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Diverging Masculinities and the Politics of Aversion toward Ethnically Mixed Men in the Korean Military

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For a very long time, the military in South Korea was an exclusively male social institution that enforced the idea of Korean ethnic purity, playing a pivotal role in the state's formation of a specific male national identity through mandatory military service. The military served to socialize, classify, and rank men in ways that fortified their relationships to the state based on ideas of "hegemonic masculinity" and idealized nationhood (Arkin and Dobrofsky 1978; Moon 2002; Sasson-Levy 2003). Many feminist works have critically examined the disciplinary nature of the military by associating masculinity with hypersexuality and the exclusion of women by considering women as objects of subjugation (Enroe 1980; Kwon 2000, 2013; Moon 2002, 2005). Moon (2002, 80) sees the South Korean (hereafter Korean) military as forming hegemonic masculinity through a number of interwoven notions and practices that reinforce the notion of adult males as family providers who remain distant from domestic responsibilities such as household work and childcare. One of these practices is the completion of a man's mandatory military service in his twenties, a critical rite of passage in the process of becoming a "real man" in South Korea.

Until recently, the military banned the conscription of ethnically mixed men—those with one Korean parent and the other parent of another ethnicity—on the grounds that they might upset the status quo. Male citizens who were not of pure Korean stock were exempt from the responsibility of military service until 2009, when the regulation was abolished as unconstitutional. Yet, despite the fact that male citizens of mixed descent have been drafted since 2012 as a result of the revision of the Military Service Act, their subordination as a racial minority has more than cancelled out their putative advantages as "males who have done their national duty" (*uimu*)

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in contemporary Korean society. This chapter investigates how the military has dealt with growing social concerns and debates over the direction that the military should take in this globalized milieu. It especially focuses on the nature of social contestation over the conscription and management of so-called multicultural soldiers in Korea's military in relation to issues of combat capabilities, allegiance, and loyalty.

In the early 1990s, following regional neighbors Japan and Taiwan, which were experiencing similar demographic shifts, South Korea began to actively recruit international brides for farmers and urban working-class men who occupied disadvantaged positions in the domestic marriage market. A family formed from a cross-border marriage was termed a "multicultural family" by the government, which regards the mobilization of international women in this manner as part of a national project to reproduce "Korean" families as the basic social unit of society and to increase the country's declining population (Kim 2011, 2016).

Since 2006, the state has emphasized a strong assimilationist model to quickly "Koreanize" these ethnically diverse marriage migrants and implemented a variety of programs to help migrant wives settle down in Korea. The sole aim of fast assimilation, instead of considering heterogeneity, differences, classes, and cultural pride within the boundary of the multicultural family, identified all multicultural families as members of a "vulnerable social group." The term "multicultural" (*tamunhwa*) has begun to supplant the concept of "monoethnicity" (*tanil minjok*), which had long been embraced by society as a source of national competitive success. The term "multicultural society" is now commonly used in daily language. Though the notion of a multicultural society was generally welcomed initially by many South Koreans given its novelty, "multicultural" became a synonym for "foreignness," "a family member of international marriage," or "mixed-bloodedness." Ironically, the notion of multicultural families as a vulnerable social group is deepening, and the occurrence of expressions such as the "second-generation multicultural family," "multicultural children," "multicultural adolescents," and "multicultural military personnel" marks these families with a social stigma. Young men beginning military service who are the offspring of multicultural families have been labeled "multicultural soldiers." The number of multicultural soldiers increased from 223 in 2012 and to 776 in 2016. According to South Korean Department of Defense forecasts, it will increase to 3,200 in 2019 and 5,000 in 2022.

This chapter first analyzes how the Korean military includes or excludes certain men from its ranks on the basis of its structures of hegemonic masculinity. Second, it examines how, after 2012 when the so-called multicultural soldiers were no longer refused a place in the military ranks, scholars

of the military and the media continued to employ discourses of race and racism about them that simultaneously obscured and normalized their existence within that institution (Fleras 2014, 146; Joseph, Darnelle, and Nakamura 2012). This chapter seeks to identify the problems in the linkage of military service, masculinity, and race and ethnicity from the perspective of the marginalized group of men of mixed ethnicity in the military, or "multicultural soldiers." It emphasizes the intersection of class, race and ethnicity, and masculinity in the model of normative male citizenship within the context of South Korea's transition toward a multiethnic society.

