# Performing Nation-ness in South Korea during the 2002 Korea-Japan World Cup

Hyunjung LEE and Younghan CHO

**Abstract**

*The festive mass rally that took place in South Korea during the 2002 World Cup was more than a sporting event. As a way of understanding the national frenzy and people's experiences during the World Cup, we interpret the mass festive rally as a form of social performance. In doing so, we portray this sporting event as a national stage, with Korean supporters as performers and the worldwide audience as spectators. This study uses the term "nation-ness" to encapsulate the idea of nation that links such disparate phenomena as nation, nationalism, and nationality. Through the examination of various performances within the rally, as well as of various reactions by the governmental, corporate, and public, it reveals that the spectacle contained three dimensions of performance: evolving processes, a betwixt-and-between, and everyday life. Attention to the performative aspects of the event contributes to illuminating this phenomenon as a set of evolving processes that are closely tied to contemporary South Korean society. Through analyzing South Koreans' performance in the World Cup, we suggest that nation-ness was performed as cultural practices that were utilized for individual revelation, and as expressions of nationalism interwoven with globalism.*

**Keywords:** World Cup, globalization, nationalism, performance, South Korea

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## Introduction

During the 2002 World Cup, millions of Koreans gathered in public streets and squares in South Korea to support the Korean national football team (hereafter the Korean team). At 1,868 locations nationwide, 2,021 large screens were set up during the competition, and on July 25th, more than seven million people gathered (Whang 2005). The intensity of this nationally-expressed excitement and affection increased as the Korean team reached the semifinal match for the first time in the history of Korean soccer. Showing dynamic forms of support for the team, South Koreans not only identified with one another under the powerful slogan "We are One, We are Korean," but also enjoyed themselves. Meanwhile, domestic mass media reported World Cup related news incessantly throughout the game days, people changed their schedules to watch the Korean team's games, and people kept talking about the team and the event. Put simply, the World Cup went beyond the stadium and the sporting realm to become omnipresent in the everyday lives of South Koreans.

This study interprets this festive rally as a social performance in which the World Cup became a national stage, with Korean supporters as performers and the worldwide audiences as spectators. We portray the sporting event as a national stage upon which both individual citizens' excitement and the power of nationalist fever were displayed. Through participating in the mass festive rally, people momentarily became social actors and actresses as the containers of national images and values. Such performed and embodied experiences provide ample resources for exploring the changing natures of nationalism, identity, and social memory in South Korea. Using a performance model allows the examination of this event through theatrical elements such as: actions and signs; the specifics of social, cultural, and political contexts; and tensions that more traditional readings do not recognize (Taylor 1997).

To do so, this study examines the diverse ways in which South Koreans experienced, expressed, and actualized their nation-ness through participating. The term "nation-ness" is used instead of

nationalism or national identity in order to "capture the idea of nation that links disparate phenomena such as nation, nationalism, and nationality" (Taylor 1997). The idea of nation-ness includes "everything from the bureaucratic fact of citizenship to the nationalist's mythical construction of nation as an eternal entity" (Taylor 1997, 277). By encompassing multi-dimensional aspects, the term nation-ness acknowledges structures of feeling in South Korea wherein people perceived and materialized their nationalist sentiments during the World Cup (Williams 1977). The idea of nation-ness enables us to investigate diverse elements as "a set, with specific internal relations, at once interlocking and in tension" and as "a social experience which is still in process, often indeed not yet recognized as social but taken to be private, idiosyncratic, and even isolating" (Williams 1977, 132). The ways of performing nation-ness in this festive rally lead us to focus on two dimensions of reconfiguration of nationalism in South Korea: first, how is nationalism articulated through individual identities, and second, how are national goals conflated with the global desire? Ultimately, we suggest that nation-ness was performed as a set of cultural practices that were utilized for individual creativities as well as for expressions of nationalism interwoven with globalism.

To fully explicate this performance both in public and private places during the event, we employed multi-sited ethnography as a research method. Marcus (1995) suggests that ethnography may embed itself in multi-sited contexts because a field itself becomes potentially multiple sites. By examining "multiple sites of observation and participation," multi-sited ethnography enables us to examine "the circulation of cultural meanings, objects and identities in diffuse time-pace" (Marcus 1995, 95). Thus, we conducted participant observation during the event in which we joined the festive rally in Seoul and cheered for Korean national team. At the same time, we followed diverse kinds of media such as newspaper reports, print ads, TV commercials, and street photographs. An ethnographic approach helps us investigate the complex ways in which Korean nationalism, conjoined with global desire, was represented by mass participants'

modes of spontaneous gathering, fashion, and gestures. The analysis of multi-sites aims not only to provide a comprehensive description of refashioned nation-ness during this event, but also to promulgate a useful discussion of the politics of nationalism in the global era.

