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# I • CULTURAL STUDIES

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## **Multiculturalism in Korean Way: the Difficulties of the Alternative Mass Media in South Korea**

**Abstract.** Labor migration along with the new phenomenon in Korea such as marital migration found out weak sides of politics in the «New Korea». In research, attention is paid to selective policy of multiculturalism in the country. The governmental mass media as a basic instrument in forming the public opinion build the stereotypes in relation to the migrants in frames of such a policy. In turn the experience of the aspect the experience of the appearance of the alternative mass media «migrants for migrants» shows «deficiencies» in the existent paradigm about the social nature of migrants in South Korea. The limitations in the considered material gives the new directions for the following research of migrants in whole and marital migrants in particular.

The South Korea deserves special attention to discussion of the multiculturalism because it is considered as the most ethnically homogeneous country in the world. In spite of the Korean Mass Media, governmental channels release many programs the basic character of which is the stereotype of the compassion and pity to migrant workers. That causes the displeasure and the desire to show migrant workers as members of the Korean society who invest huge contribution to Korea. The author considers that Mass Media created by the migrant workers is instrument that connects the Korean society and migrant workers. The limitations in considered materials gives new directions for the further research of migrants as a whole and marital migrants as a part of this formation.

**Key words:** South Korea, multiculturalism, migrants, television programs.

### **Introduction**

South Korea deserves special attention in any discussion of the multiculturalism as it considered one of the ethnic homogeneous countries. Therefore historical understanding of the notion «citizen» and «nation». Even ethnic Koreans are counted foreigners. However, in the light of the globalization the country begins «project of distribution of Korean nation». In 2006, Lee Myung Pak opens «multicultural politics» for the maintaining of the unity in the rapidly changing conditions. It is expected that the number of foreigners in South Korea will reach 2.5 million of people, in 2050 -4.1 million that will make 9.2 % from the overall population.

The reasons of such changes are the problems of low birth rate and aging population in Korea. As a result, the country is dependent beginning from 1990-es years, from the presence of the migrant workers, as a rule from Asian countries, for the

low-qualified workforce in condition of flourishing economy. In condition of the absence of competition with Koreans foreign workers fill the labor niche in process industry and construction identified as 3D working places («dirty», »dangerous», »difficult»).

Along with the constant increase of migrant workers, new demographic phenomenon appeared. From the end of the 1990, the country began to come into phase of the «multicultural marriages». South Korean outsiders especially in rural regions began to take as brides women from the countries as China, Vietnam, Philippines, Cambodia and Thailand. In 2005, there were 36% of the marriages in rural areas between Korean man and foreign woman as it was 14% in whole Korea. As labor migrants, marital migrants and their children born in such marriages significantly grow in numbers[1, 72].

This wave of migrant include mainly women who officially immigrate in Korea as wives to create families with Korean men. Korean man as a rule

working in agriculture or city representatives of low and middle class having setback to find a bride refer to the services of marital agencies. Men are significantly older than women are and couples cannot find common traits having the serious problem to understand each other.

China is the biggest donor of the brides, Vietnam and Philippines, Thailand, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan and some East –European countries are bridal donors- countries for Korea. Nowadays more than 820000 people belong to multicultural families in Korea the number of which increased as twice within last eight years [2].

In result, the government has to change the policy of monoculture and attain to multicultural variety. The politics of the multicultural families brought to opening of the multicultural centers all over the country. The problems of the social adaptation of foreign wives and multicultural children brought to formation of new legal acts, understanding of the necessary solution of the issues of citizenship. The formation of postulate of the «new Korea with new Koreans» was specified by the Ministry of Education in school textbooks, what would influence significantly maintaining of the multiculturalism.

However, the policy of the multiculturalism was distributed only to the multicultural families but not migrant workers; in comparison from marital migrants, they had the status of the «ad hoc instrument for Korean economy» and even does not consider as people who contribute in Korean society [3,112].

According to data in March 2015 the government of Korea registered 1 813 037 born abroad, this number includes students, representatives of «white collars», migrant workers, not registered workers and «foreign brides». In 2014, the number of legal workers were 503 135 and altogether 64 507 not registered legal workers are 3D –workers who work in 3D industry and service sector[2].

Therefore separating marital migrants from the workers, the government employ the selective policy of the multiculturalism with the purpose of more effective control of growing population of foreigners in the country. However as researchers predict the government of South Korea will be needed to present the status of the resident to working migrants to maintain the stability of labor resources [1,75]. In such way, «Korean variant» of the multiculturalism was formed in historically monoethnic country.