A little-known fact is the way that the Korean military has always discriminated among its soldiers, classifying and excluding certain troops on the basis of their particular characteristics. Not only men with physical and mental handicaps and those with insufficient educational qualifications, but also Korean men of "mixed-race," were long forbidden from serving in the military, thus cutting them off from certain social and economic benefits granted to "pure" Korean men.

Military Hierarchies of Korean Manhood

Although the Korean military was founded on heteronormative gender principles that separated its troops on the basis of ethnic purity, rank, and educational background, it has continued to serve as an economic, political, and cultural system of privilege. Upon the founding of South Korea in 1948, the country's constitution declared military service to be a basic duty of citizenship and called for a system of universal conscription for men. According to Article 39 concerning military service, male citizens of the Republic of Korea must faithfully serve, and women citizens may be called to active duty to support them. The earliest law regarding military service was adopted in 1949, and in 1957, four years after the armistice ending the Korean War, a system of universal conscription was adopted. To that end, upon reaching the age of eighteen, men were required to take a physical examination to determine their fitness to serve (Hong 2010, 51–53). Prior to the 1960s and the advent of military rule, the system of universal conscription was not applied strictly and, for various reasons, many men did not complete military service. For example, firstborn sons who were responsible for the livelihood of the family or men who found ways to benefit from special privileges were exempt from the draft. Corruption in the conscription process was also frequent. A campaign incorporating a language of equality and democratic values was introduced under the Syngman Rhee regime (1948–1960) to tackle the issue of draft dodgers, and gradually draft evaders came to be perceived negatively as unpatriotic social deviants and stigmatized by the media (Y. Jung 2014).

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Starting in 1961, new laws criminalizing draft evasion were implemented to make draft evasion extremely difficult and costly; these mainly targeted the privileged class (Y. Jung 2014, 133). It was Park Chung Hee's regime (1961–1979) that succeeded in confirming people's hegemonic consent to universal conscription. The Park regime stressed nationalism and national identity through the militarization of national security and justified the conscription of all able-bodied men on the grounds of the presence of threat from North Korea (Shim 2014, 492). The regime also implemented a series of initiatives to eradicate the evasion of military service, such as depriving violators of the military service law of economic opportunities and withdrawing various types of state approvals to run a business (Moon 2002, 93). In addition to facing the state's military requirements and appeals to patriotism or state security, men were compelled to serve to ensure their economic livelihoods after completing their service. Korean men began to internalize the model of modern hegemonic masculinity through the understanding that only through completing military service would they be able to secure good jobs enabling them to start a family and fulfill their responsibilities as dutiful breadwinners. The stick to this carrot was the threat of punishment if men failed to serve. The right of conscientious objection was and is not recognized, and even religious clerics do not receive exemption from military duty (Shim 2014, 493).¹ All conscientious objectors who refused to serve have been imprisoned (or, more recently, forced to seek political asylum in other countries). The civilian regime under Kim Young Sam provided concrete incentives to men completing their military service. Through the Veterans Support Law passed in 1997 and its Enforcement Ordinance (1998), the Kim Young Sam government strengthened the practice of offering specific economic benefits to men having fulfilled their national military service such as additional credit points when applying for jobs (Moon 2002, 105n24).

Furthermore, after the 1970s, when the system of universal conscription was firmly in place, severe discrimination between males subject to the draft and those who were exempt began to arise. Higher education was one of the most commonly invoked reasons for postponing or avoiding military service. In the 1970s and 1980s, when active troop levels exceeded two hundred thousand per year, the Korean government kept its elite troops on active duty while instituting an "alternative service program" for the remaining manpower, assigning them to such tasks as public service work or serving as riot police, prison staff, special research assistants, skilled industrial workers, and the like (Hong 2010, 58). Two basic categories were

¹ South Korea's constitutional court ruled on June 28, 2018, that conscientious objectors be allowed to substitute the required two years of military service with community service.

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established to differentiate among men. Those who were fit to serve were called resident servicemen (*hyōnyōk*), and the exempt were called supplementary or substitute servicemen (*p'och'unn'gyokk* or *taech'ebongmu*; Moon 2002, 97).