## Literature Review

The mass festive rally that took place in South Korea during the 2002 World Cup was much more than a sporting event. In the rally, millions of people wore the same colored shirts, carried the national flag, and passionately supported the Korean team. The grand sensory and symbolic codes that the World Cup provided were the spectacle par excellence (MacAloon 1984).

Since the World Cup concluded, there have been many academic efforts for evaluating the national frenzy, many of which are useful in unraveling the complexity of the event. To begin with, guest editors of *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies* analyzed the South Korean media discourses during the World Cup; according to them, South Korean media continued to represent World Cup as "either a mere capitalistic spectacle by critical leftist intellectuals or a patriotic revelation by right-wing instigators" (Cho Han et al. 2004, 5). The latter group praised the revival of collectivity or national unity among the youth, who were often criticized for their lack of patriotism and selfishness. However, leftists expressed concern for the overwhelming nationalist sentiments and even fascistic moods being expressed in South Korea.

Similar to media discourses, academic opinions were divided. In his summary of major discussions of the "Red Devils phenomenon," Hong Sung-tae divides academic discussions into a framework of either "festival theories" or "madness theories" (2004, 89). Hong writes that festival theory praises both communitarian fervor and collectivism, which were witnessed from people on the streets and from an individual pursuing his/her pleasures through the World Cup event. On the other hand, madness theory concerns fascist moods and even raises the issues of strong statism in the Red Devil's phe-

nomenon. He proposes viewing each perspective as a process that reflects the progress and structural changes of societies.

One representative approach is to highlight people's voluntary participation in the festive rally and to acknowledge the emergence of women's subjectivities as a positive outcome. Such a trend focuses on illuminating the meanings of the space as well as people's experiences in it. In her study of public space during the World Cup, Whang (2005) contends that street fans found a special space far removed from where they live and work and that the differences in time and space mean some people experience an extraordinary level of excitement. She concludes that people on the streets act voluntarily as they enthusiastically organize themselves into a community and, in doing so, they rediscovered a sense of their national identity (2005, 231). Jeong (2002) also comments that the 2002 World Cup helped rediscover public squares as a space for public festivals. People's experiences in the squares reflect their desire for positive recognition of themselves and the enjoyment of doing something together.

Mansenreiter (2004) particularly points to the emergence of female supporters during the World Cup and suggests that the feminization of the audience challenged established concepts of maleness in the stadium as well as male spectators. He wrote that women's motivation in participation was ignited less by the game than by attraction to the personal merits and appearance of the athletes. However, he was not blind to female subordination at the structural level and concluded that women exercised their power more as consumers rather than as producers.

Meanwhile, another approach pays attention to the changing nature of nationalism, and some academics grew weary of the collective nature of the event. By describing the "unexpectedness" or "unpredictability" of social phenomena, Cho Han (2004) attempts to understand the implications of nationalism latent in World Cup enthusiasm. She suggests that the 2002 World Cup was a historical moment wherein people experienced nation building "from below," which involves national catharsis, pride, and profits, as well as the potential to deconstruct the nation.

Not all interpretations of the mobilization of people into the street rallies are positive. Kwon (2002) contends that the people's enthusiasm for the rally was made possible through state intervention, the Korean team's victory, and people's pleasure during the World Cup. While he concedes that the energy was not simply the result of manipulation, he suggests that the Red Devil phenomenon was synergetic, initiated by the government and corporations, and then fueled by people's desire for entertainment and national pride in the successive victories of the Korean team. He concludes by questioning why Koreans were enthralled by the idea of oneness, particularly in the name of the nation.

In order to examine the changes during the World Cup as a means to project a new kind of Korea, Choi (2004) examines two organizations: first, the National Council for a Better Korea Movement (BKM) and second, the Red Devils, the official fan-club of the Korean team. As a governmental organization, the BKM was responsible for several public campaigns, such as translating street signs to English and Chinese, clearing up the street food stalls, and improving public toilets. The Red Devil's mission was merely to cheer for the Korean team. By comparing the two organizations in detail, she concludes that the BKM's activities are indicative of local cultures' feelings of subservience and adaptation to the "West" while the Red Devils enabled Korea to fulfill its goal of impressing others outside the nation and rectifying the tainted view of its past.

Although these studies contribute to reflecting on and reconfiguring the national frenzy around the World Cup, they still tend to hold on the old dichotomies of madness versus festive, global versus local, mass mobilization versus voluntary enthusiasm, the state versus civil organization, and so on. Rather than such an either-or approach, a national frenzy such as this should be closely examined in relation to the dominance of nationalism in Korean society, particularly in light of the economic crisis of the late 1990s. Because the notion of nationalism has "become the religious surrogate of modernity" in South Korea (Smith 1999, 100), the national frenzy during the World Cup must be seen as a consequence both of nationalism's

prevalence and the crisis it has undergone in the era of globalization.