### Methods

In terms of methodology, media are considered in the paper as enterprises whose activities are sub-

ject to the laws of economics and management, and as a social phenomenon – the channels for exchange information between parts of society, and as an area of spiritual practice.

### Main body

Nowadays there are four large television networks: Korean Broadcasting System (KBS), Seoul Broadcasting System (SBS), Munhwa Broadcasting Corporation (MBC), and Educational Broadcasting System (EBS).»Arirang TV» and «YTN» are popular channels, which cast in English and Korean. Besides, 38 television networks exist in South Korea, 20 of which commercial. There is also «AFKN TV»-television for American military and their families.

The country, which had no experience of acceptance of the migrants beginning from 1980, in result of economic development, the coming of the stream of not regulated migration, began to encounter with the difficulties. The incoming migrants have no equal rights with the citizens of the country. Thus, the programs of being in the country such as programs of the trainees for example was limited by definite periods, in the last case by 3 years. The reasons of these phenomenon researchers comprehended as «threat to having pure-blood national identity of Korea [4,679]». In result, trade union movement for equal legal rights and improvement of labor conditions began in Korea. The weak organization and appearance of rock-groups during meetings could not stop the upsurge during demonstrations of workers for their rights. Besides «unjust presentation of the migrants in Mass Media» caused Koreans to be indifferent to the problems of the migrants [5].

Korean television channel RTV had the initiative to create the television channel for labor migrants-migrant Worker's Television (MWTV). MWTV was created in 18 of April 2015 with the purpose «to show voice of working migrants who lived in Korea». Migrants united from following countries: Bangladesh, Nepal, Burma, Mongolia, China, Germany, USA, Indonesia, and Philippines, Russia.

As distinguished from more «basic versions» of the multicultural broadcasting, this television network was created for the community of migrant workers. Among of the anchors there were noticed even not registered migrants. MWTV transmit news bulletin. These programs which are transmitted in 9 languages (Bengali, Burmese, Chinese, English, Indonesian, Mongolian, Nepalese, Russian and Tagalog) share quite a lot of time for the legal questions which are significant for workers, news from

those countries and news of South Korea for foreign citizens

Besides the channel regularly transmits program of Korean language. The anchor Mahbub told that when the channel was created: «At the beginning, it was the dream for us to create own TV program. We did interview during riots that concerned system of the permission of the legal employment, organized conferences and seminars. We talked about not exact, in our point of view, information, information of Mass Media about the problems of the migrant workers» [6].

The initiative of such activists caused that in 2003 the channel PTV had 100-minute program of the discussion of the problems of labor migrants with the participation of the migrants themselves. That had a positive effect and in 2005 the further initiatives received support in creation of own program. At the beginning the broadcasting was done through the sputnik on Skyline channel but it was the chargeable way of watching which costed 20-30\$ a month in result the people with high income could watch the programs. By broadcasting through cable TV and Internet, the audience of migrantsworkers was expanded. They could watch the monthly program in Korea «The World of Migrant Workers».

In 2006, the MVTV received the license of the RTV that presented the public access to the channels of the sputnik's broadcasting. MWTV released first programs, World of Migrant Workers and Multilingual Migrant Workers News (multilingual news for migrants). Complimented by worsening of the financial situation in 2009 MWTV moved their programs in Internet and began new program named Video Web-News (VWN) [5].

Active members among labor migrants are worried that in spite of the governmental channels transmit many kinds of the programs the main character of the programs to the audience involves stereotypes of the compassion and pity. This causes discontent and wish to show labor migrants as members of Korean society who also contribute lot in Korea. Gradually, many people acknowledge the channel. Moreover, the administration begins to contact with the authors of the programs in face of employees of the Immigration Office. The staff of the channel assesses that administration and government of South Korea that organization [6].

In 2005 the Ministry of Culture organized the large festival of the migrants, the main motto of which was «We are unified!» .Simultaneously The Department of Justices and employees of immigration office with the participation of the military employed disruption of the meetings and processions of

migrants with the nets and gas as the weapons. They intruded at night in their homes, arrested and directed people in the centers of «protection» which were like prisons with the purpose to deport illegal migrants It is actual that the demands of the cultural unity, granting cultural rights to migrants does not present any value because migrants are deprived of the labor rights. Authors of such programs build plans to create cultural and educational programs, which will demonstrate real life of labor migrants [6].

Television channel of workers (MWTV) in South Korea demonstrate the efforts of the migrants through the Mass Media to become the part of the Korean society. The Mass Media created by workers-migrants in Korea is the link between migrant's society and Korean society. South Korean researchers employed the analysis of the content of a more than two hundred programs, produced by the MWTV, non-governmental organizations of the migrant's Mass Media. They conclude that MWTV programs attain united community among ethnically different communities of the migrant-workers [5].