As early as the age of seventeen, young males undergo a medical examination to assess their suitability for military service. As a result of that evaluation, which contains physical and psychological components, together with an assessment of their educational attainment and family background, all male citizens are classified into "grades." Those in grades 1–4 are deemed "qualified" and those in grades 5–7 are "disqualified" (Song 2015, 64).

However, in practice, when the Korean military considers Korean males from the point of view of inclusion and exclusion, the men are grouped roughly into two large categories: "usable" and "not usable" resources, the latter including men exempt for medical reasons, men exempt on special grounds such as economic difficulties or low levels of education, prisoners, orphans, men of mixed ethnicity, overseas permanent residents, those whose whereabouts are unknown, and so on. Prisoners, orphans, and those of mixed ethnicity, without regard to any physical defect, are singled out as being essentially "exempt" from service (Hong 2010, 2). The criteria are arbitrary but heavily laden with varying degrees of class-based, racial, and ethnic assumptions about "who constitutes the body of efficient and trustworthy soldiers" (Moon 2002, 97). Prisoners, orphans, and mixed-race individuals are regarded as a possible threat to the healthy male bonding supposed in the romantic notion of the army as a place where soldiers share a "deep understanding and friendship" with one another through their training and communal life in characteristically twenty-four-hour-a-day contact.

Despite the Korean state's emphasis on the equality of universal service of male citizens, the actual implementation of conscription has never been equal but "class-based" (Choi and Kim 2017). Fairness in military conscription has been always questioned. Upper-class male "could legally dodge military service by opting for various forms of alternative service" such as attending graduate programs in Korea or abroad, or serving at state-designated institutions (Choi and Kim 2017, 519). The Kim Dae Jung and Roh Moo Hyun administrations from 1997 to 2008 enhanced the auditing of conscription practices and endeavored to abolish corrupt practices of conscription for upper-class youths. Service evasion by the rich and powerful has become a more politicized issue, which threatens the universality of military conscription. Increasingly more Korean men have challenged mandatory conscription through draft evasion or direct opposition (Y. Jung 2014).

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In recent years, in light of cases in which famous young male entertainers and the sons of the wealthy or political elites have gained exemption from mandatory service through various ruses, the system of conscription has been criticized as exacerbating the class and power inequalities that exist in Korean society. There have also been spates of incidents in which soldiers have shot and killed their fellow troops, presumably in reaction to abuse or mistreatment. To counter this image and to encourage males of military service age to enlist, the army has even begun posting signs where young men might see them, announcing their new policy that "bullying and corporal punishment" will not be tolerated in the "new" military. In 2000, the military introduced a "human rights" paradigm into the barracks culture.

Korea's universal military conscription has recently come to be perceived as a double-edged sword by Korean men themselves. On the one hand, completion of military service is a civic duty that serves as a man's confirmation of his adherence to a set of core cultural values and grants him the right of normative citizenship in areas such as employment, social relations, and so on. For example, successful completion of military service provides him with an advantage when he is evaluated in job applications and boosts his pay slightly when he is hired (Moon 2002; Na, Han and Koo 2014). On the other hand, military conscription represents an essential duty for all Korean men that is at times undertaken against their will. Through military service, the state controls young Korean men as it structures the temporal framework of their life course by imposing a specific "timetable" for performance of that service, between eighteen and thirty-five years old (Song 2015, 64).²

As problems of employment and unemployment grow more severe for Korean youth, young men are seeing military service not only as a physically and mentally challenging demand on their lives by the state, but also as a "waste of time" and a gendered "handicap" when they study and prepare themselves for the labor market. However, as Jo mentions in chapter 6, young males who join the labor force with only a high school education tend to see military service as a pivotal rite of passage that enables them to achieve psychological maturity and a sense of responsibility as a future breadwinner. They strongly believe that the completion of military service qualifies them for regular jobs and higher pay in the ever-more-precarious labor conditions for the young generation. Military service is considered a prerequisite for a secure position in the labor market.

Another line of division among men is sexual orientation. Military criminal law prohibits and punishes homosexuality among soldiers, since it

² All ages are expressed according to the Western tradition.

is perceived to harm the "sexual health of the military family" and the "healthy life and morale of the military collective" (Na, Han, and Koo 2014, 365). The law defines sex acts between members of the same gender as molestation, punishes sodomy and other sex acts even when they take place with mutual consent, and prosecutes soldiers on leave who have same-sex relations with civilians (Na, Han, and Koo 2014, 365). Gay and lesbian individuals are still deemed unsuitable for the military under the premise that military law prohibits sex acts between members of the same gender (J-k. Lee 2009; Na, Han, and Koo 2014). Male-to-female transgender women are excluded from active duty and assigned to civil defense, whereas a female-to-male transgender man is assigned to a civil defense unit "once the Military Manpower Administration confirms his status through official documentation and a court decision is rendered" (Na, Han, and Koo 2014, 366).

