

# Broadcasting Major League Baseball as a Governmental Instrument in South Korea

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## 1. Introduction

This paper aims to examine how broadcasting Major League Baseball (hereafter MLB) in South Korea contributed to reflecting and constructing governmental rationality in a global era. For that purpose, I will illustrate the history of the founding of professional baseball league in South Korea and then, investigate different relationships between baseball and governments during the 1980s and the late 1990s. Based on such a comparative inquiry, I will show how broadcasting MLB played a key role in managing a national crisis, such as the IMF intervention, as a governmental instrument. Finally, I will try to explore the specific consequences of governmental rationality within the complicated dynamics between the nation-state and the global sports commodity in a global era.

Before delving into the relationships between broadcasting baseball and governmental rationality, I want to provide a quick history of professional baseball leagues in South Korea. The Korean Professional Baseball League (hereafter KBL) began in 1982 under an authoritarian government. Although many critics commented that KBL was one of the most obvious outcomes of the government's intervention in order to divert political attentions, KBL quickly became one of the most favorite sport leagues. Each franchise team in KBL, which was based in different provinces or cities, became successfully entrenched as local and regional teams. Its popularity had continued until the mid 90s. During the late 90s, however, MLB arose as another favorite sport league among Koreans when the first Korean player debuted in MLB in 1994 and began to perform well in 1996. The increasing popularity of MLB had become a phenomenon especially when the IMF intervention produced a gloomy and pessimistic mood in Korea in 1997-2000. In this sense, the popularity of MLB in Korea was promoted by and large by nationalistic sentiments in its beginning, but the nature of MLB as American/Global sports inevitably entails contradictions with nationalistic aspects of interests for it among Korean fans. What is important is that, despite such a dilemma, broadcasting MLB in South Korea is not just a matter of globalization of sporting events. Rather, broadcasting MLB implies deeper questions not only about national identity of sports fans but also about the political role of sports.

It is no longer a new issue that sports are made use of for political purposes, but it is still important to investigate the specific uses of sporting events in a concrete context. Such study becomes even more imperative because the new global order provides different sets of terrains and norms in understanding the relationships of sports to the social, economic and political elements. In this vein, my

purpose is to understand the changes in the relationship of sports to the nation-state and entailed contributions of sports to political rationality in a global era. I do not expect that the relationships between sports and the nation-state are no longer effective in a global era. Rather, I am going to point out that their relationships are subject to change depending on a different context in a global order, and most importantly, sports, in particular baseball, continues to play an important role as a governing tool by imposing a different set of norms, which suites to the logic of globalization. I will try to unearth such complicated relationships between sports and governmental rationalities through examining the concrete contexts of broadcasting MLB in South Korea.

## **2. Launching Korean Professional Baseball League in the 80s**

The relationship between sports and politics is always in tension, and therefore, it is not easily predictable how to utilize sporting events for political purposes in a particular moment. Some examples of sports are obviously manipulated by authoritarian or fascist governments, but it becomes so subtle and complicated that people cannot easily recognize the ways of using sporting events for political and ideological purposes. This section will investigate the founding of Korean Professional Baseball League (KBL) in the 80s not only through the examination of the economic and political circumstances of South Korea but also through exploring the roles of the government. Based on historical and contextual analyses, I am going to illustrate a certain type of governmental rationality in the 80s.

### **2-1. Political and Economic Situation During the 80s**

The circumstances of South Korea in the early 80s could be characterized by two salient as well as contradictory aspects: one was rapid economic development and the other was an authoritarian political situation. Such an imbalance between the economy and politics had existed even since the 70s, but it was deepened and exacerbated in the 80s. I will briefly summarize the economic and political context, and point out several important indices which are useful to understanding why KBL was launched at that moment.

The economy of South Korea began to recover from its miserable condition in the 60s, and continued to grow under the developmental regime, which was characterized by the statist mobilization and authoritarian integration in the 70s (Cho, 2000). Such a booming economy continued until the 80s, and had momentum during the 80s with prosperous market conditions on a global scale. Some business

indicators, particularly in the early 80s, showed that South Korea seemed to be ready for a so-called consumerist society. By a consumption society, I mean that average people earn a certain level of income, spend their money on culture and recreation, and enjoy increased leisure activity. The average income per person was \$1770 in 1984 and \$3,120 (1988), which are huge increases compared to \$54 (1968) and \$390 (1976)<sup>1</sup>. Although those levels of income in the 80s were far less than those of First World countries and even less than the incomes of South Korea in the 90s, relative economic affluence in the 80s allowed people a chance to spend more money on cultural, recreational activity than just on indispensable expenditures. For example, the ratio of culture and recreational spending to total expenditures had increased from 1.45-1.80% in the 70s to 3.5% in 1982, and the ratio kept increasing to 5% in 1992<sup>2</sup>. People could enjoy more leisure and the average leisure time had increased from 5.16 hours on Sunday in 1981 to 6.07 hours in 1987, and from 3.36 hour in 1981 to 4.17 hour in 1985 on weekdays<sup>3</sup>. Besides, almost every family owned a TV in 1985 whereas only 10% owned TV in 1971 and 30% in 1975<sup>4</sup>.

