that the new policy was nothing new. What is in the policy is what should have been there a long time ago. Even the budget would not be an issue because simply utilizing campus resources would be more than enough to administer these academic rules for the student-athletes.

(Professor 1)

“Simply it’s been ignored. Everyone knows collegiate athletics have serious issues but no one paid real attention.”

What is important is that we tried for the first time and the result shows us we can change if we really want to. The problem is not so complicated. It depends on our mindset. People thought student-athletes are not able to handle academics, but the result illustrates that if there is

a minimal amount of support they can handle it for sure. A paradigm shift is what really is to be counted. If we really value the balance of academics and athletics, we can do it.

*The Boy's Diary*

After the observation, the researcher administered expert interviews so that he could reflect on his own thoughts and feelings and compare them with other experts' opinions. For the dehumanized reality of the student-athlete's life, he found considerable similarity between his own observation and those of experts. However, the reform of South Korean sport seemed to be far away despite the fact that there are the obvious problems. The researcher kept exploring why and his journey to find an answer was recorded in his diary.

September 2007

When the observational project was finished, I am deeply convinced that reform in school athletics is possible. As all of the participating experts agreed, if collegiate athletics established academic standards, secondary school athletics would definitely follow those standards because more than 70% of high school athletes are participating in athletics so that they can go to college. The real question is why the problem is not resolved. The question will lead me to find how it will be resolved. I expect those upcoming expert interviews will provide me with the answer.

October 2008

I was sitting with one of the expert participants in his office located in the National Assembly. We were talking about the documentary that I produced based on the ethnography I previously discussed. Soon, why the sport system has not been changed despite undeniable flaws became the topic.

Question: It's obvious there are critical issues; then how come this authoritarian and dehumanizing system remains intact?

(Expert 1)

“...first of all, it's unclear who is in charge of this issue. In Korean government, two departments are involved with sport. The one is Department of Culture & Tourism and the other is Department of Education and Human Resources. In the congress, I served both the committee of culture and tourism and the committee of education and human resources. So I know more than anyone else. The former recognizes its responsibility is how to increase athletic performance of athletes. Therefore, the former sees enhancing academics of student-athletes is the latter's primary responsibility. And the latter recognized even though the academic issue comes down to its responsibility, the former is the one who actually runs the whole athletics. To make it short, nobody in the government takes responsibility of sports.”

His voice came out with the strong belief in the need for reform. Listening to him, I found myself saying in my mind, “Right, I could not agree more but is that all? Like you just mentioned, if the problem is so clear and it has been out there for a long time, what in the world are all of the congressmen, politicians, and government officers doing? What are they thinking?” As if he heard my thoughts, he answered right away.

(Expert 1)

“Although there have been several oppositions, still the primary goal of Korean sport remains the same. It is Olympic gold medals. The core paradigm of Korean power elite in sport is trapped in the state sport system so called elite sport.”

I would rather see there are two groups among Korean sport elite. The one is those who are national leaders including policy makers and administrators. The other is those who are actual field leaders including coaches, teachers and principals.

Simply, the national leaders do not pay attention to sport. They do not understand sport, do not want to know sport, and do not have any substantial life experience in sport. For example, when I mentioned that most of the school athletes live in dorm year around causing a lot of abuses, many colleagues of mine replied, 'How come those dorms still exist?' 'Sadly' he kept on "it is an ignorance, lack of basic understanding, and out of duty so to speak."

I felt some degree of frustration from his voice. Then I asked to myself, what about those who actually teach the student-athletes in the field? They can't say they do not understand the horrible situation.

(Expert 1)

"Oh for them winning means everything for that displays all of their life experience they lived by. Basically, they think winning more Olympic gold would solve all other problems. If someone insists student-athletes must study as well, they might verbally agree with it but from the bottom of their heart going to the class instead of practice is totally opposite of how they have lived so it makes no sense at all, hell no."

His diagnosis of Korean sport almost resembled mine. Then, our conversation naturally transitioned to a paradigm shift.