The military has faced challenges from groups in society claiming that the universal human rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) and mixed-ethnic people continue to be violated. In this context, LGBT groups and mixed-heritage men see military conscription as a procedural *right* for acquiring normative male citizenship in South Korea. The Korean military has been under continuous attack for violating human rights and has reacted by announcing that its operations will be more open and responsive in the future. From the 2000s, the military introduced a gender mainstreaming policy into the military by expanding the utilization rate of female military personnel and opening opportunities for military participation for married women in 2007 (Kim 2018). The Korean military has become a contested domain in which diverging masculinities (and femininities) intersect with class, sexuality, and race to compete for normative male citizenship, social belonging, and equality.

Men of Mixed Ethnicity and the Politics of Aversion

Mixed-race men were exempted from military conscription, but instead of enjoying the perks of exemption like those privileged individuals who had gained exemption, they suffered the consequences of being excluded from military life because of deep-seated aversion to *skin color*. They were being discriminated against. The Korean military has been the key actor in identifying, reinforcing, and rewarding the ethnic purity of South Korea's men. In this era of rapid mobility among its citizens, the emergence of "multicultural soldiers" and the possibility of incorporation of Koreans living abroad into the military sparked a new debate about what constitutes "the perfect Korean soldier." The lack of awareness and the racism in Korean society have highlighted the degree to which the Korean military is an organization

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tainted by *institutional racism*. Institutional racism refers to both overt and covert processes by which organizational measures and standard operating procedures—rules, procedures, rewards, and practices—have the intent or effect of excluding or exploiting members of a racial minority and thereby adversely penalize them (Fleras 2014, 145; Scheurich and Young, 1997). Even without aversive practices, the Korean military would be considered a racially biased organization from the perspective that it kept in place restrictions promoting racial purity until 2009. The challenge of incorporating the multicultural soldiers into the military served to broaden perspectives on what constituted masculinity, but, at the same time, it initiated a debate over exactly who was deemed a proper man and who was fit to be a soldier.

Korean society, and by association the military, is replete with examples of aversion to ethnically or racially mixed people. The incidence of “mixed-race” children increased rapidly during and after the Korean War. From the 1950s onward, throughout the Korean War and later during the U.S. military occupation, many mixed-race children were born to Korean women and American servicemen, but they disappeared from the South Korean landscape through state-sponsored international adoption programs. Under the banner of “One Nation, One People” (with an underlying assumption that in one country only one ethnic group should exist), these mixed-race children born during the Korean War era were sent abroad for adoption. During the period 1955–1961, out of 4,190 children sent abroad for adoption, 2,691 of them, or about 62 percent, were of mixed race (cited in Lee 2008, 35). Those who remained in Korea were, however, exempted from military service, even in the event that they were drafted or signed up to serve voluntarily. This exemption signified an aversion to their skin color.

The Military Service Act, Article 136 of 1993, reads, “In the case of clearly, externally identifiable persons of mixed race, they are included in disqualified conscription status.” That is, people who appear to be of mixed race are not allowed to participate in barracks life. Not only are distinctly ethnically mixed people banned from the induction physical but also, regardless of their physical fitness level, they cannot participate in the military. The organization asserted that the external appearance of men of mixed ethnicity was a type of “defect” preventing them from serving, but it did not concretely explain why such men could not serve on active duty. They were simply defined as possessing a distinct appearance of “otherness” that prevented them from being included in the category of the “elite forces” that the military desired.

In Korea, the concept of “mixed race” is extremely unclear. Generally, it denotes any person born to a Korean ethnic parent and an immigrant parent who is therefore not of full-blooded Korean ethnicity. Considering the historical record, from the Mongol invaders who took up residence in

Korea, through the colonial-era “Japan and Korea Are One” policy that led to Japanese-Korean intermarriage, to the sexual unions of American troops and Korean women during the U.S. military occupation, it has not been easy to establish who was of “pure blood” and who was of “mixed blood” in Korea. Nevertheless, on the basis of being “clearly, externally identifiable,” such men—especially those whose non-Korean parent was black or white—were barred from conscription.