Although the economic sector continued to be flourishing, the political sector remained authoritarian and oppressive during the 80s. However, the rapid growth in economy inevitably entailed the further contradictions between the public expectation for democracy and a military-based government. In other words, “the regime of statist mobilization and authoritarian integration in the anticommunist regimented social contexts was then confronted with a crisis of democratization” (Cho, 2000, p 413). Especially after the assassination of the president Park in 1979, there was huge public expectation for a democratic government. Contrary to such an anticipation, the leader of the army took over the presidency again through a coup in 1980, and set up another authoritarian government in 1981. Nevertheless, this authoritarian government could not hold or manage people in a similarly oppressive way. The industrialization and economic development enabled people to perceive their inequalities and political situation more clearly and easily. The opposition alliance had begun to crystallize in the 1970s, and developed into a more organized form in the 80s; namely, an oppositional alliance developed to engage in strategic interactions (ibid, p 414).

KBL was given birth to in such a context in 1982. I am not going to insist that the launching of KBL was done only as a political strategy of the authoritarian government. Rather, KLB was one of many cultural devices such as commercial TV networks and the deregulation of publications which the government employed in order to manage a hegemonic ideology. In relation to economic and political circumstances, I want to emphasize two implications within the beginning of KBL in 1982: One is that the birth of KBL corresponded to the economic growth and public desire for more leisure, and the other

is that the launching process of KBL was initiated and organized by the government.

First, launching KBL was not only an indicator of the economic development in the 80s but also a reflection of the public need for recreation and cultural activities. The statistical indices suggest that not only average income but also the ratio of recreation and cultural expenditure had increased by far during the 80s. At the same time, people could spend more time on leisure activities. Although it is not easy to insist that the beginning of KBL was the direct outcomes of the increases in recreation and leisure, nor vice versa, it might be still true that each would affect the other in a positive way. Moreover, KBL provided an outlet through which people could relax and unleash their stresses of everyday life. It was true that the overall mood of Korean society in the early 80s was still overshadowed by oppressive and production-driven ways. Therefore, it was not easy for people to find appropriate activities during rest hours: there were only three channels available on network TV and other cultural areas were not nurtured enough. KBL became successful not only because it filled up the airtime on TV during the evening but also because it appealed to people by representing the life of modernization and affluence.

Second, the procedure of launching KBL was orchestrated and directed by the government. As mentioned before, the government deployed different cultural strategies to compensate for its essentially authoritarian and military-based ways. Moreover, it was alleged that President Jeon was an excellent athlete as well as huge sports fan, and therefore, he actively participated in sporting events<sup>5</sup>. The government deployed a slogan of “the prosperity of nation through sports” as one of its important policies, and at the same time, erected The Division of Sports in the governmental organization (Kim, 2000)<sup>6</sup>, which usually administrated international sporting events and supported elite sports<sup>7</sup>. The ratio of the budget for sports to annual budget increased to 0.20% in 1983 and to 0.35% in 1985 whereas it was less than 0.10% in the 70s. Particularly in the process of launching KBL, there were several points from which we can assume the position of the government. The system of KBL was the outcome of a compromising between MLB and Japanese Baseball League: in other words, each team in KBL was based on its region and at the same time, was sponsored by major corporations. It is assumed that the government actively intervened in determining which corporations would participate and where they based their teams<sup>8</sup> because there were close and symbiotic relationships between the government and corporations under interventionist and production-driven economy policies. More evidence is that the first commissioner of the Korean Baseball Organization was a former politician, Jongchul Seo, who served as a secretary of national defense<sup>9</sup>.

It could be concluded that KBL was launched at an appropriate time in terms of the economic situation that allowed people to be ready to enjoy more recreational events. At the same time, such a

process was initiated and controlled by the government. In this sense, I want to insist that KBL was one of the building blocks which helped construct the ideological and cultural tone of the 80s, and consequently, KBL contributed to building a governmental rationality.

## **2-1 Governmental Rationality around the Launching of KBL**

It is also necessary to understand the particular features of government rationality in relation to KBL in the 80s. I categorize the nature of the government rationality into three parts: Diversion from politics, governing of conduct, and state-nationalism.

First, KBL contributed to diverting the attention of people from politics. Basically, baseball was an entertainment, which plays a key role in switching public interest from political issues, and KBL functioned in a similar but more nuanced way. KBL made use of and intensified the inner struggles, i.e., the regional rivalries. Similar to other leagues, KBL was a franchise system, in which each team is based in a regional city or province. However, such a franchise system as KBL was much stronger because each team consisted mostly of local players, coaches and a regional-based corporation was assigned as a general manager<sup>10</sup> Especially, a rivalry between the southeastern area (Yongnam) and the southwestern area (Honam), in which the political and economic privileges of east over west were historically repeated, was strengthened and exacerbated. Such an inner conflict partly resulted in diminishing the discussion not only about the oppressive control, but also about the legitimacy of the government which had been obtained through the coup. My intention is not to insist that KBL played a magical role in changing public interest from the political issues to sports or entertainment. Rather, KBL contributed to constructing a governmental rationality by orienting public interests toward leisure activity and toward regional and narrow conflicts which did not threaten the legitimacy of the government.

