

# GENDER AND SOCIAL MOVEMENTS IN INDUSTRIALIZING KOREA

CLARK W. SORENSEN

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MODERN KOREAN SOCIETY

# SEUNGSOOK MOON'S GENDERED INTERPRETATION 2005

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- *Militarized Modernity and Gendered Citizenship in South Korea.* Duke University Press (2005)
- About the politics of membership in the modern Korean nation
  - Main point: the terms of membership in the modern South Korean nation are different for males and females because of the militarization of the modern South Korean state
  - Terms of membership means “rights and responsibilities” to the nation
  - Hypothesis that this membership in the nation influences all aspects of one’s life, and is not thus just a political footnote

# HAGEN KOO'S CLASS-BASED INTERPRETATION

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- “The State, Minjung, and the Working Class in South Korea”  
1993
  - Working class came to consciousness in the 1970s in the wake of Chun Tae-il’s immolation, and the repression of Yusin
    - Resentment of pejorative images of labor—kongsuni, kongdori
    - Demands for “humane treatment” (in’gandauin taeu)
- Minjung (alliance of excluded strata—intelligentsia, workers, farmers, small business) became the dominant mode of political struggle

# WHO ARE THE MINJUNG

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- The “masses” who are the center (agent) of Korean history (farmers, workers)
  - As opposed to the ruling class that exhibits “toadyism” (sadaejuŭi) of other cultures (China, Japan, US), the minjung are true Koreans with Korean subjectivity (chuch’e)
  - Minjung culture of the masses—masked dance drama, drumming groups, shamanisjm
  - Han—the resentment of oppression—and hanp’uri, the violence that releases this oppression

# WHAT IS MODERNITY?

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- “objective definition”—a list of cultural, technological, and institutional traits and values drawn from recent experience in the West (“modernization theory”)
- Moon’s definition—“an array of local and global claims, commitments and knowledge whose specific meanings are determined in the context of asymmetrical power relations among (national) societies and (intra-national) social groups”
- Not an ‘empty sign’ because history and power relations limit the meanings that may be assigned to “modernity”—but to Koreans it is something good, but also something that comes from abroad (more developed countries)
- Questions:
  - who imagines what constitutes modernity and under what sociopolitical conditions?
  - How are Western notions of modernity interpreted and reinvented by local actors?
  - To what extent is the modernity appropriated by the developmental state accepted, contested, or subverted by those mobilized in the name of modernity?

# GENDER AND MODERNITY FOR MOON

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- Notion of modernity combined with “hegemonic” notions of the proper place of females and males in nation
- CULTURAL HEGEMONY (Antonio Gramsci)—the moral and intellectual leadership through which dominant groups control society (often to the extent that members of society cannot conceive of alternatives)
- Hegemonic notions of gender:
  - Man = protector and provider (that requires men to engage in military service and be the primary labor force)
  - Woman = reproducer of children and daily life (marginalized as labor force, and assigned “birth control” and “rational management of the family” as their contribution to modernity)

# PROCEDURAL DEMOCRACY AND MASS MOBILIZATION

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- Mobilization
  - Originally meant “assembling and making troops and supplies ready for war”
  - Mass mobilization = gathering people for collective action through mass meetings, marches, parades, processions, demonstrations, the mass media, mass organizations and so forth
    - Often the participants in mass mobilization campaigns are willing, but they are followers rather than decision-makers
- Procedural democracy
  - Refers to the fact of having competitive elections and representative institutions
- Substantive democracy
  - Involves more than just democratic procedures—access to power, participation in decision-making, substantive equality and justice, etc.

# DEVELOPMENT AND ANDROCENTRIC NATIONALISM

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- the nation produced and protected by men, and the role of women is to reproduce the nation
- Initial South Korean state-led development involved mobilization of men for military service, and later for labor
- As demands for democratic participation increased in the 1980s, South Korea moved into a period in which new types of political membership appeared
  - from “dutiful nationals” (kungmin 국민) to “participating citizens” (simin 시민)
  - The college educated middle classes organized citizens groups (NGOs)
  - The workers used democratic unions
- This process can be seen through the development of universal male military service (국민개병제) into allowing conscripts to be used as workers or researchers after 1973 (HCI Industrialization)



# PARK ERA SLOGAN OF PROSPEROUS NATION AND STRONG ARMY

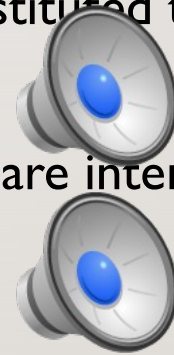
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- Puguk kangbyong 富國強兵
  - Slogan (like Yusin 維新 itself) from Meiji Restoration (J. fukoku kyōhei)
- Similarities to pre-war Japanese fascism
  - Authoritarian regime preparing for and waging war (i.e. South Korea confronting North Korea and communism)
  - Mass mobilization of the population through administered mass organizations AMOS
    - 반상회, 부인회, 어용노조, 주민등록, 새마을 지도자
  - Late comer's urgency to match advanced Western nations
    - colonization by Japan created even more urgency—modernize or be eaten by more powerful neighbors
  - post-colonial ambivalence
    - Want the technology and institutions of modernity
    - Worry about losing one's cultural essence

# MILITARIZED MODERNITY

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- South Korea an “anticommunist Self at war with a communist Other”
- The anticommunist body politic can be constituted through discipline and physical force
- Military service and the industrial economy are intertwined
- 진짜 사나이 한국군가
- 이등병의 편지 (JSA 2000 Kim Kwangsök)