(Expert 1)

"More import than Olympic gold is that more people participate in sport activity and that the grass-root sport is established as part of people's life. Let's say even if Korea took five Olympic gold medals rather than ten gold, it will soon bounce back if there is healthy foundation of grass-root sport. It is possible that the student-athlete code is ceased right away with limited protection for innocent victims and in a decade it will be fine. That's the roadmap I have in my mind but it seems they don't listen to you simply because of upcoming Beijing Olympics. Every four years, it happens again. They can't stand it."

January 2008



I was entering the main government building located in the heart of Seoul to meet Expert 2, who is in charge of administering the Korean elite sport system. The situation he faces did remind me of my conversation with Expert 1, the congressman. The Ministry of Culture and Tourism that he works for put the primary focus on enhancing athletic performance. However, he is aware of current issues caused by the system.

(Expert 2)

“Seemingly, Korean sports look very successful in the Olympics, World Cup and so on. But inside, the spirit of winning is everything causes serious issues like athletes’ human right or career transfer and so on. The number of Olympic gold Korea acquired is ok, but I don’t see the essential philosophy is embedded on sport policy. It’s being ignored.”

Something is wrong but the solution has not been found. Based on his experience, most national leaders do not pay adequate attention to sport.

(Expert 2)

“I’ve witnessed sport policy making process closely, and the policy makers’ interest lies on the outcome only. For example, when I attend annual national auditing, they ask something like how many Olympic gold are expected for the upcoming Beijing Olympic. The politicians are interested in taking pictures and media exposure at the national sport festival. They don’t care about educational issues or human right issues in sports. The power elite in sport do not understand the situation. They must get Olympic gold for the national honor. That’s all they can think of.”

Question: What about those who teach in the field as coach I asked, why can they not change things?

(Expert 2)

“Why it is not changed? I would say the fear of change or denying what you have done for a long time.”

His words reminded me of Paulo Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. Analyzing why the oppressed cannot break the dehumanized situation, Freire argued that the oppressed get used to the concrete situation they have lived in for their whole life and the fear of freedom they have to face if they break the dehumanized world. I thought Freire is right: The field leaders are former student-athletes and all they have done all of their lives is nothing but athletics.

Then Expert 2 started talking about the academic issue in school athletics. In a defensive tone, he explained why his department could not resolve the academic issue.

(Expert 2)

“Our department actually has nothing to do with the student-athlete code, we can't interfere. It's the business of department of education. They are in charge of those problems and they do it along with sport institutions and associations. Serious foul play such as illegal college admission or point shavings is causing lots of problems.”

Talking about the administrative system, things are confused because we are in charge of promoting elite sport and Ministry of Education & Human Resources Development is in charge of school athletics. In reality, elite sport and school athletics are heavily involved. In history, the two different ministries almost never have done any cooperation. That is the problem.

Recently, two departments established joint committee to solve sport issues but in real it's just showing off for the media because philosophical approach is different.”

Although he thinks it must be changed, he said the government official's role is limited unless a paradigm shift comes first. I felt he would not be active to change the system unless the system requires his direct responsibility. Between the two ministries, the line between responsibility and authority is blurred and that gives government officials excuses for the distorted situation.

(Expert 2)

“I know it is tough to solve this issue but if paradigm shift happens, it could be solved easily. From the national human resources management perspective, it’s got to be controlled. Olympic gold is good but that is not a big deal anymore. But they sacrifice everything for Olympic gold. Back in cold war era, South and North Korea competed against each other for the superiority. The military government manipulated sport for political propaganda. But this is new era. Those are not as important as it was. People care more about human victories, challenges than an Olympic gold itself. Under the present sport system, athletes are being forced to sacrifice their life and majority of Korean society views it needs to be changed. I think it’s largely up to national leaders, if they put this sport issue upfront to solve, it will be easy, but I don’t see it that way. It is kind of power game and sport does not gain much attention among national leaders. As time changes, the paradigm should be shifted but that’s not the case here in Korean sport.”