Second, the way of utilizing KBL was closely related to governing conduct and to imposing standard rules on everyday lives. Such a pedagogic purpose was obvious in its motto, “Dream for the Kids, Bright and Sound Leisure for People” (KBO). KBL became a useful instrument in educating youths and in orienting people toward rationalized ways of leisure (Elias and Dunning, 1993)<sup>11</sup>. The intention for governing conduct were well represented in specific, even ridiculous rules<sup>12</sup>; for example, KBL games cannot last more than thirteenth innings, more than four hours or later than 10:30 pm. In any case, these games were ruled as no-decision. Such rules were enforced partly because there were concerns for possible mishaps or violence at night, but they had further implications in that such rules

tried to determine when the games should be over, and when people should be at home. At the same time, the education department prohibited elementary students from wearing sports team clothes at school in order to lessen the fervor of KBL among young students (Chosun, 08/21/1983). At the same time, some major newspaper helped with building such governing rationality by paying attention to moral issues and educational concerns. For example, a newspaper showed concern that too often schedules of broadcasting KBL would cause harmful effects on kids and their education (Chosun, 08/24/1981). Similarly, newspapers severely criticized the violence by players during the games and complimented the mental power and moral strength of the players (Chosun, 06/02/1983 & 08/24/1092). Preferable conduct and imposed standard rules also contributed to constructing the ideas of what should be the norm, and in turn, such common senses about the norm caused the disciplining processes about conduct and standard rules.

Third, the ways of introducing and organizing KBL directly and indirectly contributed to constituting state-nationalism. Contrary to other international sporting events such as the Olympics, KBL was not obviously utilized to encourage national confidence and prove national competitiveness. Nevertheless, it is also true that the government played a key role in the process of launching KBL and tried to orient or to unite people into a similar interest. Such procedures inevitably highlighted the roles of the government and helped to construct a common idea in which the nation-state was located in the center. Moreover, the government tried to represent the creation of KBL as the symbol of the national entrance into the ranks of developed countries and to emphasize it as the outcome of the national economic development.

Launching KBL in the 80s was not only the reflection of the economic development but was also a politically driven outcome. The government tried to utilize KBL as a governing tool by diverting public interest into non-political issues, by governing conduct and by encouraging state-nationalism<sup>13</sup>. Such an analysis will be useful to understanding the historical contexts of governmental intervention in sports areas in the 80s as well as to differentiating the different types of governmental rationalities between the 80s and the 90s in relation to sporting events.

### **3. The IMF Intervention and the Sensational Popularity of MLB in the late 90s**

KBL had successfully become the most popular sports league in South Korea and the number of its spectators continuously increased to about 5.4 millions in 1995. However, the number of spectators plunged from 4.4 million in 1997 to 2.6 million in 1998. Although there was a small increase in 1998,

the number of spectators stayed around 2.5-2.9 millions after 2000<sup>14</sup>. There might be several reasons to explain such decreasing interest in KBL, but many pointed out the sensational popularity of MLB in South Korea and the export of very young talented players into MLB as the major causes<sup>15</sup>. What is important and interesting to me is that such changes in public interest from KBL to MBL overlapped with the IMF intervention in 1997-2000. Before delving into the political implications of soaring popularity of MLB in the late 90s, I am going to examine the implications of IMF intervention in relation to nationalistic sentiments and the status of the nation-state, and to lay out a short chronology of MLB popularity in South Korea.

The IMF intervention, which was caused by a shortage of monetary foreign funds, began in November 1997, and the government declared the end of the IMF intervention in August 2000. Apparently, such a crisis was initiated for economic reasons and the IMF provided its own diagnoses and measures mainly for adjusting the Korean economic infrastructure to global standards. Nevertheless, the interpretation of the crises “did not solely represent economic interests of social classes”, but, rather, “they reflected the ideological configuration of each social force, including cultural and political ideologies” (Shin, 2000, p 427). Especially, such economic crises made people rethink about the notions of nation-state and national development. With the myth of economic growth during the 70s and the 80s, the discourse of national development was an effective ideology for suppressing different opinions and groups and for uniting people into one goal, “Let us live well like others” (Kang, 2000, p 443). Koreans rarely doubted that their nation continued to increase not only its national wealth but also their individual incomes. However, the IMF intervention between 1997-2000 introduced fundamental changes in such a national myth. People began to recognize the negative sides behind economic success, and to raise doubts about the discourse of national development. Bureaucratic governments, the liaisons between governments and companies, and family-owned corporations, which were once the symbols of the economic miracle, turned out to be serious obstacles to further development and global competition. Many people, who had accepted the discourse of national development, did not take policies and announcements from the governments at face value. After escaping the IMF intervention in 2000, many people still suffered from job losses, early retirements and financial debts although South Korea could bounce back from the economic recession on a national level. Many people no longer identified national development with their individual well-being, and did not accept national discourse as an imperative or moral order.

Coincidentally or not, a Korean baseball player, Chan-ho Park, in MLB began to gain attention in 1996, who was originally recruited by L.A. Dodgers in 1994 and spent a couple of years in the minor

leagues. Then, he was named as one of the best MLB pitchers in 1997, and continued to play well until 2000<sup>16</sup>. In 1996, national public networks began to broadcast all the games in which he played as a starting pitcher, and to report his performance and interviews not only in the sports news but also in the main news<sup>17</sup>. This implied that Korean media, including networks and newspapers, dealt with his performance not only as sporting games but also as public events and regarded him a public figure as well as a baseball player. Even before the IMF intervention, his play in MLB attracted huge attention and popularity. Some Koreans showed off their recent affluence by traveling to L.A. to watch the Korean player in person, and such tours appeared to replicate the economic success of South Korea. Before the IMF intervention, in this sense, his performance was identified easily with the glorious accomplishment in the national economy. After the beginning of the IMF intervention, MLB continued to increase its popularity with Park's great performances. Such popularity of MLB could be exemplified by the soaring fees for broadcasting rights of MLB. The fee was only \$0.3 million in 1997, but it was increased to \$1 million in 1998, \$1.5 million in 1999 and \$3 million in 2000. Finally, it was alleged that MBC, a national network, contracted a deal of paying \$ 7 million per year from 2001 to 2004 (Kookmin-Ilbo, 11/18/2000). After the IMF intervention, his winnings in MLB were represented as national competitiveness in a global competition, and seemed to imply that South Korea and Koreans could overcome the national crisis.