In Korean society, where the people (*minjok*) and the nation (*kungmin*) have long been one and the same, a Korean national (*kungmin*) whose father or mother is of a different race does not conform to the ideal type. A soldier of mixed ethnicity is imagined as a disturbing presence in whom obedience to the demands of the state and the hierarchical solidarity between males cannot be reconciled. The Korean military, which has influenced Korean organizational culture by treating the mutual harmony of identity, male solidarity, and hierarchy as its most important value, has contributed to the strengthening and perpetuation of racism. In that respect, the military in Korean society has fortified its inbred nature, rather than serving as an organization that represents the whole of civil society in all its complexity. Multicultural men, instead of being exempt from military life, have been entirely excluded from it. The door to a military career was completely shut to them. Without having completed military service, a Korean man cannot satisfy one of the basic demands employers make of job seekers; thus, by being denied the chance to serve in the military, ethnically mixed men were often subject to poverty.

In the new millennium, public debate about the “multicultural society” in South Korea had a profound effect on the military. As the ethnically homogenous state gave way to a multicultural society, the debate intensified around how the military could change. Fueling the debate was the reduction in the population due primarily to the decline in the birth rate after the 1990s. The number of men considered required for a robust military became insufficient. This dearth of military manpower also resulted from the fluid situation of Korean men in their twenties. From the 1990s onward, “global mobility” within Korean society rapidly increased, stimulating the desires of Korea’s rising transnational class. The number of children sent by their parents for education in English-speaking countries—the United States, Canada, Australia, and so on—climbed rapidly, and, by 2010, the number of elementary, middle, and high school students being educated abroad had reached 410,000 (Cha 2013, 2). Some of the students continued to reside in foreign countries after obtaining permanent residency, and as multiple paths arose as alternatives to returning to Korea for military service, the number of potential male army recruits grew unpredictable.

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It became evident that not only the offspring of marriage migrants, but also those of foreign workers who had acquired Korean citizenship and new settlers from North Korea needed to be introduced into the military to keep up its numbers. This logic benefited from the fact that the economically productive sector of the population was aging rapidly and the shortage of a labor supply of good quality was adversely affecting the nation's growth potential. In order to achieve "sustainable growth and a sustainable society," an expert on the military concluded that Korean society needed to implement a variety of human resource strategies, ranging from the admission of immigrants into the country to enticing well-educated young Koreans living abroad to return. In 2004, a system was even introduced to encourage Koreans holding foreign passports to sign up for the military (Hong 2010, 62).

After 2007, when calculations showed that future military manpower would fall short of needs, discussions among the media and academia began to take place about revisions to the military service law concerning the qualifications for new recruits. It was estimated that available military manpower would quickly begin to drop starting in 2017, and that there would be a shortfall of 160,000 troops by the year 2023 (Hong 2010, 60). Thus, the government perceived a need to convert existing "not usable" manpower into "usable" manpower, and so the Military Service Act was revised. As amended in 2005, the act called for the induction of only those ethnically mixed citizens born after January 1, 1987, and allowed them to choose whether to be assigned to active service or as public service personnel (Hong 2010, 56).

Additionally, in December 2007, a clause in the military service law that had instituted discrimination on the basis of race and skin color was declared unconstitutional on the grounds that the constitution promised equal treatment to all, and so the law was revised. However, at the same time, the previous provision specifying that "clearly, externally identifiable" mixed-race people—that is, mixed-race individuals with a black or white parent—were disqualified from military service was not stricken from the law. Finally, in 2009, the discriminatory character of this provision that viewed those of mixed Asian and mixed black or white parentage differently was recognized as racist and was struck down, allowing any male citizen regardless of appearance to serve in the military (T. Y. Lee 2009). In Korea, military service is a duty of all male citizens but, at the same time, participation requires that the citizen in question be physically, mentally, and socially "normal," which we can understand as a type of qualification or competence. As a result, because ethnically mixed individuals were viewed as abnormal and treated as second-class citizens, this requirement became problematic (J-k. Lee 2009, 50). The exemption of ethnically mixed