January 2008

It was in a restaurant I met with the two government officials who work for Ministry of Education & Human Resources Development and are in charge of school athletics. They seemed to feel a great deal of responsibility for the academic situation of student-athletes. They said the government system is the biggest barrier for them to exert leverage to change school athletics. Is this student-athletes’ academic issue really their burden? They cannot say no, but when I asked again, “Is that really your responsibility?” their response expressed mixed feelings.

(Expert 3)

“Back in 1946, ministry of education was in charge of school athletics. Preparing for 1988 Seoul Olympics, ministry of sports took over. And in 1994, school athletics was shifted back to ministry of education. Since then, school athletics come under ministry of education and elite sports under other ministry. In fact, ministry of education started ignoring athletics because the politicians serving in educational committee and high ranking officials thought school athletics was part of elite sport system not education.”

It seemed what they said displayed the exact reality. The government budget has been distributed according to how the government values different issues, and school athletics was treated as if it did not even exist.

(Expert 4)

“Over the last four years, 300,000 US dollars was all of the budget the ministry put in action for school athletics. What we do is just reporting things when something happen. We are not in the leadership position. Without any leverage, policy making is beyond imagination. The paradigm of school athletics should shift to raise global sport workers. To do that, student-athletes must manage both academics and athletics. Government must make things clear so that this confusing situation would be in control. Who is responsible for what? Who should be blamed for school athletics? We can’t deny it’s our responsibility but in reality it is confused.”

February 2008

If the government has messed up school athletics and shows no urgency to fix it, things would be even tougher to be managed at the individual level. Before I started the interview with Expert 5, a former collegiate athletic director who served one of the best athletic programs in Korea, I felt the frustration he possessed. He sighed first and then started talking. As an educator, he seemed lost.

(Expert 5)

“There is no amateurism in collegiate athletics. Collegiate athletics must come through education, that is the essential, but the idea is gone. In reality, you can tell student-athletes are not students anymore. They don’t go to class, if they do, they are not able to follow academic standard in college. It’s been there for a long time but nothing changed. The world changed but not sports.”

At the field level, the shadow of the student-athlete code looked darker than expected, I thought. As long as the student-athlete code remains and the ‘winning is everything’ spirit overrides all other educational values in sport, it seemed almost impossible for the coaches or

school administrators to bring about changes. But the athletic directors argued that as an individual institution gets more control and freedom, there is possibility of self-reform.

(Expert 5)

“It’s extremely hard to get into a premier college, but if you are student-athletes with performance you have a free ride regardless of your academic ability. Bottom line is that the student-athlete code and school athletics system does not fit reality. Government made all those laws and the system.

If you say in 1960-1970s, it was the state that controlled sports, but now you have to self regulate. We must reform. Without total reform it is impossible to change. Frankly, college administrators also put more value in education than winning.”

After he managed the six-month project with KBS, he was convinced that reform was actually feasible. The entrance eligibility is the essential issue he argued. I was extremely happy that he and I were on the same page. Yes, I shouted in my mind. That is exactly what I meant for the whole project: belief in reform and belief in possibility.

(Expert 5)

“This university did the pilot project, *Sorry I am a Student- Athlete*, applying eligibility rule and based on the results, I truly believe it is feasible. It will take some time, but if college presidents reach agreement to reform collegiate athletics the whole Korean society will support.”

April 2008 – Reflection

This narrative attempts to explore how the Korean power elite perceive sport issues and why Korean sport cannot change despite undisputable problems. As an academic researcher as well as a journalistic practitioner, I found a consistent pattern and structure that provided me with answers to my questions. The ethnography clearly points out the student-athlete code strongly involved with college admission privilege is the essential problem. In the expert conference, all of the participants who actually run Korean sports gave identical opinions. The real question here

in this research is not what the problem is. Rather, in this critical research, what I would like to find out is why the problem has not been solved.

First of all, there is a discrepancy between two power elite groups in Korean sport: national leaders and field leaders. National Leaders (NL) are mainly the lawmakers and administrative officials who make important decisions concerning the Korean sport system. What they are in charge of is establishing the sport system, regulating sport policy, and developing and suggesting future direction. Field Leaders (FL) are actual coaches, school administrators, and workers in sport associations or institutions.