Although Park was hailed as a national hero, there were inevitable contradictions between his persona as a national hero and the original nature of MLB as a global commodity. Whatever images of him were represented in Korean media, it is true that he played baseball more for himself and for his teams rather than for the nation-state, i.e., South Korea. Contrary to the Olympics and the World Cup, MLB is one of the American sports leagues. However, MLB as a global sports commodity contained nationalistic aspects during the processes of consuming MLB in South Korea in the late 90s. Such a contradictory dimension indicates that the consumption of MLB in South Korea neither induced mere Americanization or homogenization, nor even blurred the national boundaries. Rather, it reminds us that the role of nation-state is still a crucial factor not only in importing such global commodities as MLB but also in representing them in a local context. Ultimately, such complicated and contradictory consumptions of MLB particularly during the IMF intervention make it imperative to pay attention to the role of nation-state as well as to its governmental rationality.

#### **4. Broadcasting MLB and Governmentality**

This section will investigate the relationship of broadcasting MLB to a governmental rationality, or governmentality in the late 90s in South Korea. Before analyzing the particular rationality, I want to clarify my position about this relationship; it is important to juxtapose broadcasting MLB with governmentality in a subtle and nuanced way, not in a unidirectional way. When I argue broadcasting MLB as a governmental instrument, I do not mean that broadcasting MLB was initiated merely as an outcome of political necessity. It is necessary to remember the short chronology of importing MLB in South Korea. In 1996 when MLB was introduced and broadcast, South Korea was at the highest point in its economic and political situation. Congress approved that South Korea would join the WTO in 1994, the president declared ‘globalization’ (Sekeoyhwa)<sup>18</sup> as a new policy principle in 1995 (Shin, 2000, p 430), and it was expected that the per capita GNP would be over \$10,000 in 1996. It seemed that South Korea would soon catch up or exceed the First World, and the U.S. In this sense, MLB was regarded as one among the many global areas in which Koreans could show off their excellence, and, many took for granted spending money on such special tours of watching Park and MLB games in L.A. areas. Soon, MLB was treated more as cultural issues rather than as national and political concerns.

It is fair to say that the discourse around Park and MLB emphasized more the nationalistic aspects and political implications after the beginning of the IMF intervention. Nevertheless, we should not end up with the careless conclusion that such nationalistic and political applications of broadcasting MLB were necessary or even inevitable consequences of the IMF intervention. No one can predict whether broadcasting MLB was useful to the government in the national crisis. At the same time, it was not guaranteed that broadcasting MLB functioned as a useful and effective tool for a nationalistic and political ideology. Rather, I understand the nationalistic discourses and the political uses of broadcasting MLB as a conjunctural formation<sup>19</sup>, which means that such outcomes were neither coincidental nor inevitable, but rather, broadcasting MLB and its political applications had proved its efficiency through hegemonic struggles among other cultural instruments. It also implies that the government and its alliances, i.e. MNCs, exerted their best effort to make such discourse around MLB common sense among Koreans. I am going to analyze the governmental rationality through broadcasting MLB in the late 90s, and try to suggest its consequences. For those purposes, I will investigate three parts: the roles of the nation-state and the government, the specific governmental rationality, and individual-nationalism as the consequence.

#### **4-1. The Roles of the Government in Broadcasting MLB**

First, the nation-state played a key role not only in broadcasting MLB but also in making use of MLB as a governmental instrument<sup>20</sup>. It might sound contradictory that the nation-state or the government of South Korea was actively importing such a global sports commodity as MLB into their national networks. At the same time, the nation-state appears unrelated to the process of broadcasting MLB because such a decision will be made by the principle of free trade in a global market. Nevertheless, there were several indications that the nation-state was a crucial agent in this process.

First of all, the networks, which are either owned directly by the government or public operated with subsidies, were actively participating in broadcasting MLB. KBS (Korean Broadcasting Station), which is a national public network and owned by the government, became a pioneer in broadcasting MLB into the houses of South Korea in 1996. KBS began to broadcast every game in which Park played as a starting pitcher. Such a decision of broadcasting MLB and his games would be more than a speculation because no one expected Park to play well at that moment<sup>21</sup> and therefore, it was possible for KBS to face blame for importing global sports and for wasting foreign currency<sup>22</sup>. After the huge success of Park's performance and of KBS with broadcasting MLB in 1997, the rights for broadcasting MLB was obtained by i-TV, a provincial and commercial network<sup>23</sup>. Other major networks, including KBS, MBC, made a tacit consent not to bid highly for broadcasting rights of MLB, and such consent was made not for economic reason but for ethical reasons or public opinion. After the three-year contract with i-TV, the right was purchased by MBC, a public national network which is operated with subsidies. The high bid by MBC was highly criticized not only because MBC broke another tacit consent among other networks but also because MBC overpaid for the rights.

These changes in the broadcasting right for MLB shed light on the degree of the government's intervention<sup>24</sup>; the government began to broadcast MLB, and then, it had to give up the broadcasting right because to spend public money on broadcasting MLB might be criticized for wasting valuable foreign currency in the IMF crisis. However, the government was involved indirectly in purchasing the rights back by paying more than the market value for them. Even when i-TV owned the broadcasting rights, however, the government was still participating in broadcasting MLB. The public networks, e.g., KBS and MBC reported the game results and Park's performance in detail in the main news as well as in the sports news. As mentioned before, those media represented him as a public figure and national hero more than a baseball player, and described his performance as national competence and as the symbol of overcoming the national crises<sup>25</sup>. Those news programs were busy making another myth around Park in MLB and with relating it to a political purpose, i.e., giving hope to people in whatever sense given the gloomy and pessimistic mood during the IMF intervention.