individuals from military service provided them no advantage; on the contrary, some scholars criticized the exemption as being essentially a policy to segregate them. Consequently, these scholars proposed a forward-thinking policy to accept such men into the military to form a new, advanced, "multicultural" fighting force. Thereafter, the terms "multicultural military" and "multicultural soldier" came into formal use in the Korean military. Finally, in 2011, the amendment to the military service law that specified that, "regardless of race or skin color, the duties of military service were incumbent" on all males came into effect and the "multicultural soldier" was thus born. The Korean Ministry of Defense, in its publication "The Multicultural Era and the Advanced, Powerful Army" (2010), divided multicultural families into three types—"international marriage families, foreign worker families, [and] North Korean refugees," and called the offspring of these types of families "multicultural military personnel." In the case of North Korean refugee families, young people born while their parents were resident in South Korea were then able to join the armed forces, but young people who left North Korea themselves were exempt from service.

The Korean military was pushed toward "multiculturalism," but the individuals who contributed to this change were the so-called second generation of multicultural families. In broad terms, the offspring of multicultural families are of "mixed blood" as they were born to couples brought together through the rapid introduction of international marriages in the 1990s, but since most of the mothers were of Asian provenance, their offspring were largely indistinguishable from "pure-blood Koreans" in terms of appearance. For this reason, they were allowed into military conscription.

Ambiguous Integration of Multicultural Soldiers into the Korean Military

The social discourse about integrating mixed-race soldiers has both normalized and obscured their position in the military. Since 2011, when "multicultural soldiers" began to serve, about a thousand such men have been inducted each year. In 2014, the number of male offspring of multicultural families subject to conscription was 1,719. This figure should rise to 2,199 in 2015, then to 3,626 in 2019, and 4,730 in 2024 (*Yonhap News*, November 24, 2014). This shift to a multicultural military has conjured various worries. A social debate has arisen between military officials and scholars concerning the way that "mixed-race" or second-generation offspring of multicultural families should be treated and managed. In 2012, the Ministry of Defense, which had announced the change in direction toward a multicultural military, also changed the wording of the soldier's oath from "the Korean people" to "citizens," saying that according to policy, multicultural

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soldiers should not be discriminated against and instead must receive “equal treatment.” In addition, it declared that soldiers from multicultural families should be protected from exposure insofar as it was possible and so it would not be releasing a tally of the number of such soldiers who had joined the ranks, advancing the opinion that releasing such information would discriminate against personnel (Hong 2012). Furthermore, the Ministry of Defense announced that it had developed training materials titled “The Strong, Advanced Army in the Era of Multiculturalism” for the multicultural soldiers, and that it intended to provide such training to all soldiers on a regular basis (Bae 2010). However, as the discussion in the rest of this section will show, these intentions coupled with further social discourse have culminated in a striking paradox in the treatment of multicultural soldiers.

Policy Recommendations

Beyond the changes announced by the Ministry of Defense, the ongoing social discourse led to various policy suggestions to address the challenge of introducing multicultural soldiers into the ranks of the military (Choe 2010; Park 2011). This process of policy recommendation focused on three major concerns about the multicultural military and the multicultural soldiers.

First, due to the heterogeneity arising from the military’s shift toward multiculturalism, there has been a concern that the solidarity between soldiers will weaken. If “military culture” is defined as sharing not only the same values but also the same standards of behavior—discipline, cooperation, loyalty, devotion, and traditions—and holding all to the same standard, some participants in the discourse worry that, with the introduction of multicultural soldiers, cultural conflicts would be amplified because of increased heterogeneity within the same organization (Hong 2010, 67–68). The idea of cultural heterogeneity was soon reduced to that of an intensification of conflict. As a result, it was deemed necessary that the military should strengthen feelings of brotherhood (*tongjilgam*) and a common sense of purpose (*tongnyo üshik*).

