

MILITARIZED MODERNITY AND GENDERED CITIZENSHIP

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SEUNGSOOK MOON'S BOOK 2005

- ▶ *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

MODERNITY

- ▶ **IMPORTANT POINT**—the term “modern” (현대) or “modernity” (현대성) is a keyword in Korean culture
 - ▶ It is not just a descriptive term, but is considered something that is “good” and “necessary” for the survival of the Korean people
 - ▶ If you’re modern you are advanced, up-to-date, and not to be looked down upon, thus seeking modernity has been an important national goal
- ▶ **Kŭnse, kŭndae, hyŏndae** (近世, 近代, 現代) in Korean culture
 - ▶ In Korean discussion of European history, kŭnse (“near age”) is the Renaissance, Reformation, and Enlightenment, kŭndae (“near generation”) refers to the Industrial Revolution up to WWI, and hyŏndae (“present generation”) refers to after WWI
 - ▶ In Korean history kŭnse begins with the Chosŏn Dynasty (1392) and ends with the Opening of the Ports (kaehang 개항) in 1876, kŭndae goes from 1876 to 1945, and hyŏndae refers to the period after 1945

WHAT IS MODERNITY?

- ▶ “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 (intranational) social groups”
- ▶ Not an “empty sign” [that could mean anything] because history and power relations limit the meanings that may be assigned to “modernity”
- ▶ 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 who have been mobilized in the name of modernity?

GENDER AND MODERNITY

- ▶ Notion of modernity are combined in Korea 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 (this 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

▶ 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 (coproducers?) 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—democratic access to power, participation in decision-making, substantive equality and justice, etc.

MOON'S VIEW

- ▶ Initial South Korean state involved mobilization of men for military service, and later for labor (through 1987)
- ▶ 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
- ▶ The economic dimension of this process can be seen when universal male military service (국민개병제) was expanded after 1973 to allow conscripts to be used as workers or researchers

OLD SLOGANS

- ▶ Prosperous Nation, Strong Army—Puguk kangbyong 富國強兵
 - ▶ Slogan (like Yusin itself) from Meiji Restoration
- ▶ Moon points out 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)
 - ▶ 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

EASTERN WAY WESTERN MACHINES

- ▶ Tongdo sŏgi 東道西機
 - ▶ Attributed to Kim Yun-sik (1835-1922)
 - ▶ Accept Western technology (especially the military part), but reject democracy
 - ▶ Great Han Empire after 1897 under Kojong introduced electricity, street cars, telephone lines, a telegraph system, and railroads
 - ▶ Similar to what Partha Chatterjee (*The Nation and Its Fragments*) found for Bengal
- ▶ Yu Kil-chun's "What I Saw and Heard Traveling in the West" 西遊見聞 (1890s)
 - ▶ Imagined members of the Korean national as dutiful nationals subject to continuous mobilization and control, whose education and improvement was to be undertaken for the purpose of enriching and strengthening the nation
- ▶ Hwangsŏng Sinmun distinguished *kungmin* from *minjok* by noting the military service of the former
- ▶ This old form of modernity adopted by elites after liberation in 1945

COLONIAL LEGACIES

- ▶ In South Korea (but not North Korea) there was considerable continuity in institutions and personnel from the colonial to the post-colonial period
 - ▶ USAMGIK kept institutions and personnel in place (including National Police) and promoted existing Koreans to higher positions, and this was inherited by ROK
 - ▶ Many refugees who came down from North Korea were former landlords, Christians, or educated people who had worked closely with the Japanese
- ▶ ROK defines itself as the heir to the Great Han Empire through the Provisional Government, so the colonial period is often termed the “Japanese occupation” Ilkangtchŏmgi (일강점기) rather than the “Japanese colonial period” (일제식민기)
 - ▶ Purging of “pro-Japanese elements”(ch’inilp’a) was not considered necessary (though it probably would have been popular)

COLONIAL LEGACIES (2)

- ▶ South Korea inherited a “highly articulated, disciplined, and penetrating bureaucracy” (more than one would expect of a country of Korea’s level of development) (Eckert)
 - ▶ Police not just repression, but “discipline of modernity”—hygiene, dress (colored rather than white clothing), short hair, frugality
 - ▶ Mental control through “conversion” (chŏnhyang = tenkō)
 - ▶ Originally used by the colonial regime against communists and nationalists
 - ▶ Continued to be used against communists after liberation
 - ▶ Administered mass organizations (AMOs)—colonial Rural Revitalization Programs to Yusin New Village Movement drum up support for government-approved modernization

MOBILIZATION FOR DEVELOPMENT

- ▶ “Let’s Try to Live Well?”
 - ▶ 잘사라보세 잘살아보세 우리도 한번 잘살아보세
 - ▶ 금수나 강산 어여쁜 나라 한 마음으로 가꿔가면
 - ▶ 알뜰한 살림 재미도 절로 부귀영화도 우리 것이다
- ▶ <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XYclhD4mjuo>
- ▶ “My Fatherland” by Park Chung Hee
 - ▶ 백두산의 푸른 정기 이 땅을 수호하고
 - ▶ 한라산의 높은 기상 이 겨레 지켜라네
 - ▶ 무궁화꽃 피고져도 유구한 우리 역사
 - ▶ 굳 세계도 살아왔네 슬기로운 우리 겨레
- ▶ <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5VRhu3RVWJJ0>

MILITARIZED MODERNITY

- ▶ 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



SURVEILLANCE

- ▶ 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 (滅共防諜 smash communism, prevent spying)
- ▶ Lifestyle crimes (long hair, elaborate weddings)
- ▶ Administered mass organizations
 - ▶ 반상회 neighborhood meeting; öyong chohap

ACTUAL TREE WHERE COMMANDOS STRUCK



PLAQUE NEXT TO TREE

▶ 1.21 Situation Pine Tree

- ▶
- ▶ On January 21, 1968 Kim Sin-jo and 30 members of North Korea's 124th Regiment infiltrated with the goal of attacking the Blue House, and in front of today's Ch'ŏngun Silver Town (Ch'ŏngun-dong) after engaging with the police they fled into the Pugak Mountain and Inwang Mountain Area. 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 21st 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

- ▶ 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

- ▶ Military service a requirement for many jobs thus indirectly reserving those jobs for men
- ▶ Military service recognized as work experience, thus giving men better pay and faster promotions than women
- ▶ 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?

- ▶ *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

- ▶ 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

- ▶ 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

- ▶ 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 *sanõp yõkkun* (industrial worker who is a pillar of development)
- ▶ For middle class men, citizen’s movement (civil society groups)
- ▶ Historical trajectory of male-centered labor movement
 - ▶ 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 TRAJECTORY OF WOMEN'S CITIZENSHIP

- ▶ More interclass coalitions than in men's trajectory, but still often led by middle-class women
- ▶ Two paths:
 - ▶ Women workers' labor movement in manufacturing industries
 - ▶ Autonomous women's movement working for equal employment post-1987
- ▶ Fought for protections from forced early retirement, child care and maternity leave; abolishment of military points system
- ▶ In the 1990s the phenomenon of "laid-off family head" (실직된 가정) became a social issue