Bolstered by a robust national economy until the early 1990s, nationalist confidence enabled the Korean government to drive its ambitious globalization policy as well as to adopt *segyehwa* (globalization) as its slogan (Shin K. 2000; Shim and Park 2008). This *segyehwa* declaration (Kim Y. 1996), which indicated the pinnacle of national confidence, turned out instead to be a prelude to a national crisis (Cho 2008). This problem, exemplified by the IMF (International Monetary Fund) intervention (1997-2000), severely damaged South Korea's myth of national development. This national crisis not only accompanied stressful economic changes and the hardships, but also produced an intense sense of depression and frustration that substantially damaged Korean nationalism. As Shin describes, "[T]he crisis of discourse strongly demanded the formation of a new hegemonic discourse specific to the Korean experience during the economic crisis" (2000, 428).

The economic crisis and the IMF intervention severely damaged ideas of nationalism and national development in South Korea. During the decades when South Korea continued its economic miracle, the discourse of national development was an effective ideology for uniting people, which became the basis for developmental nationalism. Developmental nationalism also appealed to people because they could live in better material conditions as long as South Korea continued its economic growth until the late 1990s. As a hegemonic discourse, developmental nationalism underscores national growth and modernization, in which processes the nation-state plays a central role in allocating economic elements to maximize their efficiency. In particular, it highlights the increasing amounts of export/trade and the progress of industrialization and routinely enumerates economic indexes such as GNP and GDP. However, the IMF intervention made people rethink their relationship to the nation-state and national development. People no longer believed in the government's propaganda, in which national development was an inevitable prerequisite for the improvement of individual's life conditions; nor did they take for granted the government's promises to guarantee average people's

personal well-being.

Under such circumstances, the 2002 World Cup became the perfect arena for all of South Korea, government and citizens alike, to rebound from national depression. By hosting the World Cup successfully, the government could claim that South Korea was reentering the global arena. For their part, everyday Koreans were driven to a new level of national fanaticism by the Korean team's successive victories. Mass public rallies became outlets for the expression of genuine national confidence, joy, and unity; at the same time, they were also shrewdly orchestrated events that showed off the reemerging South Korea to the world.

## Performing Nation-ness: An Interpretive Tool

In our search for better scripts to describe the Korean national frenzy during the 2002 World Cup, we use a performance model to examine the social spectacle that took place in South Korea (Taylor 1997, xi). This approach indicates that related phenomena in the mass festive rally were not a monolithic, stationary, one-time-only occurrence, but rather evolving events closely tied to contemporary South Korean society and the prevalence of Korean nationalism within it.

In this paper, we look at how nation-ness was both performed and configured in the spectacle. The ways that people inhabited their bodies and embodied their sense of nation-ness in the mass rally would be almost impossible to unravel without considering the performative characteristics of the spectacle itself. Reading the rally/spectacle as a performance provides innovative ways to explicate the multiple dimensions of nationalism embodied within it, because such a reading sites performance as part of a broad spectrum of human actions that range from ritual, sports, popular entertainment, and everyday-life performances to media and the Internet (Schechner 2002). We have chosen to focus on three dimensions of performance that manifested in the spectacle: as a set of evolving processes, as a spectacle in-between, and in everyday life.

Approaching the 2002 World Cup phenomenon in South Korea as a set of evolving processes enables us to decipher the ways that nation-ness was experienced through a set of collective acts rather than a single act or series of single acts. According to Turner, ritual and performance include the processual sense of "bringing to completion" or "accomplishing," and "to perform is to complete an involved processes rather than to do a single deed or act" (1982, 91). The performative acts of citizens in the rally spanned reality and fiction, being and becoming, and present and future. Participants in this social performance rendered the event to be a "fantasized reality even while it realizes fantasy" (Turner 1982, 121). At the end of the World Cup, the implications of people's performances were neither determined nor reified; rather, the event's importance is still being reconstructed and imagined.

By labeling performances as a spectacle in-between, we are making two implications. The first of these is collective rituals composed of individual performances. South Koreans who publicly gathered and cheered for the national team had a chance, albeit temporary, to experience collectivity or a sense of direct relation to others as they presented themselves in the here and now (Turner 1982, 48). However, as with communitas, people could preserve individual distinctiveness even as they experienced this short-lived feeling of group solidarity (Turner 1982, 45). Despite the solidarity experienced during these events, the participants were loosely related to another, in a state of fragmentation as well as confluence that dissolved after the games.