In this vein, it can be concluded that the nation-state played a key role not only in broadcasting MLB directly and indirectly but also in constituting nationalistic discourse around it. At the same time, it is important to differentiate the role of the government in broadcasting MLB in the late 90s from that of launching KBL in the 80s. The governments were involved and intervened in different ways although both actively made use of sporting events for political purposes. In the 80s, on the one hand, the government was an executive producer in launching KBL; in other words, the government had driven and controlled the policies in KBL. For example, the first commissioner of KBO was a politician, and the president threw the first ball in the opening game. Some large corporations participated in their franchise baseball teams irrespective of their intention because of their close relationship with and dependence on the government. The government also could control the broadcasting schedule of games because it merged and abolished some media companies and put all the networks under its control. On the other hand, the government in the late 90s was more or less indirectly involved in broadcasting MLB. The government participated in this process by two ways: by providing public networks a subsidy and by developing nationalistic discourse around the Korean players in MLB. The decision to purchase the rights to broadcast MLB was made more for economic causes although it is not sure whether the government forced the public networks to purchase it. The nationalistic discourse in the news reports encouraged Koreans to pay attention to and to have interest in MLB. In this sense, the government in the late 90s was more concerned with coordinating the whole processes rather than with directing and controlling them<sup>26</sup>. Such different roles of governments between the 80s and the late 90s were useful for understanding specific modes of governmental rationality in the late 90s<sup>27</sup>.

#### **4-2. Governmental Rationality around Broadcasting MLB in the Late 90s**

Then, how did broadcasting MBL contribute to constituting a specific governmental rationality in the late 90s and how could the governmental rationality be characterized? It is necessary to remember the Korea's situation after the IMF intervention. As mentioned before, the crises were not only about the economy but also about national development as a hegemonic ideology. Consequently, "the crisis of discourse strongly demands the formation of a new hegemonic discourse specific to the Korean experience during the economic crisis" (Shin, 2000, p 428). In this vein, I am going to insist that the discourse of national development was replaced with a new set of governmental rationalities, which functioned as a new hegemonic discourse and ultimately, contributed to maintaining the existing hierarchical structures and to sustaining profitability of the dominant groups. I will characterize this new

governmental rationality as the technologies of self rather than as discipline and categorize the details into three categories: legitimating global competition, emphasis on responsible individuals, and the birth of a new kind of citizen.

Before examining the details of each category, I will clarify my use of the notion of governmentality as the technologies of self. Generally, governmental rationality or governmentality<sup>28</sup> “refers to the arts and rationalities of governing, where the conduct of conduct is the key activity” (Bratich et al., p 4). Although the notion of governmentality had been utilized since the eighteenth century with the birth of modern nation-state and colonial power (Scott, 1999)<sup>29</sup>, governmental studies “emerged in the 1990s as a powerful new approach to rethinking politics, the social and power” (Bratich et al. 2003, p 4)<sup>30</sup>. In other words, it is possible to apply the notion of governmentality to more traditional governing tools such as disciplining and sovereignty, but, regarding governmentality in the late 90s, the notion of governmentality as technologies of self is more useful for understanding the ways of the production of subjectivity, which are ways of developing knowledge of oneself (Maguire, 2002). Governmentality as technologies of self functions through making bodies of knowledge, belief and opinions to be taken for granted rather than through forcing certain constraints and disciplines<sup>31</sup>. Therefore, by the governmentality as the technologies of self, I mean the processes by which the state is more interested in the various means by which individual beliefs and actions are directed toward specific ends. In their relation to broadcasting MLB<sup>32</sup>, it will be helpful to review the comparisons of the roles of government between the 80s and the late 90s. The government in the late 90s worked in more indirect ways and tried to boost nationalist discourses around broadcasting MLB rather than controlling and driving the whole processes. Another benefit is that the governmentality as technologies of self is not reducible to social control: it always involves a compromise between regulation and autonomy (Maguire, 2002). As a result, the outcome of governmentality is neither inevitable nor unidirectional; therefore, I can consider unstable or unruly subjects, i.e., a possibility of “a determinate indeterminacy”<sup>33</sup>.

After understanding the governmental rationality of broadcasting as technologies of self, I will elaborate its specific rationality. First, the governmental rationality in the late 90s was characterized by legitimizing global competition in a principle of free market and freedom of choice<sup>34</sup>. The IMF intervention forced the renovation of the economic infrastructure in order to keep up with global standards, and consequently, it became necessary to make global competition legitimate and normal. The introduction of MLB into South Korea and broadcasting the images of the Korean player played a crucial role in this. Moreover, his performance during 1997-2000 was excellent enough to give an

implicit and explicit impression that any Korean can be successful within such a global competition. Broadcasting MLB contributed to taking such global competition for granted without raising questions about fair competition and structural inequality. Consequently, it helped to constitute a new hegemonic ideology during the IMF intervention.

