



Multiculturalism in South Korea

March 8, 2012 @ 14:00-15:30

HFW 12 Conference room

“In the Shadow of Developmentalism: Possibilities and Limitations of Korean Multiculturalism”

- Dr. Nora Hui-Jung Kim (University of Mary Washington, USA)

Abstract

While South Korea has witnessed Multicultural Explosion in recent years, not everybody is equally welcomed to the new “multicultural” Korea. The Korean migrant incorporation regime is clearly segmented and stratified: foreign talents at the top, migrant workers at the bottom, and ethnic Chinese residents and marriage migrants in between. If we understand Korean immigrant incorporation and citizenship policies exclusively from the perspective of ethnic homogeneity, Korean government policies regarding foreign talents, ethnic Chinese residents, and marriage migrants are puzzling. The major principle of segmentation and stratification is the human capital of migrants, or migrants’ alleged contribution to the development of the Korean nation. The influence of developmentalism in Korean migration incorporation policies is not accidental; rather, I argue that this influence represents the legacy of developmentalism in Korean state discourses and practices, continuing throughout the modernization of fatherland during Park Chung Hee era, globalization during Kim Young Sam era, and the current multiculturalism. With the introduction of ideas and practices of multiculturalism, there is finally room for a multiethnic population in the Korean imagination. However, the potential of multiculturalism is severely limited by the legacy of developmentalism.

“Damunhwa and the Emergence of Multicultural Governance in South Korea”

- Dr. EuyRyung Jun (University of Bayreuth, Germany)

Abstract

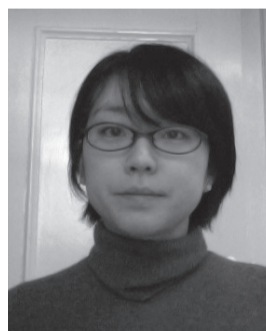
Multiculturalism has often been articulated through imperial and civilizational discourses that identify tolerance with the liberal west and intolerance with non-liberal societies and cultures. This talk explores how the focus of the civilizational gaze is turned on the allegedly “not yet tolerant self” in the neoliberal developmental state of South Korea. The mode of the liberal government that recently emerged in Korea has been shaped not in the self-celebratory rhetoric of “what we are” but in the self-critical, developmentalist rhetoric of “what we lack.” Drawing on my fieldwork among local civic actors working in the field of migration, I discuss how the civic discourse of *damunhwa*, or “multiculturalism,” that emerged in opposition to the “governmental objectification” of migrant groups redirects the focus onto the ethical improvement of the general population relying on another form of reified otherness that captures migrants and their presence in the country as “opportunities” for Korea’s moral ventures.

The workshop, “Multiculturalism in South Korea” will take place on March 8, 14.00~15.30 in the conference room (HFW 12). Two Korean scholars will visit our institute and present their papers on Korean multiculturalism. Taking on one hand a developmental perspective and on the other an exploration into civilizational ethics, these papers open a dialogue into the state project of multiculturalism. Please join us for what promises to be invigorating discussion!!

Presenters



Dr. Nora Kim (hkim4@umw.edu) has received her PhD. from University of Wisconsin-Madison (Sociology) and is now an assistant professor of sociology at University of Mary Washington, Fredericksburg, Virginia. Her research interests include international immigration, multiculturalism, race and ethnicity, nationalism, citizenship, and East Asia. She has published in the *International Migration Review*, *Nations and Nationalism*, and *Citizenship Studies*.



Dr. EuyRyung Jun (euyryung@gmail.com) is a post-doctoral researcher at the Department of Social Geography at the University of Bayreuth. After receiving her M.A. from Cornell University, she studied anthropology at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Her dissertation “Virtuous Citizens and Sentimental Society: Ethics and Politics in Neoliberal South Korea” (2011) explores the new social and ethical landscape created by the issue of foreign workers, marriage immigrants, and multicultural families in South Korea. Her current research examines the contested notion of “civic participation” that has emerged in the context of environmental politics and governance in that country.

Please email Dr. Jin-heon Jung (jung@mmg.mpg.de) for more information.



Max Planck Institute for the Study of Religious and Ethnic Diversity
Hermann-Föge-Weg 11 • D-37073 Göttingen • GERMANY
Fon: +49 (551) 4956 - 0 • Fax: +49 (551) 4956 - 170
info@mmg.mpg.de • www.mmg.mpg.de