Second, the performance in the World Cup encompassed both "efficacy ritual" and "entertainment-theatre" (Schechner 1977, 218). During the World Cup, in public places South Koreans expressed a considerable amount of serious, nationalist sentiment while at the same time they simply entertained themselves, using the event as a convenient excuse to act crazy and have fun with their families and friends. According to this interpretation, performance in the rally was about being oneself and playing at being others; being in a trance and being conscious (Turner 1982, 122). Sport's visceral physicality, dra-

matic uncertainty, and subjective interpellation render it a compelling and seductive aspect of popular existence for both spectators and participants alike (Andrews 2006). While an international sporting event can "function as a key element in the promotion of social cohesion, specifically national cohesion, and the mobilization of the masses" (Schaffer and Sidonie 2000, 215). Koreans were playing and amusing themselves, rather than behaving in ways that were totally informed and enforced by political ideology and governmental propaganda.

Finally, we examine the role of performance in everyday life. The World Cup, like the Olympic Games, contains various genres of cultural performance in its mega-events: religious festivals, drama festivals, film festivals, arts festivals, and even culinary festivals, as well as combinations of these (MacAloon 1984). Thus, the lines between audience and participants become blurred and everything within the process becomes a performance (Bass 2006). During the World Cup, nation-ness widely materialized in the form of national flags, placards, mottos, and chants, which constituted performative banality. Such performative banality also indicates that "[nationalistic] habits are not removed from everyday life [...] Daily, the nation is indicated, or 'flagging,' in the lives of citizenry" (Billig 1995, 6). Furthermore, during the World Cup, South Korea was both literally and symbolically projected as a national stage that would be observed by global spectators. Both the South Korean government and major corporations prepared showcase events to prove that South Korea had successfully rebounded from the economic crisis of the late 1990s and was ready to be a global leader. South Korea's global visibility was persistently projected onto this national stage with oft-repeated slogans such as "The whole world was watching us."

Understanding any spectacle is dependent on a complex scene of interface; in this case, analyses of various performances within the rally, as well as of Korean reactions in the governmental, corporate, and public spheres, are also necessary in order to fully illustrate the characteristics of the refashioned nation-ness that emerged. We discuss how South Koreans performed nation-ness at the event by turn-

ing the various elements of theatricality residing in the spectacle into a narrative.

## Reconfiguring Nation-ness in South Korea during the World Cup

### *Pre-Stage: Presenting the National Stage to Global Spectators*

The 2002 World Cup was hyped as the perfect opportunity not only for the Korean football team to enhance its reputation by winning, but also for South Korea to be seen as an attractive place for foreigners and global financial investors. While global rhetoric was overwhelmingly salient in South Korea, there was a firm foundation of nationalistic intent beneath it. Both symbolically and literally, the World Cup was prepared for and presented in South Korea as a national stage, to be seen by global spectators.

For South Korea, "[T]he 2002 World Cup [was] the perfect vehicle for hastening recovery from the recession of 1997 and the subsequent economic restructuring imposed by the International Monetary Fund" (Horne and Manzenreiter 2004, 193). Public discourse surrounding the World Cup highlighted its potential to redeem the nation's international reputation, thereby healing the society as a whole from the wounds it sustained during the economic crisis of the late 1990s. As South Korean Deputy Prime Minister Jin claimed, the government regarded hosting the World Cup as a chance for, "the brand-making of Korea, rather than making money directly" (*Newsweek,* June 17, 2002). Mass media reiterated the rhetoric: "[g]lobal citizens began to realize that Korea managed to move on from a minute country in East Asia to a powerful nation running toward the center of the world" (*Hankyoreh*, June 27, 2002). To accommodate this imagined global gaze, the South Korean government and domestic corporations took initiating roles by launching campaigns prior to the World Cup that aimed to both change and enhance the existing culture and aspects of the urban atmosphere such as sanitary condi-

tions and overall cleanliness (Choi 2004). One remarkable example was "The Global Etiquette Era" series published in *Chosun Ilbo*, one of the mainstream newspapers in South Korea. The series, which comprised a total of 1,080 articles and ran between December 9, 1998 and May 30, 2002 (the day before the World Cup opening ceremony), consisted of personal stories written by citizens, accompanied by their opinions about how other fellow South Koreans should behave in everyday situations. Talking about the habit of car-horn honking in South Korea, for instance, a woman concludes: "I think it is very rude to disturb the foreign visitors with the honking noise in the middle of the night—it will do a lot of damage to Korea's reputation, known as the peaceful land of the morning calm" (April 3, 2002). The articles' ultimate purpose was to inform readers about proper manners and behavior, especially on behalf of the foreigners who were expected to visit South Korea for the games.