Second, the governmentality emphasizes the roles of responsible individuals rather than that of the society or the government. For decades, the government used to stress individual sacrifices for the national interests, and such rhetoric had been useful with oppressing different ideas and groups as well as proved efficiencies by economic progress. However, the government revealed its incompetence and powerlessness when the IMF tried to enforce structural readjustment in South Korea and millions of people were laid off. The governmental rationality needed to promote the roles of individuals who are responsible for their own well-being<sup>35</sup>. The figure of Korean players in MLB was the best example which represented the responsible individuals. The new hegemonic ideology unloaded the burden of social welfare from the government through making the concept of responsible individuals common sensical and even moral.

Third, the governmentality constituted a new kind of citizen in a global era. What was particular about the governmental rationality was that the emphasis on the responsible individuals still worked within nationalistic discourses<sup>36</sup>. Contrary to rationalities in neo-liberalism of other countries, nationalistic discourses defined the relationship between the individual and the society or the government, and consequently, invented a particular type of citizen in South Korea. Nevertheless, this nationalistic notion of citizen was not contradictory to the emphasis on the individuals because it stressed the roles of individuals who were responsible for the national competence and national development. The governmental rationality was imbued with the rooted nationalism in South Korea and it could be more successfully substituted for the previous ideology.

#### **4-3. Individual-Nationalism: The Consequences of the Governmentality in the Late 90s**

I characterized the governmentality in the late 90s as the technologies of self, and summarized its specific rationalities as three categories: legitimating global competition, emphasis on responsible individuals, and the birth of new kind of citizens. Then, following questions occurred to me: What are the consequences or outcomes of this governmental rationality? Put simply, could such governmentality successfully construct corresponding subjectivities? I will examine theoretical understanding about such questions and draw a tentative conclusion based on several observations.

One of the critiques of governmental study is that its diagnosis is too pessimistic and then, it does not leave any other exit other than being caught in such a governmental rationality and social system. Therefore, many studies based on the notion of governmentality tend to assume that the subjective agents would be directly affected by governmental rationality and their subjectivities also would be its direct outcomes. Although such seemingly inherent pessimism stems from its original ideas by Foucault, however, such a pessimistic dimension is not all about governmentality and its consequences. With a premise that Foucault employs neither a simplistic functionalism nor a pessimistic determinism, Maguire argues that “the knowledge, institutions and power relations do not determine the form of our subjectivity” (2002, p 303).<sup>37</sup> Contrary to technologies of domination, technologies of self are “not reducible to social control: they always involve a compromise between regulation and autonomy” (ibid, p 304). Similarly, Miller considers “unruly subjects seeking to reform themselves” while he supposes that the outcome of producing loyal citizens in the cultural-capitalist policy is not inevitable or unidirectional (1993, p ix). Both emphasize the fundamental instability of governmentality, unstable subject, an ethical incompleteness, and consequently, argue that the outcomes of governmentality cannot be guaranteed.

Similarly, I will argue an indeterminacy of the governmental rationality in the late 90s in South Korea; namely, there is no reason to assume that all the subjectivities became the direct outcomes of the governmentality. In other words, all Koreans are not expected to adopt the logic of global competition, to take up their position as responsible individuals and to identify themselves as citizens who should represent the nation-state and contribute to its development. Such an indeterminacy was possible in this context particularly for two reasons. One is that Koreans experienced the deconstruction of a national myth during the IMF intervention. Some of them showed their cynicism toward nationalistic descriptions about Park in MLB because they knew that his great performance could not help their economic situation. Some of them no longer accepted the nationalistic discourses about him because they could penetrate the gaps between their own well-being and the national images on TV. The other is the contradictory relationship between the natures of MLB as global commodity and its more inherently nationalistic aspect. There were a lot of variation in the reasons why people got to have interest in MLB. Some had interest in MLB just because a Korean player appeared in MLB and his great performance provided them with nationalistic sentiment and confidence. However, some others liked MLB because they could enjoy the best players and play, and they sometimes despised the first groups for they had shallow interest in MLB. Even others showed some hatred to the Korean player because Korean media gave false ideas about MLB by overestimating him and they always focused on him.

In this sense, it can be concluded that the governmental rationality could not complete its mission; namely, it could not control or manage the subjectivities completely. However, I do not mean that it totally failed; then, the governmental rationality around broadcasting MLB could not replace the myth of the national development as a hegemonic ideology. Rather, I will argue that the governmental rationality resulted in individual-nationalism<sup>38</sup>, by which I mean that most Koreans were still deeply involved with the nationalistic discourse but they responded to it in different and diverse ways. In this sense, individual-nationalism as the consequence of the governmental rationality can be interpreted into two levels. On the one hand, individual-nationalism can be understood as a way of interpellating individuals who should be responsible for the national wealth and represent the nation rather than of asking them to sacrifice their own interests for the collective, national ones. On the other hand, individual-nationalism implies that people are able to respond in different, diverse and even oppositional ways to nationalistic governmentality. People could constitute their relationships to the nation-state not by the enforcement of the government but by their individual preferences. This kind of relationships could not be same with the previous relationship of Koreans to the nation-state because their perspectives about the nation-state as well as the world had been transformed through experiencing the IMF intervention and through enjoying global commodities and their entailed cultural ideas.