When I asked the participants, “How do you think those national sport leaders perceive the current situation?” the narratives of all participants reached the same conclusion. A congressman who is dealing with sports, three government officials who are in charge of administration of sports, and a former collegiate athletic director’s analysis shows undeniable similarity, if not identical.

From the national leader’s perspective, the high profile politicians and high-ranking officials do not understand what the problem in Korean sport is or they just ignore the current problem. Expert 1 came out with the strongest criticism. His narrative includes words such as “do not pay attention or do not understand, or do not want to know.” He even has mentioned “ignorance” and “out of duty.” Politicians established and manipulated the current sport system. Current politicians in the national congress, however, show no responsibility for the authoritarian, if not anti-humanitarian, sport system.

Government officials have the same view. In Expert 3’s & 4’s narratives, politicians and high-ranking officials in the educational department viewed school athletics as “part of elite

sport system not education.” Other government official Expert 5’s narrative displayed ‘ignorance’” as well. He attended the Annual Audit of National Assembly, and the questions many congressmen in the committee asked were “how many gold medals” instead of “how to solve the ongoing problem.” Based on his experience, those national leaders still put “national honor” first, while “human rights” or “education” were lesser priorities.

In the participants’ narratives, field leaders are viewed as passive figures who are afraid of change. Expert 5’s narrative displays a legitimate argument. “Why is it not changed?” he cast a question back to me and referred to “the fear of change.” Expert 1 argued that field leaders, in other words, coaches, think “their life is trapped in nothing but winning situation.” He said, “All of their life experience they lived by is about winning.” Basically, they think winning more Olympic gold would solve all other problems in Korean sports. If someone insists student-athletes must study as well, they might verbally agree with it, but from the bottom of their heart going to the class instead of practice is totally opposite of how they have lived, so it makes no sense at all. The college basketball coach’s narrative suggests that it is the system that has put individuals into the concrete situation saying, “people do not care how we do in class; win or lose is what matters.” In the current system, if a coach loses, he will lose his career no matter what. None of the coaches from the elementary level to the professional level are free from this “winning is everything” paradigm.

In this critical research, the question of how the Korean power elite in sport perceive sport issues has reached a tragic reality. It can be concluded that national leaders are not interested in sport issues, while field leaders are seeking only winning instead of pursuing the

real virtue of sport. Sadly, all of them are aware of the existence of a serious problem, but, quite simply, that problem is not their interest at all. I am extremely frustrated.

It is the system to be blamed, I thought, because the government created this monstrous sport system and abandoned it when it became useless as political propaganda. What I found even more tragic was that under the current government system it is not even clear who should be responsible for the disaster in school athletics. All of the expert participants pointed out that it is like a ping-pong game between the Ministry of Education & Human Resource Development and the Ministry of Culture & Tourism. The problem exists while nobody takes responsibility.

Expert 1 argued that this ineffective government system is the biggest obstacle that blocks sport reform. He served on both the Committee of Education and the Committee of Culture & Tourism in the National Assembly and he recalled his frustration dealing with this distorted situation. He simply explained, “To make it short, nobody in the government takes responsibility of sports.”

Narratives of the government officials from the two departments supported the legislator’s argument. All of them agreed reform is necessary but all made excuses for not taking the initiative to do it. Expert 2 said in a defensive tone of voice, “Our department actually has nothing to do with the student-athlete code; we cannot interfere. It’s the business of Ministry of Education.” His argument displays how he views the current sport situation: “Things are confusing because we are in charge of promoting elite sport and educational department is in charge of school athletics.” Confronting harsh criticism, he confessed that “The two different departments almost never have cooperated. Recently, the two departments established a joint



committee to solve sport issues but in reality it's just showing off for the media because their philosophical approach is different.”