Second, there remains uneasiness about the loyalty of multicultural soldiers. Under the premise that a good soldier shows a high degree of attachment to the state, the offspring of multicultural families should demonstrate loyalty, patriotism, and a shared view of the enemy, but the opinion is that they will inevitably have difficulties doing so and that there will be a marked difference in identity between themselves and ordinary soldiers (Kim 2014, 24). In this opinion, the second generation of multicultural families think, “I grew up in a multicultural family and I am an outsider who doesn’t belong to any country,” and, consequently as a soldier, it is difficult for them to have a clear-cut view of the state that is making demands upon

them. To counter this kind of thinking, a recommendation was made to provide education on Korean society and history to offspring of multicultural families so that they may gain proper views of history, the state, and who the enemy is (North Korea) prior to their induction, enabling them to reduce the maladaptive triggers that may arise during job seeking or on personality tests (M. Jung 2014). An interesting part of this effort is the constant insistence on the necessity for "security [anti-communist] education" for migrant wives and multicultural families (Lee 2012). Trips to visit the area around the demilitarized zone (DMZ) have even been organized. For example, one police chief from Taegu organized an event he called the "Year of the Rat multicultural family field visit to the DMZ and cultural tour" through which participants visited Yeoncheon in Gyeonggi-do and Ch'ŏrwŏn, where military bases are located. When South Korean media conducted interviews with participants, a resulting news article was headlined "Hopes That the Divided Korean Peninsula Can Soon Be Reunited" (Lee 2012).

A third concern is that multicultural soldiers suffer maladjustment to military life, which might lead to further problems. This concern stems from a sense that because multicultural children have suffered severe difficulties and discrimination in their upbringing, they would not be able to adapt to life within the military, in which they face additional discrimination from their fellow soldiers. Park (2011, 183) explains that multicultural children "have been put in difficult educational circumstances, lagging in linguistic development as a result of being raised by mothers with insufficient Korean language skills and experiencing cultural maladjustment." Consequently, children of multicultural families often suffer in their studies, face crises of identity, and, in the growing-up process, experience emotional stress due to their ostracism from the larger group, and so on. These factors have led to concerns that such individuals pose a possible threat to safety in the barracks. It is said that because of the "barracks stress" they experience, multicultural soldiers become the targets of incidents and crimes while in the military, or vice versa—being targeted causes them stress. For instance, a multicultural soldier may be ostracized by nonmulticultural soldiers and, due to his maladaptation, then attack the ostracizers (Park 2011). Following the surge in international marriages in Korea, concerns and stigmatization connected with the multicultural family and multicultural teens and young adults have naturally extended to concerns about multicultural troops. Because the children of multicultural families have not adapted well to Korean society, it is predicted that their adaptation to military life will also be difficult. According to Kim Yong-ki (2014, 29), children of multicultural families "in the process of growing up cannot adapt to school education, and this is connected to various social problems such as suicide, murder,

arson, etc. When barracks life, disputes, and economic conditions in the military region, ordinary soldiers' transition to military life during up provoking violence, soldiers became they were encouraged to select where to

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Treatment of Multicultural Soldiers

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arson, etc. When these kinds of problems are directly introduced into barracks life, disputes within the troops arise and consequently there are social and economic costs for the state and its citizens and the degradation of trust in the military results in anxiety." Moreover, because of racial discrimination, ordinary soldiers worried that soldiers who had not adjusted properly to military life due to being bullied or ostracized by the group would end up provoking violent incidents. As a result of these concerns, multicultural soldiers became the object of various types of special "care." For example, they were encouraged to enlist with friends or brothers or given the right to select where they wished to be deployed (Hong 2012).

In contrast to these concerns, there is an emerging discourse about the possible "usefulness" of multicultural soldiers. It has been suggested that the presence of multicultural soldiers can contribute to the transnational efforts of the Korean military. Considering that, as of September 2012, a total of 1,451 individuals from fifteen countries had been dispatched as peacekeepers or as medical personnel, multicultural soldiers from Korea stationed abroad could, it has been said, demonstrate Korea's "multicultural capacity" in overseas activities (Cha 2013, 7).

Treatment of Multicultural Soldiers in the Korean Military

The paradoxical element was that, whereas permitting multicultural soldiers to serve in the Korean military would seem to have put an end to the institutional racism of the military, the military itself expanded upon the micromanagement of surveillance of multicultural soldiers. While continuing to perpetuate Korean society's racial discrimination toward multicultural families and their offspring, the South Korean government and military began a screening process that targeted the multicultural soldiers as potentially dangerous and warranting special attention. First, the Ministry of Defense, which had said it would not keep statistics on or survey the multicultural soldiers, modified its position and introduced an "Integrated Management System" to keep track of them. The Korean military established a policy that prohibited discrimination based on appearance or ethnicity but at the same time introduced a system that distinguished multicultural soldiers from nonmulticultural soldiers (Hong 2010, 65; Kim 2014, 52), thus demonstrating the power of management and control. Starting in 2010, as each multicultural soldier entered training camp, he was tracked in a continuously updated computer system that could single him out. When a soldier from a multicultural family joins the force and it is noted that the new recruit is requested to receive special attention, he is put on a list of "soldiers of interest." In order to help multicultural soldiers adapt to military service, the military has implemented a "buddy enlistment" system between second-generation multicultural soldiers. Multicultural