## **5. Conclusion**

I have investigated governmental rationalities within the complicated relationships between the nation-state and the global sports commodity through examining the concrete contexts of broadcasting MLB in South Korea. For that purpose, I began with illustrating the particular features of a government rationality within the process of launching KBL in the 80s. The government tried to utilize KBL as a governing tool by diverting public interest into non-political issues, by governing conduct and by encouraging state-nationalism. However, MLB had become one of the favorite sports leagues in South Korea during the IMF intervention. Such a sensational popularity of MLB makes it imperative to examine the role of nation-state as well as its governmental rationality in a global era. Hence, I have investigated a governmental rationality in the late 90s in South Korea in three parts: the roles of the nation-state and the government, the specific governmental rationality, and individual-nationalism as the consequence. First, the nation-state played a key role not only in broadcasting MLB but also in making use of MLB as a governmental instrument. While the government in the 80s was an executive producer in launching KBL, the government in the late 90s was a coordinator of the processes of broadcasting

MLB. I also characterize this new governmental rationality as the technologies of self rather than as discipline and illustrate the specific details into three categories: legitimating global competition, emphasis on responsible individuals, and the birth of a new kind of citizens. Nevertheless, there is no reason to assume that all the subjectivities became the direct outcomes of the governmentality. Rather than arguing either total failure or success of the governmentality in the 90s, I have argued that the governmental rationality resulted in individual-nationalism by which I mean that most Koreans were still deeply involved with nationalistic discourse but they responded to it in different and diverse ways.

From this analysis about governmental rationalities within launching KBL and broadcasting MLB, I want to elicit two further implications: one is imperativeness of such governmentality studies and the other is possibility of alternative diagnosis of identities in a global era. First, it is necessary and useful to apply such governmentality studies to understanding the changes of power structures and dominations caused by global flows because an analysis of governmentality “allows us to understand how it is what we govern ourselves and others” (Maguire, 2002, p 309)<sup>39</sup>. As examined, an analysis of governmentality in the late 90s allows us to recognize the process in which broadcasting MLB functioned as a governmental tool by encouraging global competition, free market and responsible individuals. Moreover, an analysis of governmentality “allows to reveal domination as a contingent, historical product, that hence to be questioned” (Dean, 1999, p 38). Once we began to unearth the implied or hidden governmental rationality around broadcasting MLB, we also begin to penetrate the contradictory natures of the nationalistic discourses about American/Global sports commodity. Then, “by making these techniques and tactics intelligible, we can make them amenable to strategies of contestation.” (Bratich et al. 2003, p 19)<sup>40</sup>. Many studies theorizing resistance and opposition tend to end up with a romanticized or naïve solution without delving into the dominating structures. I believe that we can figure out alternative strategies of resistance with as much effort as understanding what is going on with the situations. An analysis of governmentality provides a useful tool for examining the complicated the ways in which power exerts itself and the dominant groups make their alliances.

Second, this study allows me another diagnosis in interpreting the issue of identities in a global era. While many studies based on postcolonialism have provided theoretical terms such as hybridity, diaspora, and cosmopolitanism in order to understand the transformation of identities in a global era, their theories can explain only part of the whole issue of identity in globalization. They often made the mistake of generalizing the identities issues and consequently, of flattening the diverse phenomena into one-dimensional explanation. It becomes more necessary to pay attention to different types of global experiences because “for the majority, the cultural experience of globalization is not a matter of physical

mobility, but in staying at home (Tomlinson, 1999, p150)”. As I examined, the consumption of U.S. sports in South Korea doesn’t blur the national boundaries and national identities, and is less likely to encourage hybrid, diasporic and cosmopolitan identities. Rather, broadcasting MLB and its governmental rationality still made use of nationalistic discourses around the Korean player in MLB. However, I have argued an indeterminacy of governmentality in the late 90s and suggested individual-nationalism as its consequence. Although the term individual-nationalism needs elaboration and field research, such an analysis of governmentality provides us with another useful diagnosis about the transformation of identities in globalization. Following Appadurai, I want to insist that South Korea is “not to be read as a mere case” because “it is a site for the examination of how locality emerges in a globalizing world, of how colonial processes underwrite contemporary politics, of how history and genealogy inflect one another, and of how global facts take local form” (1996, p 18).

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- 1 The information about average income per person comes from the Stats of Korean National Bank (1999), and from The Social Index of Korea (2000).
- 2 The ration of cultural and creational part comes from The Social Index of Korea (2000).
- 3 The information about the leisure hour comes from National Livelihood Hours (1981-1995).
- 4 The ratio of TV per family comes from Sociology of Leisure and The Social Index of Korea (2000).
- 5 Jeon, the president at that time, threw the opening ball in the opening game in KBL ([www.koreabaseball.or.kr](http://www.koreabaseball.or.kr)).
- 6 Before 1982, the division of sports was under the division of Edu-Administration. It means that the government began to invest more energy on sports realm such as Professional leagues, Asian Games, and the Olympics. After 1993, the division of sports was merged with the division of culture, and then, the division of Culture and Sports administrated sporting events (Kim, 2000).
- 7 Elite sports refer to some professional athletes who are usually trained for the goals such as gold medals in the Olympics.
- 8 For that reason, each franchise and its sponsor still suffered from economic loss although some emphasize the indirect economic benefit. However, such a dilemma was expected from its inception.
- 9 This tradition had continued until mid 90s: in other words, the government assigned the commissioners among the previous politicians. The first commissioner, Park Yongoo, from non-politician background, was possible in the mid 90s.
- 10 Draft system represented such strong franchise system. Each team can draft a player only from their local province; in other words, players are assigned based on their local bases.
- 11 The Process of rationalizing leisure is well explained by Elias and Dunning (1993). They insist that sports can be regarded as the outcomes of the civilization process and, consequently, they conclude that sports became obvious and figured during the modernized process in the 18th and 19th centuries
- 12 Those rules doesn't change this year in spite of huge criticism from fans. In the final championship series in 2004, three games were called non-decisions.
- 13 Many theorists agreed that Korean nationalism had been close to the tradition of organic statism (Choi,