Later the students and marital migrants started to enter in the organization what changed the content of the MWTV. In result of the analysis of the activity in 2011 year there was raised the question about the change of the title in result of the demographic changes and increase of the number of the marital migrants. Marital migration increased from 25182 in 2001 to 125087 in 2009 as the large number of the men with the low level of the income looked for the brides form the foreign countries. More than 80% of marital migrants were the women from China, Vietnam, Philippines and Cambodia (Korean Immigration office, 2010). In 2015 marital migrant's number was more than 22 462. Besides the quantity of the applications about the granting of the refugee's status continued to grow during this time (from 37 in 2001 until 717 in 2007, until 324 in 2009). In result, Korean society have drastic changes in the period.

The author of the one article researched 30 minute program in Korean in format of the panel discussion on questions of the legal consultations with migrants where he discussed unjust conditions of the labor, presented information about the cultural activities for migrant workers. The purpose of the program is granting the practical recommendations on the solution of the problems of the migrants [5]. Researching MMWN (Multilingual Migrant Worker News), the author found out that among the index-linked elements of the program the labor questions were dominant that clearly shows as their labor class in the quality of the important element among the

migrant workers in Korea. The programs included the information about the new governmental acts, trade-union questions of the migrants, groups of the support of the NGO and corresponding economic changes. The form of the employing of such programs are discussions in forums, symposiums, press conferences that are connected with the question of the migration and the labor.

All issues were about the modern changes and tasks that given to the migrants in Korea. Therefore, the programs that were created by the migrants themselves significantly differed from governmental channels of Mass Media in South Korea. The character of the delivering of the information significantly differed. The program World of Migrant Workers demonstrated the bright cases of labor exploitation, examples of wages liabilities, cases of unhuman repressions, forced deportation, sexual chase on the example of events in industrial city Ansan, which located south to Seoul [5].

The other direction of the enlightening the issue of the migrants on the channel was the category of the presentation of cultural events with the participation of the migrants –more than 30% of the information. The social cultural events, educational programs, concert programs were presented with the purpose to find the similarities and differences. One plot showed the trip to Korea of Buddhist priest from Burma who performed Burman traditional rituals in Korea. There was a story of Nepalese wedding ceremony in Korea and the activity of the Mongolian communities in Korea. These plots showed the acknowledgement of the fact that all the migrants in Korea are representatives of different cultures. In plots there were brightly demonstrated the perception of the migrants such as an example of the Mongolian worker who shared the story that never imagined to work together with Indonesian worker. All those brought to perception that all of them «are on the same boat», the appearance became the secondary, the migrants learned to hold the new identity in Korea [5].

The third category of the plots in the programs were international questions, events in the world and the information about the events in the countries of the migrants. However, those programs were directed to direct necessities of the audience so that they would not express interest to own country exclusively.

It was reflected the desire of the community of migrants becoming the members of Korean society in the fourth category of the plot of the Mass Media. Such programs included the cases when migrants saved Koreans in the fire, when children of the mi-

grants studied at school and pieces where migrants lived with Korean families.

One of the brightest examples that was broadcasted on TV was the program of the soccer mini World Cup with the participation of the laboring migrants. Symbolically event was at the same time as the World Cup in 2006. Hard crackdown caused the death of several migrants workers. It seemed it was comfortable to «cover» Korean government had, they arrested and deported migrants. The migrant workers organized the World Cup with 12 teams of migrants- players. The broadcasting of the event of the MVTV had two purposes. First is to pay attention to the Korean population to the life and the sufferings of the migrants so «that global village is near and it is destroyed». Second, the event of the soccer match formed the feeling of the commonness among the working migrants who felt themselves under threat that they were segregated by society when it was World Cup.

The other problem in the category of TV programs were the pieces of everyday life of working-migrants, for example, education of the children of working migrants, the cooperation between the life of the migrants and Koreans. The program MWTV in the category showed the image of the migrants, migrants as active participants in the society, well socialized in the society as a rule the fact is being ignored by the Korean Mass Media. Such programs shows that migrant-workers deserve that they were acknowledged as members in Korean society. They deserve to live with the same status as Korean citizens have [5].

Possibly the most famous production of the MWTV is the migrant Worker Film Festival (MWFF) which in 2011 had a six in a row time to take place. The mission of festival is the expansion of the dialogue on the problems standing before migrant and non-migrants in the world to show that migration traverse with the question of the labor, human rights, race, culture and gender. All variety of genres included documental films, dramas, and comedies, human rights along with the international and local full-length motion pictures. There was a separate accent on the short-length film of migrants about migrants.