Another standard promoted as a requirement for world-class citizenship was the ability to speak foreign languages, English in particular. Because the Korean organizing committee for the World Cup deliberately selected official volunteers who could already speak foreign languages, 95% of the South Korean volunteers were fluent in a second language (Nogawa 2004, 228). At the same time, South Korean volunteers "revealed a more serious approach to the World Cup in general" and "appeared to express much stronger nationalism and localism than their Japanese counterparts" (Nogawa 2004, 235). These observations show that the desire of South Korean volunteers to become global citizens was prompted largely by nationalistic sentiments.

In the process of national-stage-making, a complex interplay of mirroring and masking operated in South Korea. Through the mirroring effect provided by the hosting of a global sporting event in South Korea, citizens were encouraged to witness themselves as proud Koreans with the power to rebound from the recent economic crisis. At the same time, they were also required to internalize an imaginary gaze from outside Korea in a way that reminded them of how others, usually Westerners, saw and judged them. In this context, the sense

of national pride and the urge to present the nation's image as something appealing to foreigners became indivisible.

*Scene 1: Refashioning the National Flags*

Within South Koreans' performances during the 2002 World Cup, nation-ness was transformed and even rendered banal as citizens, through the use of the national flag and nationalist mottos materialized nation-ness as both individual creativity and cultural practice.

A unique element was that South Korean supporters, especially adolescent girls, adorned themselves with the South Korean national flag, one of the most representative symbols of national ideology. In Korean nationalism, the flag has functioned as a solemn symbol of the nation-state to which citizens must duly pay their respects, a duty constantly taught in school and reinforced by society in general. However, to use the flag as a performance accessory demonstrated that people were now able to transform this sacred national symbol into a fashionable trend and use it to express individual tastes and styles. Korean adolescents used the flag to create hoods, revealing tank tops, capes, and miniskirts.

Figure 1 shows four teenage girls on a subway platform, presumably heading toward City Square in Seoul where citizens congregated to cheer for the Korean national team on game days. Many young people, particularly girls, expressed their sexual attractiveness through the flag; wrapped around their bodies, it seemed to function as excuse to wear-off-the-shoulder shirts and miniskirts and to stay bare-legged. Dressing up with a refashioned national flag, practices of bodily adornment at the mass festive rally played a significant role in marking the relations of inclusion and belonging (Moor 2006). In addition, people were also pursuing personal pleasure and expressing individual creativity through their bodily adornment such as clothing and facial make-up.

By using the national flag as fashion accessory and costume instead of waving it, people performed an individual expression of nation-ness that is clearly neither collectivist nor ideological in a tra-

Figure 1. Teenage "Red Devil" Girls Dressed in National Flags
(photo by Hyunjung Lee, 2002)

ditional sense. Thus, refashioning the flag does not indicate that people were either turning into nationalists or simply pursuing individual satisfaction. Rather, it implies that people were entering the ritualized frame, which they experienced as crossing a threshold between nationalist expression and personal creativity around a football match (Hognestad 2003). Similarly, the nation-ness performed through refashioning the flag can be regarded as a transitional, fleeting, and fragmented entity, not a fixed or unilateral one (Turner 1969, 95). Conversion of the national flags into costumes can be seen as an example of exercising banal nationalism, which Billig (1995) introduces to cover the ideological habits which enable the established nations to reproduced.[1] By using the national flag as a fashion

1. Here, banal nationalism is an endemic condition, but as Billig contends, such nationalism can hardly be innocent. Rather, banal nationalism reproduces intuitions through which notions of nationhood are embedded in contemporary ways of thinking (Billig 1995).

item rather than waving it for a more traditional display, Korean supporters performed their nationalism with less solemn and less collectivist implications than traditional nationalism.

*Scene 2: Emergence of Female Subjectivities*

While South Koreans joined the mass rally, along with expressing their collective excitement, they also utilized their experiences to discover self-understanding and inhabit a complex version of self that often transcended the quotidian (Cho Han 2002, 37). These performative acts revealed that their national identities were intertwined with personal desires. Clearly, the refashioning of nation-ness within the spectacle indicates that national goals can intersect with individual desires.

Within the spectacle of the World Cup, both men and women, young and old, appeared in the public places. In particular, women and teens, who are generally marginalized in South Korean society, were able to find opportunities, albeit temporary, to become visible and let their voices be heard. Although these groups were traditionally supposed to stay at home under the patriarchal structure, during the event they could make themselves visible in public places and escape the daily drudgery of homework and house chores to play in the streets, staying until late in the night. As Manzenrieter comments, "For the first time in Asian history, it seems that a generation of women has emerged which is in the position to act upon the definition of dominant concept of masculinity" (2004, 216).