Experts 3 and 4 showed almost an identical attitude: “Preparing for 1988 Seoul Olympics, Ministry of Sports took over school athletics and in 1994 school athletics was shifted back to Ministry of Education.” They kept on saying, “School athletics come under Ministry of Education and elite sports under other Ministry since then.” In fact, the Ministry of Education started ignoring athletics because the politicians serving in the Committee of Education and high-ranking officials thought school athletics was part of the elite sport system not education.

The result is as I discussed in the ethnography. Expert 5, the former collegiate athletic director, declared, “There is no amateurism in collegiate athletics” and accused the Korean government of this authoritarian sport system: “The student-athlete code and school athletics system do not fit to reality. It is the Korean government that has created all these monstrous laws and system.”

Every single figure involved with Korean sports is a victim. None of them benefits. With no doubt, student-athletes are the biggest victims.

### Conclusion

Inquiring questions would end up finding another question rather than finding a clear conclusion. In this critical research, my eventual goal would be finding a definitive resolution for the reform of Korean sport. Wrapping up the research, I found myself close to the obvious problem and distant from the resolution. However, I think I got close to why the problem is not being solved and that could be a meaningful start for the reform.

The ethnography revealed the present problems, including loss of educational opportunity, physical abuse, and cultural isolation. In the current authoritarian sport system highlighted by the student-athlete code, all (including student-athletes and coaches) are victimized. The core problem is the student-athlete code involved with the privilege of college admission. Student-athletes and their parents perceive that they must endure the dehumanized practices to achieve their first and utmost goal. The coaches and school athletic administrators also must win to keep their careers secure. Therefore, it is necessary that the system be reformed to lessen the dehumanization experiences by student-athletes and decrease coaches and school athletic administrators' career insecurities.

With minimal support, the basketball club of the university has challenged and proven the feasibility of sport reform. However, without any changes in the sport system, this individual effort is limited. If the system remains intact, those who try to reform at the individual level have to risk taking all the responsibility for the results. That would be too harsh for any individual whose career is at stake. Someone needs to step up and take responsibility, while none of the power elite in Korean sport would take initiative for the reform.

The experts' narratives revealed that power elite groups possess ironic perspectives. National leaders of Korean sport are indifferent, while field leaders are trapped in the "winning is everything" mindset.

The government system that blurs the line of responsibility between the two ministries was pointed out as one of the biggest obstacles deterring reform of Korean sport and the law. Seemingly, the Ministry of Education is in charge of physical education and sport, but in fact it is the Ministry of Culture and Tourism that actually administrates Korean sport. As a result, Korean

sports from school athletics to the national level are pursuing only winning, while abandoning the real virtue of sport.

To reform the current Korean sport system, a paradigm shift from the dehumanized one to the humanized one especially among the Korean sports power elite is essential. However, the majority of the South Korean power elite still believe that if the student-athlete code is broken, the performance level will decline. Therefore, future research needs to focus on developing a theory to prove that amending the student-athlete code would enhance the performance level. For example, if the student-athlete code is changed and the dehumanized environment is changed, the total number of student-athletes will increase rapidly. Besides, if student-athletes participate in both academics and athletics, this will eventually enhance the athletes' creativity so they can apply their intellectual ability to athletic performance. How this paradigm shift should be established would be the purpose of future research.

## CHAPTER 4

### OVERALL IMPLICATIONS

The boy who once had a soccer dream now has a dream of sport reform in South Korea. As a journalist, he has been trying to change the authoritarian sport policy for almost fourteen years. He focused on human rights of student-athletes who have suffered because of the dehumanized policy highlighted by the student-athlete code. However, as the external environment of sport changed rapidly, he started viewing South Korean sport issue through the lens of media globalization.

Since mid 1990s, media globalization brought revolutionary changes to the South Korean sport industry. As MLB took Chan Ho Park to Los Angeles Dodgers in 1994, not only did the South Korean sport industry face unprecedented chaos but also the whole media industry had to deal with such a radical change. The traditional media sport industry that had been protected by national borders was no longer able to enjoy local oligopoly. Along with the multi-media and other television channels, a serious competition came into the market. Then global media content, such as the MLB, started dominating local sport content that was not yet industrialized. The Chan Ho Park story illustrates how South Korean sport has been embedded in the global media sport industry and yet on the other hand, South Korean sport is not ready to deal with media globalization.