The executive supervisor, the refugee from Burma, Aung Tinhtun is sure that it is necessary to show only those movies that were done by migrants in Korea in spite of the quality of the produced films. «Possibly the films deserve criticizing but we do not pursue commercial interest, our film festival is directed to the expansion of communication between migrants and Koreans». The film festival usually

begins in Seoul during one week-end and then during several weeks is passed to other regional cities in the country where there lot of migrants. There is hope that films will resonate with Koreans and migrants who live in the regional cities and stimulate the appearance of the new multicultural communities [3].

MWTV gradually made modifications in the programs. So in 2007 there was introduced the new program such as 20 minute talk show named: «Everything is all right, everything is right!» It was created to attract the expanded audience and by means of the talk with group from five or six foreigners of different cultural traditions, discuss such topics as family and different cultural traditions with the sense of humor. The talk show reflects different customs of migrant workers and their cultural festivity in South Korea. In result, according the words of the producer of the program MinodMoktan from Nepal the idea is being pursued to show to Koreans that migrants are unique people who should be perceived not just as cheap work force and it can change the image [3].

With the beginning of the administration of Lee Myung Pak in the beginning of the 2008 in the country there were consolidated the Ministry of Information and Ministry of Communication and Korean Broadcasting Commission into the new organization –Korea Communication Commission (KCC).

The public access to the broadcasting was accepted as unfavorable and threatening to the «Liberal Government». In result «Multilingual Migrants News» were shortened to one program in a month in eight languages (originally 11) and «The World of Migrant Workers» was changed to short monthlynon-arts program named «Special MWTV» [3].

With years MWTV was undergone the gradual transformation from the original attention to the questions of the labor of migrants workers, to the festivity of cultural variety of migrants workers. They became in some sense of the «a place of refuge» for the marital migrants, migrant workers and ‘multicultural children». The main priority became the programs for marital migrants as they are mothers of new generation of the «multicultural children» «Moreover, taking in the account the importance of the family and housework of the women in frames of the strategy of the conservation of the reproductive function in family in changing socio-economic conditions[7]. The importance of their presence in Korean society is self-explanatory.

South Korea received the highest assessment of the international observers in the process of the tran-

sition from ethnic homogeneity to multiculturalism. Korea acknowledge cultural variety and perform the real steps in the maintaining. However, in relation to the television programs as means of Mass Media there is tension and contradictions between officials and migrants themselves. The example of the MTWTV could become the standard for the multicultural dialogue and communication.

The reality is that there are limited quantity of migrants in Korea who has skills in creating television programs. The organization of the regular programs of media education was done with the purpose to teach migrants workers and foreign brides to make own Mass Media. «Media Academy» in frames of the «MWTV Media Production Team» unites the migrants from different places during two month. This ends as festival at night where participants gather to share own films and receive the feedback from their peers. The program was thought as the way to prepare the graduates of the academy for the future programs about the daily life of migrants at MWTV site. Special programs of the media education for marital migrants, workers, and courses of the photograph for migrants and activists were organized by MWTV [3].

### Conclusion

In 2015, the official presentation of the Russian-speaking channel RusKor TV became new event for Russian-speaking population in Korea. The presentation of the first broadcasting in Russian language was declared on 25<sup>th</sup> of February in South Korea at the site of the Association of Russian –speaking population in Korea (ARusKor). Russian Mass Media reported that according the information of the creators of the channel the main purpose was the presentation of the interesting and useful information to Russian-speaking residents who live in South Korea and beyond its borders. The other purpose is to make familiar Koreans with Russia. RusKorTV televise live in on-line regime where there is access to the archive of the news, events, reports, commercials, exciting reports on the life of Russian speaking people in Korea and Korean themselves (the channel also includes feature films, documental films, reviews of the main events in the business sphere and innovations, different show-programs. On the air there can be seen the programs about social and cultural life of both countries, their history, traditions, customs, about the outstanding achievements of the science, culture and art in those countries [9].

For creating the programs there will be attracted not only corporate employees of the channel but

the independent correspondents will take part in the projects. This will increase the representativeness of the information and expand the audience among Russian-speaking countries. Moreover, the channel RUSKOR TV invites to cooperation bright young people (journalists, bloggers, and video graphs) from all regions of the country for the work of the free-lance TV reporters. They will thematically enlighten the most interesting events in South Korea and create author pieces and journalistic story. In such a way, the channel can become a new dialogue-oriented platform of one of the alternative

channels in South Korea. The production of the favorable conditions for the work of the alternative Mass Media can help to society to advance in correspondence with the multicultural standards of the understanding.

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