These women, normally second-class citizens, used the national stage as a place to encounter moments in which they could perform roles different than the ones that could be experienced in their everyday lives. Through this role-changing experience, some were able to find a different, richer version of self. It is interesting to note how one female South Korean professor expresses the excitement she felt as a woman participating in the rally:

> When would I, a woman, have had such a great time in my own

> country, screaming legitimately in public, like crazy? At a place like Seoul City Hall Plaza? Even under the protection of police officers? I personally thank the World Cup event, although some say it may just be a pure commercialism. It is because the event provided a public space where South Korean women could freely and legitimately express their long-repressed passion and desire (Hyun 2002).

Under the pretext of joining the national frenzy, female bodies that had been constrained within the patriarchy and traditional sociocultural conventions found an outlet for personal physical sensation and pleasure. As Manzenreiter writes, "(South Korean female supporters') motivations were less ignited by the love of the beautiful game than by the adoration of cute and handsome players" (2004, 216). Such female fandom needs to be evaluated as a harmonious combination of sexual desire and neo-patriotism (Kim H. 2004, 2005). Of course, the fact that some women found a renewed sense of identity and a new sense of pleasure during World Cup events does not mean that women's liberation has been achieved in South Korean society. In general, Korean women are still bound by cultural discourses regarding their capabilities, reproductive duties, and domestic responsibilities. As Kwon points out, "[D]uring the World Cup, there were no women; women existed only as cheerleaders on the streets and the football fields" (2002, 76).

Nonetheless, the World Cup phenomenon provided a stage albeit temporary, where youth and women, "could perform and prove how much they are in love with themselves" (Cho Han 2002, 37). Public places such as streets and squares became thresholds where all kinds of possibilities presented themselves and changes happened (Turner 1982). As they participated in the festive rally, South Korean supporters could enjoy "the true feast of time, the feat of becoming, change, and renewal," although it was a moment of "temporary liberation from the prevailing truth and from the established order" (Bakhtin 1984, 10). Meanwhile, the performance made the identities of women as South Koreans vulnerable and open to change; their experiences

involved an indeterminacy or open-endedness as an unfinished, still-evolving, and ongoing present (Hoy 1994). While many infused these temporal or fleeting experiences into their nationalism, they also discovered their own agency as well as their female desires.

*Scene 3: Chanting the Nationalist Mottos Together*

Another way of performing nation-ness involved transforming nationalist mottos into enjoyable chants. In public places such as Gwanghwamun and City Square, South Korean supporters shouted and sang several chants relentlessly and passionately. Two of the most popular were *Daehan minguk* (Great Republic of Korea) and *O, Pilseung Korea* (Oh, Victorious Korea). During the period of the games and celebrations, people took great pleasure in the repetitive activity of chanting (Blau 2002). Rather than privileging literal meanings such as greatness of citizenry and nation, their performances were apparently voluntary and done for fun. Nonetheless, spaces for these gatherings were made available by the South Korean government and major domestic corporations.

It is worthwhile to point out that the tension between spontaneity and mobilization during these cheering sessions reflected contradictory aspects of this new form of nation-ness. Careful advance planning included two TV commercial series by SK Telecom, a sponsor of the Red Devils, the official supporting organization of the Korean national football team. These commercials feature a popular Korean film actor, Han Suk-kyu, renowned for his image as comfortable and easygoing. In the first commercial "How to clap *Daehan minguk* (Great Republic of Korea)," we see Han in a red T-shirt, stating that he has also become one of the Red Devils. Standing at center stage in front of the Red Devils, Han instructs while wearing his friendly, inviting smile and teaches the clapping/chanting motions, directly addressing the viewers. Han says:

> Red Devils chanting, please follow my motions. First, clap five times. [*Red Devils clap 5 times, then shout Daehan minguk*] Stretch

Figure 2. Popular Film Star Han Seok-gyu in a TV Commercial
(video still courtesy of TVCF, 2007)

> out your hands! The power of Korean Football, Red Devil Speed 011 is with you! (Figure 2, left).

In the second commercial, Han instructed the viewers on how to sing the supporting song. The background setting, which was livelier and more dynamic than the previous version, featured noticeably more Red Devils making dynamic, unilateral movements in identical uniforms, singing *O, Pilseung Korea* (O, Victorious Korea) (Figure 2, right). Han, featured as the leader of this massive supporting group of Red Devils, confidently narrates:

> Now this time, it's the song. Red Devil cheering song, please follow us. Stretch out your arms. [*Red Devils sing and do their motions in unison.*] Louder! [*Red Devils continue their singing.*] The power of Korean Football, Red Devil Speed 011 is with you!

The cheering and chanting motions conveyed through Han's demonstrations and the countless young Red Devils behind him all symbolized South Korea as a dynamic, powerful nation filled with youth and energy. The background sound of people repeating the slogan in unison, all dressed in the same uniform, showed off the nation's solidar-

ity. Also, the masculine gesture of stretching out the arms signified citizens' desire for their national team's victory as well as their nation's advancement.