troops remain under restriction and under the supervision of a service member called a "security officer." Currently, the army excludes multicultural soldiers from serving near the DMZ, and the "relatively straightforward tasks they are assigned" are considered somewhat plum jobs. One officer said that to avoid any "accidents" or "psychological problems," multicultural soldiers are often granted leave or given permission for overnight stays because they need "comforting." These measures have resulted in complaints from ordinary soldiers that they are the victims of "reverse discrimination" (Lee 2013).

Conclusion

대한민국

I, the undersigned, as a soldier of the Republic of Korea, solemnly swear loyalty to the state and *the Korean people*, and, observing all laws, promise to obey the commands of my superiors and to faithfully carry out the tasks given to me.

When new soldiers began their military service, they used to sign this oath.³ In 2012, the phrase "the Korean people" was changed to "citizens." Given the social trend represented by the rapid increase in the number of inductees who were the offspring of international marriages—the so-called multicultural families—this change reflected public sentiment that the word "citizen," which describes a member of a nation, was more appropriate than the word "people" (*minjok*), which carries the concept of a Korean "race" (Yoon 2012). This chapter shows how the incorporation of multicultural soldiers poses strategic, legal, and ideological challenges in the current globalizing milieu of the Korean military. The current Korean military vacillates in its adherence to the hegemonic mode of Korean manhood by continually reconstructing a militarized masculinity. The South Korean patriarchy, represented by the military, associates the prestige and status of the nation with the enhancement of a collective masculinity known as "ethnonational masculinity" (J-k. Lee 2009). Against this backdrop, the homogeneity of the soldiers comes to be seen as protecting the loyalty, solidarity, and system of hierarchy among men. However, the Korean military, despite its patriarchal and monoethnic nature, has not functioned as a uniform, unchanging entity. The Korean military has met pressure to participate in the societal current of Korea's rapid increase in national wealth, burgeoning desire to achieve more on the global stage, and national recognition of the place of cultural diversity. To reflect this change

³ National Law Information Center, available at <http://www.law.go.kr/LSW/lsInfoP.do?lsiSeq=128315#0000>, emphasis added.

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in the social context, the military has faced a particular challenge playing its part in Korea's global ascendancy: to accommodate generally respected universal human rights related to sexual orientation, race, and ethnicity.

The emergence of multicultural soldiers within the army is still a matter of dispute. Their ambiguous position clearly reveals the governmental character of "multicultural society" within Korean society. To improve the security of the active forces with the view toward creating an advanced military of global stature, mixed-race men were allowed to serve in the military but, as in the past when multicultural people were singled out based on particular characteristics, they are still stigmatized on the basis of their "inferiority," by virtue of their appearance, background, cultural heterogeneity, linguistic ability, and so on. On the surface it looks as though the Korean military's exclusion of men of mixed ethnicity has come to an end; in reality, identifying multicultural troops as different from ordinary troops, managing and deploying them differently, classifying them as potential threats, and other measures have just put into place a new set of day-to-day racist responses. This kind of management, though giving agency to multicultural soldiers in a particular way, tends to categorize them as the ambiguous subject who cannot acquire full membership in Korean society.

The South Korean military has been challenged by a pressing dilemma rooted in a desire to preserve the homogeneity of ethnic soldiers in the face of the increasingly hybrid culture generated by a reliance on transnational migration to maintain and reproduce the Korean family. In response, the sole aim of fast assimilation identified certain soldiers based on ethnicity, sexual orientation, and education as members of a *vulnerable* group and committed the cultural violence of permanently singling them out as belonging to the class of marginalized or unfit soldiers. The military's personnel management practices and the discourse of both aversion to and suspicion of the use of multicultural personnel by the media and by military scholars provide ample evidence that deep-seated views of what it is to be a Korean "man" have yet to substantively change.

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