Observing that South Korean sport was struggling to adjust to media globalization, the researcher recognized that if he wants reform, he needs to view the current situation from both the external issue: media globalization, and the internal issue: the authoritarian sport policy.

These two related but separate studies were designed to understand the external and internal issues, respectively.

The first qualitative case study *Globalization, Media Imperialism and South Korean Sport* cast two research questions: 1) how global sport and media are penetrating South Korean sport and media sport industry; and 2) what are the impacts of media globalization in South Korean sport and media sport industry.

Applying expert interviews and narrative analysis, the qualitative case study suggests following. It found that the MLB successfully penetrated South Korean sport market by manipulation of star power of a local star athlete, Chan Ho Park and at the same time using sport nationalism to gain viewer ship within South Korea. Along with the MLB, transnational media corporations such as Disney Group and News Corporations have established a joint venture, MBC/ESPN in the Korean market. This typical market expansion strategy is called 'glocalization'.

The findings in the study also suggest that media imperialistic practices exist between the United States and South Korean sport industry. The lopsided content and revenue flows between the two countries should be considered as legitimate evidence for the label of media imperialism. As the disparity of content and revenue flows continues, South Korean local sport league has to endure less media exposure thus resulting in a serious setback. Furthermore, South Korean baseball is becoming one of the farm systems of MLB. The study suggests it is highly possible that South Korean sport industry would be marginalized by global sport capital if this practice continues.

The second study *Framing the Authoritarian Policy in South Korean Sport: "Sorry I'm a Student-Athlete"* looked into the internal issues. The research questions in this qualitative critical research were as follows: 1) how the authoritarian sport system is constructed in school athletics to dehumanize student athletes?; 2) how the Korean sport elite perceive the current sport policy and its practices; and 3) what are the invisible forces that deter possible changes of authoritarian sport policy.

A critical ethnography with expert interviews was applied to find answers. Findings from the ethnography of a college basketball team revealed that the student-athlete code created such a dehumanized environment not only for the 17 student-athletes but also for the coaches. However, based on the study, the researcher posits that reform of the school athletics is feasible if the institution provided the team with minimal amount of systematic support.

Although the reform is possible, the expert interviews suggest that the power elite of South Korean sport are not paying adequate attention. The experts' narratives pointed out either a lack of understanding or an ignoring the current problems. Furthermore, the coaches and the principals are trapped in the spirit of "winning is everything." The bottom line is both the coaches and the principals fear if the student-athlete code is changed, the performance level of the student-athletes would weaken.

In addition to these findings, the study also uncovered an administrative issue in the government system. For the administration of school athletics, it is unclear which department is in charge. There are two different department involved with school athletics but both deny sole responsibility. The experts from the Ministry of Education and Human Resource Development argued that they are responsible only for the academic aspect of student-athletes and are not

responsible for athletic performance. They argue that they are not able to force student-athletes to study because the other department would not agree. On the contrary, the expert from the Ministry of Culture and Tourism said that it would be unfair for them to be held responsible because keeping the high performance level is the duty of the department. In reality, the athletics and academics of student-athletes should not be separated but should be balanced in both aspects.

The findings of the study suggest that South Korean sport has become an unequal part of the global sport industry. After Chan Ho Park's success in MLB, Seri Pak in LPGA, Ji Sung Park in ELP, Seung Yeop Lee in NPB, each followed the same pattern. As a result, it is not just baseball but most South Korean local sports are now competing against global contents.

In 2006, MLB created the first World Baseball Classic (WBC) and tested the potential marketing power of sport nationalism in baseball. It turned out a huge success particularly in South Korea and Japan. The two arch rival countries fought each other three times in the tournament and every rival game drew attention beyond expectation. It supports the idea that sport nationalism is one of the most effective marketing tools for sport.