During the World Cup, these two nationalist slogans were relentlessly repeated and performed on TV and in commercials, at the rally, and at celebrations after the games. Slogans displayed in the streets and on people's costumes, and the mottos reiterated through people's mouths at the rallies and celebrations all pronounced a nationalist ideology. Nation-ness, therefore, was "produced and constructed through performative enunciation and collective activity, the set of behaviors crystallized around the chanting" (Ueno 2004, 120). Nonetheless, people's performances transformed traditionally serious expressions of nationalism into something that they could playfully manipulate, along with a sense of jocularity (Levermore 2004). Many people utilized these chants and cheering motions to have fun, rather than to intensify their sense of nationalism. Moreover, the ubiquity of the slogans and chanting exemplified the banality of the nation-ness in the event in the sense of pleasurable repetition rather than insignificance or dullness. As national symbols took on fashionable forms beyond their traditional modes, the nation-ness became banal within the performances (Aslama and Pantti 2007). Nationalistic mottos were popular and almost omnipresent in Korean society as unflagging or fashioning modes, rather than as political or ideological propaganda.

### *Scene 4: The National Conflated with the Individual*

Admittedly, the World Cup is a global sporting event which is prepared and sponsored by governments, conglomerates, and international agencies. In South Korea, the miraculous success of the national team enabled nationalism to be an effective motivator and organizing principle. It became almost impossible for any Korean to escape the constant presence of the World Cup in mass media broadcasts, street displays, and daily conversations. Although nationalism continued to function as a mobilizing tool, Koreans did not respond to the

national frenzy passively or unilaterally. No one could help but be drawn into some type of performance, either through active participation or through refusing to participate but still avidly commenting. Therefore, participations during the event could be described as an oxymoron, such as "voluntary mobilization" (Jeong 2002).

Similarly, identifying personal desire with the nation-state or national goals emerged as a common trend in South Korean social discourse during the 2002 World Cup. National dreams such as the victory of the Korean team and the advancement of South Korea as a first-class nation became goals that supporters could transpose onto their own personal desires. By collectively shouting popular mottos such as "Kkum-eun irueojinda" (Dreams come true), supporters simultaneously expressed individual dreams and identified with national ones. This particular motto, originally displayed in one of the supporting card displays during the Korean match (Figure 3), spread as a popular phrase used by citizens in reference to their own personal goals and desires.

This card display is an example of nationalist rhetoric in which each citizen's dreams are cited as equivalent or even as prerequisites to the nation's goals. Such rhetoric acknowledges personal autonomy by encouraging citizens to fulfill their individual dreams, yet also involves them in national goals through its assumption that readers will naturally equate their own dreams with those of the nation. The result is sanctioned reasoning wherein you, an individual, realize a personal dream as part of, and in order to achieve, Korea's dream.

Exactly how this national dream and the ways an individual's personal wishes were expected to manifest varied: teenagers might dream of getting into a good university, whereas the individual goal for adults might have been to get a promotion at work. Still, whatever the specifics might be, nationalism was retooled so that individual self-understanding, cultivation of a renewed identity, and self-improvement were granted equal status and even considered as important as the realization of national dreams to which in turn successful realization of individual dreams was recognized as a primary contributor. Self-discovery among ordinary people was praised as the

Figure 3. A Card Display that Reads "Dreams Come True"
(courtesy of Naver search engine)

result of their individual performances, which were seen to be strongly mediated and driven by nationalist desires. Perhaps most significantly, this powerful mediation was both offered and received not only as a natural interaction between government and people, but also as something natural for the people to experience and possess. In the process, nationalism or national desire became "universal" or imperative as a means for fulfilling personal dreams.

*Scene 5: Cleansing the National Stage*

In order to physically accommodate such national-global interactions, the South Korean government and corporate sponsors constructed performance stages and installed giant video screens in public spaces, such as city squares, and invited citizens onto these fields of performance. As the national stage was promoted at home as well as to the world audience, spectacular programs and celebrity appearances were scheduled and advertised on public networks and in newspapers alongside reports of the national team's surprising victories.

These live performances were arranged as pre- and post-game shows that were broadcast on every South Korean TV channel. Meanwhile, the media highlighted the Korean team's success, alongside coverage of the millions of Koreans supporting their team on the national stage as proof of the Korean national capacity for worthiness and success in global competition. Quoting reports from the foreign press, Korean media emphasized such statements as "the world is stunned by the Korean team as well as by [the support shown by the citizens and the Red Devils'] performance on the national stage" (*Dong-A Ilbo*, June 12, 2000).