# SURVEILLANCE

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- Residential registration (chumin tŭngnok) introduced in 1962 by SCNR
  - Each person given a unique number at birth that is used for military service, taxation, criminal investigation, and the provision of social services
  - From 1968 each person supposed to carry their National Registration Card with them at all times (so North Korean spies can be ferreted out)
  - This was the year of the North Korean commando raid on the Blue House
- Prevasive use of slogans 멸공방첩 (滅工防諜) smash communism, prevent spying)
- Lifestyle crimes (long hair, elaborate weddings)
- Administered mass organizations
  - 반상회 neighborhood meeting; öyong nojo (company-run unions), puin hoe, 4-H, Coop

# TREE WHERE NORTH KOREAN COMMANDOS STRUCK 1968



# PLAQUE NEXT TO TREE

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- **1.21 Situation Pine Tree**

- On January 21, 1968 Kim Sin-jo and 30 members of North Korea's 124<sup>th</sup> Regiment infiltrated with the goal of attacking the Blue House, and in front of today's Ch'öngun Silver Town (Ch'öngun-dong) after engaging with the police they fled into the Pugak Mountain and Inwang Mountain Areas. On this pine tree the scars of fifteen bullets remain from the violent engagement with our military and police, and since then this pine tree has been called the 1.21 Situation Pine Tree.
- The party of armed communists were perfectly familiar with the Blue House and neighboring facilities of that time, and carried out their provocation preparing carefully by wearing South Korean army uniforms and civilian clothes during their infiltration, and camouflaging themselves as drunks.
- After the January 21<sup>st</sup> engagement the results of 14 days of fighting were that of the 31 infiltrators one escaped, 29 were killed, and one was captured alive (Kim Sin-jo).
- On account of this incident the Home Reserve Army was established (April 1, 1968).

# NORMALIZATION OF ANTICOMMUNISM

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- Distinguish legitimate members of the nation-state from others (i.e. communists)
- Education
  - 반공도덕, 승공, 바른 생활, 국민윤리, 국사, 통일교육
  - School writing letters or sending gifts to soldiers 위문편지/품
- All out national security posture (총력안보), total solidarity (총화단결)
  - Monthly civil defense drills from 1971, 1975 Yulgok tax for modernization of the military
  - Thought conversion reinstated 1956, and thought criminals locked up

# MILITARIZED ECONOMY

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- Military service a requirement for many jobs thus indirectly reserving those jobs for men
- Military service was recognized as work experience, thus giving men seniority that led to better pay and faster promotions
- 1961-1999 the “military points system” gave veterans an advantage in certain kinds of tests and interviews
- Large corporations imbued with military practices (especially 1970s)
  - Rigid hierarchy based on rank
  - Command mode of one-way communication
  - Collective ethos
  - Even white collar workers given “endurance training”

# THE DECLINE OF MILITARIZED MODERNITY?

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- *Minjung* activists criticized militarized modernity in 1980s, without rejecting “modernity” entirely (wanted a more humane and just society)
- As “citizen’s movement”/citizen’s groups (시민단체) formed post-1987, class polarization arose between these and “people’s movement”(minjung) (민중운동)
  - Simin (rights bearing citizen) a new subjectivity for Korean dutiful nationals (kungmin)
- 1990s: changing attitudes towards North Korea, despite continued overall support for the National Security Law
- Civil society group membership still largely male-centric, middle-class
- Under militarized modernity: mass mobilization for state
- Under civil society: citizens monitor the state’s actions and negotiate



# FOUR MAJOR CIVIL SOCIETY ORGS

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- Korean Women's Associations United (KWAU)  
한국여성단체연합
- Citizens' Coalition for Economic Justice (CCEJ)  
경제정의실천시민연합
- Korean Federation for Environmental Movements (KFEM)  
환경운동연합
- People's Solidarity for Participatory Democracy (PSPD)  
참여연대

# THE TRAJECTORY OF MEN'S CITIZENSHIP

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- Military mobilization constrained citizenship, while economic mobilization enabled citizenship
- Military service creates hierarchy among men:
  - In the mid-1990s “the undereducated, felons, orphans, and ‘those of mixed blood’” were not allowed to serve
  - Middle-class men sometimes find ways out of regular military service, while lower-class men have trouble finding alternatives

# TWO PATHS TO “CITIZENSHIP” FOR MEN

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- For working class men, labor union movement
  - Fought against paternalistic *kongdori* (female equivalent: *kongsuni*) terminology
    - Name taken from popular song of the 1930s Kaptori and Kapsuni about two young villagers who fell in love but married other people because in those times it was forbidden for young people to express love before marriage (incident supposedly happened in 1870s)
  - Distinctions between *nodongja*, (worker) *kulloja* (laborer) and *sanöp yökkun* (industrial worker who is a pillar of development)
- For middle class men, citizen’s movement (civil society groups)
- 1970s- labor movement apart from democracy movement (people’s movement)
- 1980s- labor movement and democracy movement combined forces
- 1990s- class division between labor movement and citizens’ movement, which aims for more gradual institutional change

# THE 386 GENERATION

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- 삼팔육세대 三八六世代
- Generally—those born in the 1960s who were democratic political activists in the 1980s and 1990s
  - “people in their thirties, who went to college in the 1980s, and were born in the 1960s
- Supported Kim Daejung in 1997, and entered the government in large numbers under Rho Muhyun
- Younger people sometimes now think of them as has-been progressive elites, while conservatives think of them as “pinkos”