Observing that media globalization in sports industry continues, South Korean government started responding to resolve the current issue. In 2007, the National Assembly of South Korea passed the Universal Access Policy. This policy mandates that mega sporting events such as World Cup Soccer or the Olympics should be guaranteed free access. In other words, those popular sporting events will be broadcasted on network TV, which does not charge any extra fees. It is a meaningful step to protect South Korean sport industry from the ultimate competition and the market penetration of global capital.

Based on the study, the researcher suggests that the Universal Access Policy would not be able to solve the essential problems South Korean sport is facing. In order for South Korean sport to survive, it needs to establish a new policy and system that guarantees human rights of athletes and benefits for all of the participants in South Korean society. Only if the authoritarian policy is amended, will the human rights of student-athletes be improved. With a change in policy, this researcher predicts that the total number of participants in athletics would increase. In addition, the more people who participate, the more likely talented athletes would be found. Along with this is the prediction that the more creative play would eventually enhance the performance level.

Moreover, without a sound and consistent farm system of student-athletes, it would be extremely hard for South Korean sport industry to be prosperous. A sound grassroots and tradition of sport are foundations of sport industry to be successful.

The authoritarian policy and the dehumanized practices have created a twisted image of sport and athletes. South Korean sport and its participants are reflected as sporting machine that is bullish and uneducated. Unless South Korean sport reclaims the virtues of sport and the respect of sport, the distorted image of sport would never be improved.

Although proving the connection between the current media globalization and the authoritarian sport policy is not the primary goal of this study, I would argue these external and internal issues are deeply combined. To deal with the ongoing media globalization in sport, South Korean sport industry must handle the authoritarian policy.

A paradigm shift should come first so that South Korean sport would be reformed. Especially for those who control South Korean sport need to perceive the value of sport as a



global industry instead of a tool of political propaganda. As Thomas Kuhn argued in his historic writing, paradigm shift comes to reality when majority of the society accept the new idea (Kuhn, 1996).

As a journalist and a scholar, the researcher has tried to contribute to the paradigm shift both practically and academically. Over the last two years, the researcher has produced a series of documentaries titled *Chan Ho Park and Michael Jordan, Sorry I'm a Student-Athlete I and II*, and *Human Rights Report of Sexual Violence in South Korean Sports I and II*. All of documentaries were designed to shift the existing paradigm to support the reform of South Korean sport.

Korean society has responded. The National Assembly of South Korea and the National Committee of Human Rights announced a recommendation to improve human rights of student-athletes, respectively. In addition, the National Committee of Human Rights is investigating the physical abuses in South Korean school athletics.

There are various ways for future research to contribute for the reform. Exploring how the authoritarian sport policy is making a negative impact on sport industry is necessary. Investigating how media globalization would change global sport industry is also important. To improve administrative system in government, researches that clarify which department in the government should take responsibility will be valuable.

The boy believes that his dream of South Korean sport reform will come true. He also believes that no dreams, however, has ever been accomplished without action. As his pursuit continues, he keeps revisiting what Paulo Freire has taught him through his lifetime action: "Reflection

without action is empty verbalism" (Crotty, 2003, p. 147).

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APPENDICES

## APPENDIX A

## CONSENT FORM

## Consent Form

“Media Globalization, Authoritarian Policy and Sport:  
A South Korean Perspective”

I agree to take part in a research study titled, “Media Globalization, Authoritarian Policy and Sport: A South Korean Perspective”, which is being conducted by Jaeyong Chung from the Department of Kinesiology at the University of Georgia (542-4427) under the direction of Dr. Billy Hawkins, Department of Kinesiology, 542-4427. Participation is voluntary. I can refuse to participate and can withdraw from participation without any penalty or any loss of benefits to which I am otherwise entitled. I can request to have the results of the participation, to the extent that it can be identified as my own, removed from the research records or destroyed.

If I agree take part in this research study, the following will occur:

1. I will be asked to participate in interview session that may last 60-90 minutes approximately. Total duration of participation will be no longer than 3 months. These activities will take place in either the participant’s office or the researcher’s office during the participant’s working hours.
2. I will also be asked to participate follow-up interview that may last 30-45 minutes if necessary. The follow-up interview session will be held in the similar circumstance or through telephone and it will be done no later than 30 days from the prior interview.
3. The researcher will ask my permission to make audio recordings of my interview.