Even after the celebratory post-game shows ended, cleaning the national stage, i.e. public streets and squares, was hyped and presented as another spectacle as if this effort would promote the national image as conforming to global standards. After the Korean team's first game, the squares and streets upon which the national stage had been constructed were filled with trash. After the second game, citizens participated in clearing up the litter. These efforts were directly organized by the Red Devils, prompted by media critiques that the messy areas might spoil the image of the national stage. Major South Korean newspapers such as *Dong-A Ilbo* reported citizen concern: "several middle-school students cleaned the littered streets until late at night, and one of the students said, 'We felt the need to clean up the streets after the tournament; we need to do this for the sake of the Korean team and its victory'" (June 12, 2002). In addition, the media constantly reminded people that dirty streets after the games might taint the global fame of the national stage, newly earned during the World Cup. Thus, South Korean citizens encouraged one another to clean up the streets after each game and to treat the streets as an additional venue for completing the mission of their national stage.

The linkage of these concepts demonstrates that the physical act of cleaning was an enactment of nationalism, prompted by the global gaze that also functioned as an internalized censoring device. It is too naive to regard the cleaning process as a proof of increasing social consciousness or civic ethics in South Korea. By promoting and par-

ticipating in the street cleanings, citizens embodied a nationalism that was symbiotic with their global desires and disciplined by the global gaze. The cleaning process illustrates how globalism was deployed as rhetoric to mobilize national desires, while at the same time the national stage was presented as proof of the ability to succeed globally.

## Conclusion

As a way of understanding the national frenzy and people's experiences during the World Cup, we have interpreted the mass festive rally as a form of social performance. Attention to the performative aspects of the event contributes to illuminating this phenomenon as a set of evolving processes that are closely tied to contemporary South Korean society. The elements of theatricality residing in this performance can be seen as a mechanism of communication activated by people's national desires, as well as the expression of a system that forges and transforms such desires. Through analyzing South Koreans' performance in the World Cup, this paper shows how people actualized and reconfigured their sense of national identity and explains how personal dreams became conflated with the nation's desire for global visibility.

We suggest that the performing nation-ness witnessed in the spectacle indicates the changing natures of Korean nationalism in two senses: one is an alliance between nationalism and individual identities and the other is the intersection between nationalism and globalism.

On the one hand, nation-ness, comprising nation-state, nationalism, and nationality, was materialized as cultural practices and utilized for individual revelation rather than functioning only as ideological propaganda. Although South Koreans expressed their national frenzy by wearing the national flag and chanting nationalist mottos, these ways of exercising nation-ness in their performances became more or less banal. Refashioning or "unflagging" flags epitomized the

altered characteristics of nation-ness (Billig 1995). The unusual alliance between nationalism and individual identities during the World Cup made collective goals contingent on individual desires, and vice versa. Through participating in supporting events, people utilized nationalism as a way to reveal their individual identities. Women in particular could enjoy and express their personal pleasure and subjectivities in public places through performing. While the national dream was being imposed on each Korean as a venue for fulfilling individual desires, the fulfillment of individual desires was linked to national success and global competitiveness.

On the other hand, the social performance in South Korea during the World Cup illustrated the process by which nationalism has been interwoven with globalism (Shin G. 2006). Creating a Korean national stage for global spectators manifested society's contradictory desires for both self-hate and self-love: while Koreans tried to reach global standards by altering their traditions and customs, they simultaneously advocated the national stage and the national frenzy enacted upon it as proofs of their global success. A performative feature of this study visualizes the complex and even contradictory assimilation of the national into the global constructed during the event. The performed rally was a showcase for how globalization taps into the local rhetoric of rebound, charged in this case by South Korea's inherent nationalism. The intertwined desires for globalism and nationalism evinced an alternative realignment of nationalism, inaugurated during the World Cup.

Because performance is an activity that both stores and shapes human experiences, participants' memories of the mass rallies will continue to be interpreted in numerous ways. People's experiences and memories of the festive rally are neither homogeneous, stationary, nor a one-time-occurrence. Rather, as fragmented, floating, and energetic modes, they contain affective capacities and potential which can be mobilized at any given juncture. In this sense, it may be too dangerous to judge the reconfiguration of the nation-ness during the World Cup, or to ask whether it is a better or worse type of nationalism compared to developmental nationalism. The spectacle

of the World Cup was "in itself, neither good nor bad, neither liberating nor alienation," and its capability and value reside in "the complicated interaction between the spectacle frame, its contents and its sociocultural context" (MacAloon 1984, 272). People's performances in the spectacle have never been completed or determined; rather, they will remain an inspiration until the "opportunity to explode once again into a form of energy that can transform another time and space" occurs (Cho Han 2004, 21).

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