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- 1995), to state-nationalism (Yoon, 2000), and had fascist elements (Kim, 1999).
- 14 The numbers of spectators come from the official site of KBL, i.e., [www.koreabaseball.or.kr](http://www.koreabaseball.or.kr).
- 15 The decrease of the spectators in 1998-2000 might be explained by the economic crises among most Koreans during the IMF intervention. However, the small number of spectators after 2001 could not be explained only by such economic reasons.
- 16 In 2000, Park got a right of free agent and moved to Texas Rangers with \$ 65 million deal for 5 years. Ironically, he had suffered from injury since 2000 and haven't play as well as the period in LA Dodgers.
- 17 It is necessary to understand the roles of the evening news, which broadcast between 9-10 pm in both national networks. The evening news consists of the main news and the sports news; the main news usually dealt with social, public issue. In this sense, we can understand why the news about Park began to broadcast in the main news.
- 18 The term 'globalization' was used to express the national pride of successful economic growth, so the government more often used term 'Sekeoyhwa' (Shin, 2000).
- 19 I agree with the concern that if the discussion of governmentality neglects the relation to the state, "governmentality loses all specificity" (Grossberg, 2003, quoted in Packer, p 32). Grossberg adds that governmentality is "specific to particular conjunctual formation" (ibid, p 37).
- 20 Miller argues that "the state needs to produce a sense of oneness" "when political system are under question by new social movements and the internationalization of cultures and economics" (1993, xii).
- 21 Although Park debuted in MLB in 1994, he degraded to the minor league and spent two years there. Park began to play as a regular starting pitcher in 1996, and therefore, such brilliant plays were not easily expected.
- 22 Although MLB began to be popular since 1996, broadcasting MLB could not guarantee the economic profit partly because the time zones were so different. Usually, MLB games broadcast in dawn or in the morning. Moreover, it was extremely difficult to spend the foreign currency for sports when the IMF intervention just began.
- 23 Contrary to other national networks such as KBS and MBC, i-TV covers only Kyounginn province, which includes Incheon city, Seoul and their suburban areas. No one expected i-TV purchased the right of broadcasting MLB in 1998.
- 24 According to Dean, the state in neo-liberalism "acts as a neutralized and neutralizing referee" and the nation state "on less a directive and distributive role, and more a coordinate, arbitrary and preventive one" (1999, p 171).
- 25 According to Miller et al., "the sporting body bears triumphalist national mythologies in a double way, extending the body to encompass the nation and compressing it to obscure the social divisions" (2000, p 31).
- 26 Bratich et al. argue that "governmentality is an analytic perspective that defines the state's role as one of coordination" (2003, p5).
- 27 According to Dean (1999), Foucault's work of "government as the conduct of conduct" is characterized by "its concreteness; its concerns are problem-centred and present-oriented."
- 28 According to Maguire, "governmentality refers to mentality or way of thinking about the administration of society" (2002, p 307). Meanwhile, Dean explains that the term 'governmentality' deals with "how we think about governing," and it is a "matter of bodies of knowledge, belief and opinion in which are were immersed" (1999, p 16).
- 29 The form of political rationality, one, totalizing and centralizing, the other individualizing and normalizing, is governmental rationality or governmentality. The first threshold is mercantilism. (Scott, 1999)
- 30 Dean also mentions that "by the 1990s, governmentality was a concept whose time arrived with the changing status of liberal government and the recession of welfare state ideal" (1999, p 1).
- 31 Miller similarly mentions that "government from on high is being displaced by governance of the self" (1993, xx). He adds that "self-governance as a set of technologies comes to displace the management of population by material intervention" (ibid., xxi).

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- 32 In relation of the reform of the self, Bennet points out that culture was “fashioned as a vehicle for the exercise of new form of power,” and was “targeted as an object of government” (1995, 18-19).
- 33 The term “a determinate indeterminacy” comes from Miller’s ideas (1993).
- 34 Dean argues that “all variants of neo-liberalism essentialize market” and they try to “reconfigure formerly public provision as markets in services and expertise”a with the favor of ‘customer-focused freedom’ (1999, p 159; p 154).
- 35 Such a governmental rationality as responsible individuals has been common to the governmentality in the neo-liberalism. Maguire points out that “in a neo-liberal style of government, the burden of responsibility for social order falls more on the shoulders of individuals, so too does the responsibility for one’s own improvement, competitiveness and optimization” (2002, p 307).
- 36 Such an aspect is enabled partly because in Korea “national discourse remained extremely state-centered” (Calhoun, 1997).
- 37 Contrary to the notion of technologies of self, technologies of domination assumes the modes of knowledge production and organization that “determine the conduct of individuals and submit them to certain ends or domination, an objectivizing of the subject” (Maguire, 2002, p 299).
- 38 In the analysis of nationalistic narratives during the UPS strike in 1996, Kumar suggests “labor nationalism” as an alternative scenario, which “projected the interests of labor onto the nation” (2004, p 19). The notion of labor nationalism might be paralleled with my notion of individual-nationalism. The notion of labor nationalism is discussed in detail in the chapter three of her forthcoming book. I appreciate to Kumar to give me a chance of reading her book in advance.
- 39 Dean similarly points out that an analysis of government is a “study of the organized practices through which we are governed” (1999, p 18).
- 40 Such research reveals “not only how our choices are influenced and constrained, but also enables us to demand new and different choices” (Maguire, 2002, p 309).