There are no direct benefits to me but the findings from this project may provide information on better understandings that help me make sense in a way I would not have otherwise. No discomforts or stresses as a result of this study are foreseen. No risks are foreseen.

Any results obtained in connection with this study that can be identified with me will be kept confidential. Individually identifying information will be securely kept in a password protected computer and will only be disclosed with my permission or as required by law. After analysis is complete, the researcher will erase any individual identifying information from the data, remove any links between my name and results, and will erase or destroy the audio recordings.

The investigator will answer further questions about the research, now or during the course of the project and can be reached at 82-10-9417-8936 (cell) or 82-10-9417-8936 (work). I understand the study procedures described above. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I agree to take part in this study. I have been given a copy of this form to keep.

Signature of Investigator

Date: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

Signature of Participant

Date: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

*Additional questions regarding your rights as a research participant or in the event of a research related injury should be addressed to the IRB Chairperson, University of Georgia, 612 Boyd Graduate Studies Research Center, Athens, Georgia 30602-7411; Telephone (706) 542-3199; E-mail Address: [IRB@uga.edu](mailto:IRB@uga.edu).*

## APPENDIX B

## INTERVIEW PROTOCOL 1

## Interview Guide 1

(For Media Sport Executives)

“Media Globalization, Authoritarian Policy and Sport:  
A South Korean Perspective”

## Part I

1. Do you mind telling me how old you are, where you live, and what you do for living?
2. How long have you been working in sport media industry?
3. Would you tell me about your understanding of what happened to Korean Sport when Chan Ho Park joined Major League Baseball?
4. Based on your understanding, when Chan Ho Park went to MLB, what was the reaction of Korean media?
5. Have you recognized sport globalization and MLB’s strategy for the global marketing when Chan Ho Park joined MLB?
6. What do you think the major changes of Korean media sport industry since Chan Ho Park pitched MLB?
7. What were the lessons you learned since you witnessed Chan Ho Park’s case?
8. Do you think the authoritarian sport policy in Korea is one of the factors that deter industrialization of Korean sport?

## Part II

9. What is your understanding about the Student Athlete Code?
10. What are the impacts of the Student Athlete Code over Korean sport?
11. What makes the Student Athlete Code remain intact?
12. What could be major barriers that deter reform of the authoritarian sport policy in Korea?
13. Based on your experience, how would you describe the perception of Korean power elite about Korean sport policy including the Student Athlete Code?
14. What could be a possible solution for reform of Korean sport policy, if there is any?
15. etc.

## APPENDIX C

## INTERVIEW PROTOCOL 2

## Interview Guide 2

(For Government Official, Collegiate Athletic Director, Politician etc.)

“Media Globalization, Authoritarian Policy and Sport:  
A South Korean Perspective”

## Part I

1. Do you mind telling me how old you are, where you live, and what you do for living?
2. How long have you been working in sport industry?
3. What is your understanding about the Student Athlete Code?
4. What are the impacts of the Student Athlete Code over Korean sport?
5. What makes the Student Athlete Code remain intact?
6. What could be major barriers that deter reform of the authoritarian sport policy in Korea?
7. Based on your experience, how would you describe the perception of Korean power elite about Korean sport policy including the Student Athlete Code?
8. What could be a possible solution for reform of Korean sport policy, if there is any?

## Part II

9. Would you tell me about your understanding of what happened to Korean Sport when Chan Ho Park joined Major League Baseball?
10. Based on your understanding, when Chan Ho Park went to MLB, what was the reaction of Korean media?
11. Have you recognized sport globalization and MLB’s strategy for the global marketing when Chan Ho Park joined MLB?
12. What do you think the major changes of Korean media sport industry since Chan Ho Park pitched MLB?
13. What were the lessons you learned since you witnessed Chan Ho Park’s case?
14. Do you think the authoritarian sport policy in Korea is one of the factors that deter industrialization of Korean sport?
15. etc.